

B8595HC
2. I 53
Copy 1

CPM PROJECT
2000

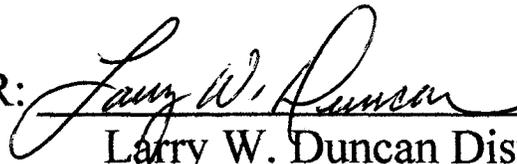
INFORMATION & PROCEDURE
MANUAL FOR
CUSTOMER SERVICE STAFF

RAY T. STEVENS
2555 SEA ISLAND PARKWAY
HUNTING ISLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA 29920

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF
PARKS, RECREATION & TOURISM
HUNTING ISLAND STATE PARK
843-838-4868 PHONE 843-838-4263 FAX
hunting_island_sp_@prt.state.sc.us

FEBRUARY 25, 2000

SUPERVISOR:



Larry W. Duncan District Manager

S. C. STATE LIBRARY

AUG 9 2004

STATE DOCUMENTS

PROJECT GOAL

The goal for spring of 2000 is to have a system that provides seasonal and part time staff with information related to park operations. This system will enable front line staff the ability to provide customers with accurate information in a timely manner therefore providing better customer service.

Problem Statement

The South Carolina State Park Service hires nearly 500 seasonal/part time employees to assist full time employees in providing services to park visitors. Seasonal & part time employees make up the largest part of the work force. Seasonal and part time staff is used in the front line customer service position such as sales clerks, park attendants, and program specialist.

Hunting Island State Park employs 17 full time, 18-part time and 17 seasonal positions. Hunting Island State Park makes up for 6% of visitation and 12% of the revenue taken in by the park service. Therefore customer service at Hunting Island plays a major role in the overall impact on the park service.

Because of the position these employees have it is important that they are provided as much information about park operations as possible. Formal training classes are not provided due to the turnover rate and short employment time of these positions, the only alternative in the past has been on the job training.

While on patrol Park Rangers will encounter customers doing something outside of policy and take steps to correct the situation. The most common reply from the visitor is “the person on duty at the service desk when I checked in said it was ok “. For the most

part, customers do not know most of the staff they come in contact with is part time employees with little to no training.

The customer should not need to know whether the staff person is a part time employee or a seasoned veteran. The only thing a customer needs to know is that they are receiving the correct information from someone on the park staff.

Cause Analysis

There are many contributing factors to the failures of on the job training in a state park setting. The park staff, as a whole, are responsible for such a variety of duties including law enforcement, revenue producing stores, maintenance repairs and construction, educational programs, protection of the park's natural & cultural resources. Because of this fact it is impossible to train seasonal employees in every aspect of the park service.

Ranger positions are usually filled in one of two ways for the most part. One way is after they have completed their college education in a related field along with completing an internship program in a state or national park. The other is when someone has completed their education in a non related field and has had experience in a part time position in a state park. So in most cases the positions are filled with someone that has some knowledge and/or experience in park work. Rangers are given a training partner for their first thirty days on the job, have access to the park 2000 page operation manual and attend orientation classes.

Seasonal positions are usually filled with students attending high school and/or college, local and retired residents. They usually have no training or background in state parks and do not understand how the process works.

Budgets dictate when seasonal employees are hired which coincides with influx of park visitors. This usually occurs during early spring when colleges are on spring break and when recreational minded people are heading to the outdoors. Because we hire so many , around twenty, at one time we are unable to give them a training partner as we do with park rangers which are hired one at a time. Seasonal employees are located at one of seven work stations located throughout the park's 5000 acres and several miles from one another.

Seasonal employees are trained by their department supervisor in equipment operation, emergency procedures and how to fill out the proper paper work that involves their daily duties. Seasonal employees are not cross trained or made to understand how decisions that they make effect other the departments or the customer. It is one of those situation where we are trying to get them the basic and least amount of information so we can get them on the job and handling the influx of customers.

By doing this we are not satisfying the customer when one person tells them they can do something or that we can provide them a service when in fact we cannot. The customers verbally complain or write a complaint on the comment form found at the service counter (see Appendix I). Rangers complain of having to rectify a situation because of what clerks have told customers. An example of this is when someone hired for housekeeping is asked by a customer if they can have a ground fire in the picnic area . The housekeeper knows she has seen ground fires in the campground so she does not see

the problem with telling the customer yes. She has not been made aware that it is illegal to have a ground fire in the picnic area and that it must be contained in a grill.

Now the ranger must be sure the fire is extinguished and grounds maintenance must clean up and restore the area. Another example is when a cabin guest ask the store clerk if they can check out of their cabin late and she gives them the ok. She does not understand that housekeeping has 15 cabins to clean in six hours and if some one leaves late that means someone else will have to check in late or housekeeping must hurry and not do a thorough job of cleaning. Then the ranger must get involved to either ask the customer to leave on time therefore upsetting them or tell the customer due to check in that they must wait while their cabin is being cleaned. After driving several hours to get to the park the customer is usually not happy about waiting. The cabin guest will complain on the cabin comment form (see appendix I) provided to them in their cabin.

Department supervisors and Rangers comment (see appendix II)at weekly staff meetings about the extra work or how they had to take time to straighten out a problem caused by a seasonal employee in another department. Everyone agrees we must provided the seasonal employee, our front line customer service staff, with access to correct up to date information that they can provide to the customer. Time restraints, budgets and customer demands does not allow us time to bring in twenty to thirty new employees, department supervisors and Park Rangers for a day or two of training. But to give out wrong information or say "I don't know" is not acceptable.

Going over the data from the customer comment forms (see appendix III) park supervisors noticed comments involving park rangers were usually positive. Comments involving seasonal staff were more on the negative side.

The negative comments dealt with the seasonal staff's knowledge of the job, the park or policy procedures. Positive comments dealing with the seasonal staff involved their attitude. These findings lead supervisors to believe that we are doing a good job of stressing the point of being courteous to the customer but we are not doing a good job of educating the seasonal staff. So we began looking at ways to improve the situation.

The first thing we looked at was the way we trained the park rangers to see what part of that training we could adapt to the seasonal employee. As mentioned early we do not have the budget necessary to provide training classes and we do not have the man power to provide a training partner for seasonal employees. We did agree we had the resources to provide a information and procedures manual for the seven work stations.

This manual would be similar to the State Park Service policies and procedures manual available to park rangers. We decided that we did not need to reproduce seven copies of the eight volume 2000 page ranger manual for various reasons. First of all they would not need all of the information, the cost of printing would not be beneficial and it would take too long for the employee to read and familiarize themselves with the manual. We all agreed the manual needed to be a single volume, two inch ring binder, style of manual.

The single volume would be best suited for all work stations and service counters.

We knew we had enough information and staff experience to put this manual together.

We also knew we had the funds in our education budget for the necessary materials such as binders, paper, dividers and other items.

We decided that each department supervisor would be primarily responsible for the information related to their section but everyone would get a chance to voice their opinion on each section of the manual and that all supervisors would contribute to the "General" information section of the manual. The project manager would be the park manager who would have the final decision as to what would or would not be used in the manual.

Our hardest obstacle for this project would be time restraints on the supervisor staff, especially trying to get together between weekly staff meetings. So we decided to use a signature sheet (see appendix IV) that could be circulated with the information attached. Supervisors will read the related manual information make the necessary comments then forward it to the park manager for final review.

Implementation Plan

Supervisors and Rangers have been asked to provide the following information:

- What information about your department do you want your staff and the customer to know.
- What information about other departments do you want your staff and the customer to know.
- What general information about the park do you want your staff and the customer to know.

To insure a continuous progression and to meet our deadline we have set up an action plan (see appendix V).

This information will be collected, organized and put together as an information manual for employees. Each department supervisor, work station and Ranger will be given a copy of this manual. This manual will enable every employee access to the same information needed to either answer customer questions or know which department to direct the question.

Because of the potential of supervisors not allowing time for employees to read and familiarize themselves with the information manual a formal process has been outlined on implementing this manual into our normal operating procedures.

After being interviewed and selected to fill a position new hires are given a date and time to report to their work station. Because of hiring numerous employees at one time we will use the first pay period as a time line to train employees. By doing this we can limit the effect it has on each department's man power. Taking one person per day over a two week period and using one instructor will not negatively effect the overall operation of the park. The instructor will go over every page of every department with employees with time for questions and explanation of policy. The process is expected to take about three to four hours which will leave time for the employee to cover half of their duty shift.

The instructor will be someone form the operation staff that consist of the Park Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent and Ranger staff. These position^s have been selected because the chain of command follows in this order and these individuals are responsible for coordinating all departments toward one goal, "Stewardship & Service". Therefore they have the largest investment to make sure the information from all departments is relayed to all the staff.

The time during the first and second pay period the employee will have had time to use the information provided, refer to the manual for assistance when answering customer's questions and have first hand knowledge of their duties.

reword

During the second pay period the same employees will be given a thirty minute test by their supervisor to see if they have learned from this program. The test will provide the

employee the opportunity to provide comments and suggestions on the process and how it could better serve them.

The program will be evaluated in several ways:

- Comments provided by the customer in verbal & written form in an ongoing basis.
- Comments provided by supervisors in weekly staff meeting.
- Comments provided by seasonal employees.

By using the information provided by all parties concerned we can continually improve the process by adding or modify the information manual and the manner in which it is presented.

Glossary of terms

Customer Service: Provide a product or act of labor to benefit the recipient.

Department Supervisors: Full time employees given the responsibility to manage at certain area of the park's operation

Park Ranger: Staff involved in the overall operation of a state park

Part Time staff: Employees that may work year round but are not permanent full time state employees receiving benefits.

Pay Period: Two week time span

Seasonal staff: Employees that work during the high visitation time of the year, traditionally April through October.

Stewardship: Responsible land ethic

Weekly meetings: Thursday of each week at 9am all department supervisor, someone from the Ranger staff, the Assistant Manager and Park Manager meet in the conference room at the park office to discuss policies and procedures, coordinate operations, miscellaneous business from the past week and upcoming events.

Appendix I

Customer Comments

Please circle one of the following: Day use visitor Camper Cabin guest

Park staff: **agree** **somewhat agree** **disagree**

Helpful 1 2 3 4 5

Knowledgeable 1 2 3 4 5

Courteous 1 2 3 4 5

Park Facilities: **agree** **somewhat agree** **disagree**

Clean 1 2 3 4 5

Well maintained 1 2 3 4 5

Well Priced 1 2 3 4 5

Have you ever visited this state park in the past? Yes No If yes, when and how many times: _____

Would you visit this park again in the future? Yes No If no, what would prevent you from returning: _____

General comments: _____

If you would like a reply to you comments please provide your name and address on the back side of this form.

Appendix II

Department Supervisor
Weekly Staff Meeting Notes

Date: _____

Supervisor: _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

11. _____

12. _____

Appendix IV
Supervisor Signature Sheet

Please read the attached information and provide the necessary comments. Please forward to the next supervisor.

HI-102 x _____

Comments: _____

HI-199 x _____

Comments: _____

HI-201 x _____

Comments: _____

HI-301 x _____

Comments: _____

HI-401 x _____

Comments: _____

Forward to Park Manager

Appendix V Action Plan

January 2, 2000

Meet with Supervisor staff to begin process on information and policy manual.

February 3

Began gathering information by department into categories.

February 17

Review information and outline with staff.

March 1

Compile forms and procedures for manual.

March 8

Review forms and procedures with staff

March 22

Put together rough draft of one manual and review with staff.

April 7

Manuals will be placed at seven work stations.

April 21

Have test made and review with staff.

April 28

Select seasonal staff to take test and provide comments.

May 11

Review test and comments with staff.

May 24 - September 4

This is the busiest season therefore we will let operations run as normal. We will monitor employees, staff and customer comments. Continue staff testing when staff turnover occurs.

September 21

Review employee comments and test scores with staff. We will also review customer comments.

November 2000

All seasonal employees have ended their employment. We will review all related information and make the necessary improvements and take action to prepare for next season.