



## Achieving customer service excellence

**As part of a major transformation project we designed a dynamic blended programme that engaged 720 members of staff to explore the benefits of achieving customer service excellence.**

### Objectives

From November 2008 - April 2009 we worked closely with the Council to develop and deliver a 3-module programme for all 720 managers and staff in Neighbourhood Offices and Contact Centres as part of a major transformation project.

### Approach

Each programme was designed to both engage delegates and build on the considerable experience and success already in existence at the Council. New thinking was introduced and the sharing of best practice formed the bedrock of all the programmes.

Steps engaged with the delegate group right at the beginning - during the research and development phase, canvassing the Council's staff for their experiences and identifying key areas for development. Involving staff in the development of the programme ensured high levels of engagement and ownership. This was their programme - their opportunity for personal development and life long transferable learning.

Techniques used as part of the training included:

- A Teaser Campaign using a series of posters, postcards and other materials to introduce the characters and generate engagement.
- A DVD highlighting the organisational drivers for the training and reflecting customer views (both positive and negative) via a series of vox pops.
- Interactive scenarios, designed to be relevant to a wide range of staff
- One-to-one skills practice (role-play) of bespoke scenarios.
- Facilitated group discussion and action planning.
- Introduction to behavioural models (i.e. AURA, Transactional Analysis, 4-colour behaviour model).
- For managers we covered leadership styles, the GROW coaching model & change management.

### Benefits and Outcomes

Contact centre staff, neighbourhood offices and senior management came together in delegate groups for the first time - giving them the chance to meet each other, understand each others roles, breakdown silo mentalities and identify their contributions to shared organisational goals.

Training had never been delivered in this way at BCC. Such was the feedback from the ongoing programmes that a 'halo' effect was created.

- Attendance levels surpassed the Council's expectations at over 90%, which is substantially higher than the average figure within local authority environments.
- Sessions received an average **97%** positive rating (*Good or Excellent*) and the Course Facilitators received an average **98%** positive rating (*Good or Excellent*).
- A pre & post-course questionnaire was developed to monitor learning objectives around the policies, procedures and skills of excellent customer service - this showed a **42% increase** in correct answers post-course.

This programme was shortlisted for the '*Most Effective Training Programme*' Award at the **Customer Contact Association (CCA) Awards 2009**. The training has also been endorsed by the **Institute of Customer Service (ICS)**