

## **CUSTOMER/CLIENT DEVELOPMENT (CDV)**

*\* Note that the developmental activities in this section are similar in nature to those within Developing Others. Remember to focus these ideas and activities on the development and personal enhancement of your customers.*

**Customer/Client Development** involves the genuine intent to foster the learning or development of a diverse clientele. "Customers/clients" include the public, internal clients, colleagues, partners, co-workers, peers, branches, ministries/agencies and other government organizations.

<i>This Means...</i>	<i>This Doesn't Mean...</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• making positive comments regarding customer's current and expected abilities and potential to learn and develop</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• giving only negative feedback and/or criticizing personal traits</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ensuring that the customer has a clear understanding of roles, accountabilities and specific expectations</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• assuming direct reports know what is expected of them</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• actively monitoring the quality of your customer's work, giving on-the-job coaching, or other practical support, as a means of enhancing performance</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• taking a "no news is good news" approach</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• giving specific feedback to the customer on a regular, frequent basis and reassuring after setbacks</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• giving occasional feedback only and assuming others will want to deal with difficult situations on their own</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• arranging learning opportunities for the customer enabling them to internalize that knowledge and operate independently</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• assigning work that you know the customer will do well and efficiently because they have done similar assignments many times before or giving them work you don't want to do</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• posing questions and stimulating discussions with the customer so as to enhance their understanding of the situation</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• saying as little as possible so that you can move on to the next priority/issue</li></ul>

**Developmental  
Activities**

## **Level 1-2 Activities**

Examine your own style of providing information to customers on assignments. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Do I give individuals an opportunity to think and act independently?
- Do I tell people what to do or do I give them the overall objective and let them determine what to do?
- Have I identified appropriate times to provide advice to customers and times when I should be leaving them to function on their own?

**Ask clients what kind of help they need.**

- Ask a client to present the advantages and disadvantages of several alternative approaches to a critical selling situation or a situation where they have influence over some important stakeholder, and then suggest an alternative.
- Discuss alternative approaches with the customer.

**Identify the unique issues, concerns and motivators of a valued customer.**

- Write this information down and discuss it with the customer.
- Decide how this information can be used to increase the customer's effectiveness.

**Encourage the sharing of resources with your customers.**

- Keep abreast of developments in other areas that may be beneficial or deal with issues for your customer which will help them carry out their assignments.
- Share any information that may increase your customer's knowledge and enhance their management experience.
- Help identify learning opportunities for the customer.
- Identify opportunities to share information and resources for the benefit of the customer and the organization as a whole.

**Reflection Tip:**

- \* Identify innovative ways of sharing this information (emails, e-news letters, etc.).

**Meet with your customers to share ideas and information.**

- Talk to people about relevant issues, concerns, approaches or ideas.
- Explore customer issues concerns and ideas and use this information to determine how you can advise and make specific helpful suggestions to increase customer's effectiveness.

**Reflection Tip:**

\* Are you using language your clients understand or jargon?

### **Develop a reading list of relevant literature for you and your customers.**

- Discuss with your customer ways you can support his/her development.
- Develop a list of a variety of literature including newspapers, trade papers, etc., that will offer relevant information and provide learning opportunities for you and your customers.
- Ask peers or other experts for additional sources that will help you and your customer leverage your knowledge.

### **Level 3-4 Activities**

#### **Develop a continuous improvement mindset by including feedback (both positive and negative) in your customer interactions.**

- Recognize significant, special efforts that your customers make. Communicate their accomplishments on their behalf through the organization.
- Whether it is positive or negative, to be effective, feedback needs to be timely, specific and behavioural, rather than general and judgmental.
- Focus on the behaviour, not the person, and give specific examples, e.g., the comment, "You have not developed a succession plan for your area," is much less likely to arouse defensiveness than the comment, "You're not doing your job."
- Be frank, providing negative feedback as well as positive, while ensuring that you make clear what the individual can do to improve. Be prepared to outline the resources or other support you can provide the employee with in order to assist in his/her development.
- Incorporate best practices discussions into all regular meetings, so that staff can share their successes and learnings.

#### **Reflection Tip:**

\* Review your feedback. Was it in behavioural rather than personal terms?

#### **Maintain a development file on your key customers.**

- Keep track of successes (e.g., achieving goals), failures (e.g., not upholding commitments), development needs (e.g., improving problem solving skills), and how you have agreed to help.

- Ensure that your notes are behavioural and specific, including actions taken by the individual, attitudes displayed, dialogue, impact of behaviour on results, etc.
- Provide feedback frequently and as close in time to the actual event as possible.

**Reflection Tips:**

- \* Engage your client in this development plan.

**Identify common problems and develop solutions.**

- Identify common interest, issues or problems your customer faces and consider the reasons for and patterns underlying these interests, issues or problems.
- Explore potential solutions and analyze the strengths and drawbacks of these solutions.
- Provide feedback to your customers and present your solutions. Remember to focus on behavioural examples rather than interpretations of behaviour.

**Make presentations.**

- Identify a specific topic you believe your customer would be interested in hearing about.
- Prepare and deliver a presentation on the subject. (Use overheads and find ways to make the presentation entertaining as well as informative.)
- Minimize the use of technical jargon in your presentation.

**Level 5 Activities**

**Foster an environment where your customer can take ownership of his/her personal or team development.**

- Schedule regular individual discussions with your customers to discuss the progress of their teams and achievement of their own personal goals.
- Address such issues as:
  - ⇒ What are their personal and team goals?
  - ⇒ What skills must they personally develop to reach their team goals?
  - ⇒ What do you see that supports or contradicts these goals?
  - ⇒ Are their goals challenging enough?
  - ⇒ What can you and the Organization do to help customers achieve their goals?
- Check in with your customers relative to their progress. If a key result is falling short of target, work with them to identify specific actions to help them reach their goals.

## *Competencies that support INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS*

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- Set challenging but realistic objectives with your customers.
- Start with objectives where there is a high probability of attainment to build momentum and the individual's confidence in his/her own abilities.

### **Reflection Tip:**

- \* Are you supporting your clients' independence?

### **Invite customers to participate or lead a project team or assignment involving your area of expertise to provide them with developmental challenges.**

- Identify appropriate projects or assignments that will provide learning and skill building practice for the customer.
- Discuss the value of each with your customer.
- Help/mentor the customer during the project/assignment. This will help them become proficient with resources, skills, relationships and enable them to complete the project or assignment.
- Let them stand in for you on occasion.

### **Organize forums for customers that focus on independence.**

- Choose a topic that is of particular interest to your clients and invite them to the session.
- Organize the session with your customers.
- Identify the issues and concerns and then design and coordinate appropriate activities to address those concerns.
- Develop an agenda for the session with your customers.
- Encourage your customer(s) to participate and lead the session.
- Work with your customer to help deliver the session.
- Provide feedback on content and delivery for their development.