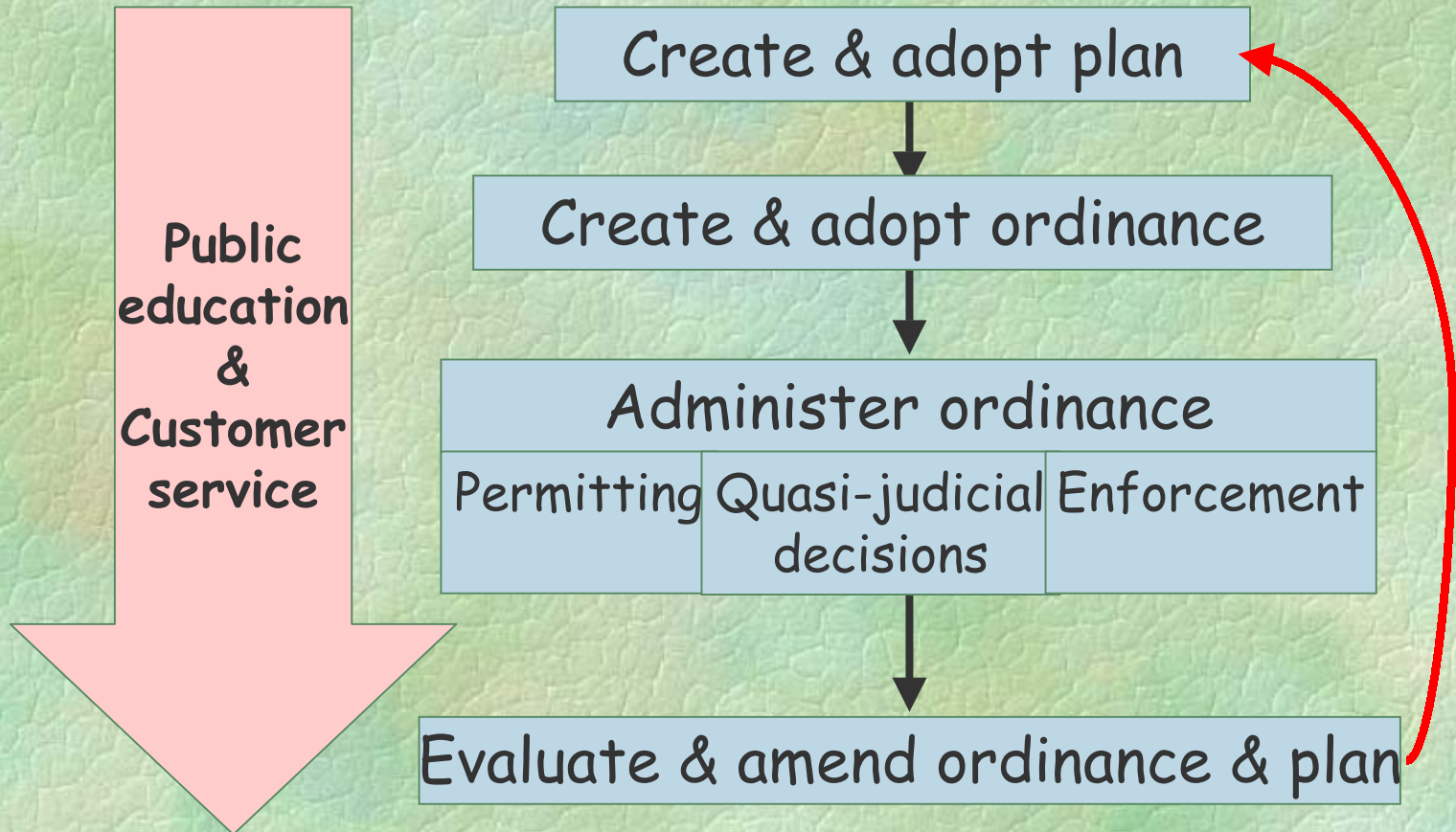


Customer Service



For planning and zoning
departments

Regulatory process



Customer Service

☛ Who

☛ What

☛ Why

☛ How

☛ Dealing with "Difficult" People

☛ How are you doing?

Who is our customer?

permit applicant

citizen

taxpayer

client John Q. Public

property owner

that #%@*&\$

Other customers...

- 🌿 The County Board
 - 🌿 Planning and Zoning Committee
 - 🌿 Zoning Director
- or
- 🌿 the land and water resources of your community

What does a customer expect?

👉 Information !

- Is a permit is required? WHY?
- How do I fill out the form
- Why do I have to submit that?
- How long will it take?
- What will the hearing be like?

What does a customer expect?

- 👉 **Courtesy**
- 👉 **Respect**
- 👉 **Professional behavior**



**It's not just what you say,
but also how you say it.**

Why do customer service?

☛ Effectiveness

developing personal relationships:

- buy-in /support for the ordinance
- appreciation for the resource

☛ Expectations

☛ Enjoyment!

the experience for you and the public

What are the

Top 10 Tips!

for good
Customer Service?

Tips for Good Customer Service

The Office

- convenient location and parking
- field offices if needed
- access without coming to your office - web, phone, fax

Tips for Good Customer Service

In the Office 1

- clean reception area
- space to work with customers
- encourage appointments
- staff to assist walk-ins
- self-help area with forms, handouts and brochures

Tips for Good Customer Service

☞ In the Office 2

- trained, personable counter staff
- listen!
- help the customer know what to ask
- provide answers and information wherever possible
- if answer is not available, identify who will get back to them, and when

Tips for Good Customer Service

Telephone

- customers know where to call, and they can get through
- trained personable receptionist to answer general questions
- help the caller know what to ask
- take a detailed message, offer voicemail, or send information

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Tips for Good Customer Service

Telephone 2

Voicemail greeting

- friendly, not too long
- identify your in/out schedule
- invite a detailed message
- say when you'll check messages and return calls

Tips for Good Customer Service

Telephone 3

- RETURN calls promptly
- explain steps in the review process
 - permit
 - variance
 - conditional use
- use plain ENGLISH



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Tips for Good Customer Service

During an Inspection

- schedule appointment, or notify
- be on time, introduce yourself
- explain why you're there, and what you are looking for
- respect private property
- explain what you saw, and what the next steps are

Tips for Good Customer Service

• Hearing or Committee Meeting

- notify of time and place
- explain the process - before, and at
- explain the standards
- identify when public input can be offered
- if public input is not allowed, explain why

Tips for Good Customer Service

✿ Correspondence and Permits

- provide clear, factual information
- identify permit terms, conditions and expiration date
- highlight special concerns
- include rights to appeal

Difficult People...



Dealing with Difficult People

How do you deal with someone who's angry, upset or critical?

Listen

Empathize

Apologize

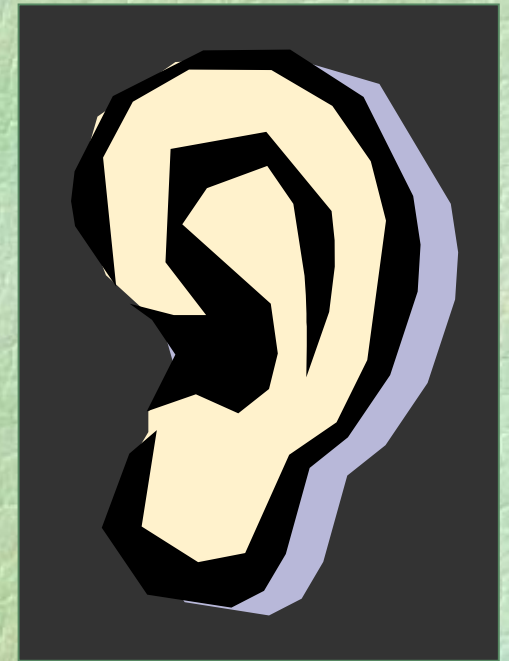
Do something

Joan Lloyd,
syndicated columnist

Dealing with Difficult People

Listen

- Listen to the question or concern
- ask further questions if needed
- Be Calm



Dealing with Difficult People

Empathize

- Acknowledge and agree

“Yes, this would be a good time for construction.”

“If I understand what you’ve said, you’re concerned that....”

- Remain Calm

Dealing with Difficult People

Apologize

- give them benefit of the doubt

“I’m sorry I wasn’t able to return your call yesterday”

- or if there's miscommunication

“I’m sorry, maybe I didn’t explain that very clearly....”

Dealing with Difficult People

Do something

- offer clear follow-up
- explain why it is this way
- offer alternative options

“I would be happy to mail you a study about...”

“I’ll help you fill out the form, so you can file the application today.”

Things to Remember...

- ☞ Many folks have only one "zoning experience" - so **BE PATIENT** and thorough
- ☞ Explain the information, and explain **WHY** - the reason behind the codes



More things to Remember...

- ☞ Use plain English - avoid jargon!
- ☞ Be honest about review times
- ☞ Meet stated review times
- ☞ Say "no" EARLY
- ☞ Apologize for mistakes, delays

How are you doing?

Try to see your office through the customer's eyes...

- Complaints
- surveys
- random calling
- focus groups
- industry groups
- Customer Comment Cards

