

You Should Just Know



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CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS— ARE YOU READY?

Are you aware of the **Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005**? This legislation is aimed at breaking down barriers and setting accessibility standards for people working with disabilities. It focuses on areas such as customer service, transportation, employment, information and communications and accessibility to buildings and other structures, with a goal for full accessibility by 2025. This is to be done through the setting of standards to be met by public and private sector organizations, and the establishment of timetables for achieving them.

The first set of standards deal with customer service accessibility, and came into effect on January 1, 2008. The implementation date set for the public sector (which includes municipalities, school boards, colleges and universities, public hospitals and public transportation or-

ganizations) is January 1, 2010. January 1, 2012 is the implementation date for private businesses, non-profit organizations,



or any other service provider with at least one employee in Ontario. There are eleven Customer Service Standards that must be complied with, and they can be found through the resources listed in **Downloadable Diamonds** on Page 4. They range from the establishment of policies, practices and procedures

regarding the provision of goods or services to people with disabilities to training your staff on these issues. If you are a designated public sector organization or other provider with twenty or more employees, you must

- Document in writing all of your policies, practices and procedures for providing accessible customer service and meet other document requirements set out in the standard.
- Notify customers that documents required under the customer service standard are available upon request.
- When giving documents required under the customer service standard to a person with a disability, provide the information in a format that takes into account the person's dis-

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'TIS THE SEASON FOR HOLIDAY PARTIES

Happy Holidays!

Many organizations either have already had or will soon be having its traditional holiday party. While they are designed to be a festive and enjoyable occasion, it is important for employers to remember that their liabilities do not disappear just because it's a party. To

assist, the following suggestions are presented.

Before the Party

Staff should be made aware by friendly reminder that even though it's a party, and even though it may be off site, all of your organization's policies are still in effect, particularly those

concerning harassment and bullying, and that unacceptable behaviour could result in disciplinary action. This is particularly important to reinforce to new managers and supervisors, who sometimes forget that they are always an employee's supervisor, even outside of the work environment.

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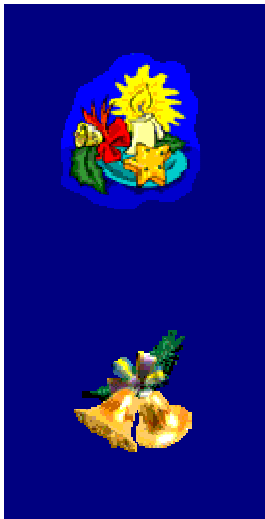


Anything that you can do to give everyone access to your organization and its services is a good thing!

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ability.

CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS– ARE YOU READY?

If you were not aware of this responsibility, or have been putting it off, the task, is not as daunting as it may seem. There are resources out there to help you implement the standards. The Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services has a very useful website, www.AccessON.ca, which will provide you with the information and many of the tools that you will need to ensure that you will be in compliance. Another organization, funded by the Ministry of Community and Social Services but set up as a project of the Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters is Business Takes Action (www.businessstakesaction.ca). BTA's aim is to promote "...the benefits of hiring, retraining and promoting qualified persons with disabilities to meet employers' skills shortages." Membership, which is free, gives you access to workshops, guidebooks, accessibility checklists and more.



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TIS THE SEASON FOR HOLIDAY PARTIES!

During the Party

It's a good idea to appoint a senior manager as the 'go to' person if there are problems during the party. This allows for consistency in approach. And don't automatically 'shaft' an HR person with this! They have a right to party as much as anyone else!



If alcohol is available at your venue:

- Ensure that it is being served responsibly, and that the servers know when to cut people off. This is one key element of 'Smart Serve' training, so if you are using an outside venue or outside caterers, please ensure that their staff are 'Smart Serve' trained.
- Stop serving alcohol well before your party ends and ensure that food and alcohol-free drinks are available.
- If you have under-age staff, make sure they are not drinking.

If you hear or see a situation where things are getting heated ("Why didn't I get a raise this year?"), step in and change the topic. Stupid things get said, and reputations can be ruined.

Act as a role model in terms of your own behaviour. Your staff will be watching you to see what is appropriate.

After the Party

Make sure that everyone has a safe way home. Some organizations advertise in advance that free taxis will be made available those who will want them. This may seem expensive, but are a great 'good will' gesture and could save your organization from a major tragedy or a costly lawsuit later!



for



Know when to say when!

Despite of all of the advice above, please enjoy your organization's function and have a happy and safe holiday season!

DRESSING APPROPRIATELY FOR THE WORKPLACE

A number of years ago, an office worker decided to go out for a walk at lunch. On her way out the door, a man started walking behind her. She continued to enjoy her walk, but noticed that the man was still following her. After twenty minutes, she returned to her workplace, and again noticed the same man behind her. When the office worker saw a coworker, she quickly told him her concerns, and her coworker approached the man who had been following her. The man, now confronted, was quite flustered. His explanation? He thought that the employee was a stripper, and wanted to see where she danced. When asked why he thought the employee was a stripper, the man responded that it was the way she was dressed. Now it was the employee's turned to be embarrassed, as she was dressed no differently than she normally was at work.

Most organizations have some form of dress code, a reflection of how important the way staff dress is to the image and reputation of the organization. As a key component of an organization's culture, dress codes send a message about style, attitude, respect and professionalism. To do that, it must reflect the image to be presented. For example, if dress requirements are for suits and dresses, this is the image the organization will send. Its message would be one of formality and professionalism. For other organizations, the term 'business casual' is used for the dress code. It often means professional looking but not overly formal attire. The quick translation is often 'no tie, but no jeans'. The message here is one of less formality, but still professional. In many agencies and organizations that assist the public, this is deemed appropriate, as the staff need to be seen as approachable and friendly. When determining the correct level of dress, it is important to take into consideration your client group, and what will make them feel the best when dealing with you. Meeting with a client who is facing financial ruin in your three piece suit may not be your best choice.

Of course, setting a dress code is one thing, and enforcing it is another. The office worker referred to previously did work in an organization with a dress code, but it was not enforced. (and yes, her supervisors were male). Additionally, setting an unrealistic dress code is also inappropriate. Some organizations will set specific standards, such as "no dress hem will be more than two inches above the knee". Who is going to carry the ruler around on that one?

In order to be effective, the dress code must reflect the culture of the organization. It must be respectful of the needs of the organization, the staff, and most importantly the clients. It must be something that serves as a guideline, and not something that requires an organization's version of the fashion police. In some cases, the dress code will be challenged, but there should be rationale and explanations as to why it exists, not just 'because we say so'. And like any other part of your organizational culture, it must be adhered to at the senior levels. Dress the way you want others to dress.



"...setting a dress code is one thing and enforcing it is another".

JM BOX CONSULTING SERVICES WISHES YOU AND YOUR FAMILY A HAPPY AND SAFE HOLIDAY SEASON, AND BEST WISHES FOR SUCCESS IN THE NEW YEAR!





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Check out our website at
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Myth: Providing access to accommodation is difficult and expensive.

Reality: 56% of accommodations cost less than \$500.

Courtesy of Business Takes Action 2009

An Overview of Our Services

JM Box Consulting Services provides creative and cost-effective Human Resources support and services that assist clients in dealing with their issues and challenges with confidence. Together, we will resolve issues one at a time, either through consultation, training or working together on necessary projects. These services are designed to be of greatest service to small to medium size organizations, mainly but not exclusively in the municipal, health care, charitable and not-for-profit sectors.

JM Box Consulting Services takes the approach of meeting client expectations by identifying the gap between the desired goals and current realities, to discover the best ways of eliminating that gap- not just for the present, but for the future as well.

Services

E-Consulting- providing clients with quick, cost-effective access to Human Resources expertise through the use of e-mail and telephone communications, without the expense of or supplemental to internal Human Resources staff.

Project Management Services- to provide project management and expertise on matters such as job evaluation/pay equity, wage/salary administration systems, policy and procedure review and development, and organization redesign and restructuring.

Training Services- to address client needs that are best addressed through training specific to the needs of the organization, such as Violence in the Workplace, E-mail and Internet Use, and Hiring/Interviewing.

Downloadable Diamonds

The purpose of this section of our newsletter is to alert readers to some resources available from the internet that they might not be aware of.

As mentioned in our story on Service Standards, there are a number of great resources available to you for free off of the internet.

At www.accessON.ca you can find a number of helpful resources, such as a video on making your organization more accessible, and a compliance toolkit. There is also a Guide to the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, as well as The Compliance Manual, which provides policy templates and other useful items. Online training is also discussed with regards to subjects such as Serving Customers with Disabilities.

If you go to www.businessstakesaction.ca, you access, through your free membership, workshop guidelines, an accessibility checklist, and other useful tools. Particularly useful is Removing Barriers to Work.

If you would like to make any comments on any of the articles that you have seen in this newsletter, or would like to make suggestions for an article for a future edition, please do not hesitate to send an e-mail to john@jmboxconsulting.com.