



**2013 COMMUNITY EXCELLENCE AWARDS
Category Worksheet**

BEST PRACTICES, General

Name of Local Government: Township of Langley

Project/Program Title: Expect Excellence

Project Summary Paragraph

Please provide a summary of your project/program in 150 words or less.

Expect Excellence began as a grassroots initiative, and grew into a Township-wide, corporate culture of customer service excellence. As a foundation, Expect Excellence is a series of service standards; email, voicemail, and in-person, which have been adopted at every level of the municipality.

These standards ensure a degree of consistency across the organization which translates into an improved communication system and smoother processes for our external clients. Through this initiative, the Township's culture evolved, improving morale and creating a sense of internal cohesiveness. Standards became habit and staff is able to rely on one another for excellent service, turning the good service we provide into great service. With support from all levels, Expect Excellence has developed into a sustainable and ongoing project, continuously developing through the ideas and inspiration of our staff.

Project Analysis

Please answer the question in 300 words or less in 11 pt Arial font (our judges value directness and brevity). If you experience difficulty answering a particular question, consider the aspects of your program that may relate to the question and show us how they are linked.

Remember to include measurable results whenever possible.

1. SERVICES

How has the implementation of this program/project improved services in your community?

Requiring all staff to wear nametags not only aided to identify employees, it created awareness with staff and with the public, raising the sense of responsibility, value, and accountability. Not only has it made the internal working environment more cohesive, it has added to the level of service to the community.

The Township's service standards evolved from staff feedback through a series of workshops. Consistency was realized quickly; setting the expectations for service internally and externally.

Staff from across the organization are involved in the development of service training sessions, events, and communication forums. Encouraging staff to participate in these events has improved morale and created an environment where employees feel valued, translating into improved job performance.

2. EFFECTIVENESS

How is the program/project more efficient and/or effective than it was before?

With clear and concise standards setting out the expectations for excellence in service, it clarifies for staff, existing and new, the tools to perform their duties and their responsibilities as representatives of the Township of Langley. Further, it sets the level of expectations and deliverables to both internal and external contacts. There has been a noticeable "above and beyond" attitude shift.

3. ECONOMIC IMPACT

How has the program/project saved the community money and/or resources or encouraged economic development?

With service level expectations presented in a simple series of standards, time redundancy has decreased for staff and residents. With the improved visual presence borne from the identification tags, and the clarity of the expectation of service from the standards, internal and external customers save time and frustration; which translates into staff time and time spent on improving service.

4. ACCOUNTABILITY

How has this program/project improved upon accountability to the community's citizens?

The initiative to shift the Township's internal culture to a corporate culture of customer service excellence is an ongoing endeavor; a workplace lifestyle change. By wearing Identification Tags, staff are not only physically present, but acutely aware that they are presenting a statement of accountability. The Identification Tags have compelled staff to take ownership of their roles and interactions with others. A noticeable shift has occurred; staff realize the time-saving benefits of following service standards, and are encouraging their colleagues to conform to the standards as well.

5. AWARENESS

How has this program/project created more awareness in the community about local government actions?

To date, Expect Excellence has not been publicly marketed other than the creation of the Expect Excellence logo and poster being publically displayed. Over the next year, Expect Excellence will be broadcasted to the public, with the intent to demonstrate to our residents that Township employees take pride in their roles as public service employees, and to break away from the perception of negative government worker stereotypes.

The Expect Excellence logo is printed on the attached letter of support from our Chair, Christine Blair.

6. TEAMWORK

Tell us about the teamwork involved in making this program/project possible.

The Expect Excellence Committee is comprised of nine employees representing eight unique Township divisions. This committee selected 140 Ambassadors representative of all divisions, levels, and seniorities to serve as 'culture transmitters'. The Ambassadors are provided with special training sessions and get-togethers to become experts in service excellence. Further, these sessions have served to generate a sense of cohesion amongst the Ambassador group, and this culture of service excellence and unity is transmitted back to their departments.

In June, the Expect Excellence committee celebrated its one year anniversary with a week of events, contests, and treats for staff to commend them on their commitment to the culture. Over 250 employees participated in a contest designed to educate on the various departments and divisions of the Township.

Employees now have a venue to offer praise to their colleagues for a job well done; either in person to a committee member, by phone, or by emailing expectexcellence@tol.ca. The Expect Excellence Committee ensures that those employees are commended for their service excellence. Acknowledging service excellence has proven to be a conduit for continued excellence, as well as improved morale.

7. INNOVATION

What makes this program/project innovative and creative?

Expect Excellence is a grassroots initiative, not a top-down, bureaucracy-driven project. The culture affects all employees at all levels of the organization; from lifeguards to our CAO, all Township employees are committed to adhering to the same level of service standards. Expect Excellence is not an addition to anyone's job, it *is* their job. It's how our employees do their job.

The Expect Excellence Committee is always coming up with new and innovative ways to engage staff. Some of these engagement strategies have included, lunch hour TED Talks where staff are encouraged to bring a brown bag lunch and watch motivational videos related to service excellence; the 'Tour the Township Passport Contest' where staff had to liaise with one another to find answers to questions on various departments and aspects of the Township; the 'Get Carded' contest, where the committee visited all facilities and took photos of employees wearing their nametags which was then converted into a fun video for staff and posted onto the internal website.

Another influential component was the recruitment of external facilitator. The facilitators provided training to our ambassadors, geared towards the Expect Excellence culture of, teamwork, customer service, impacting your environment, etc. This strategic move was positively received by staff as a corporate commitment to the legitimacy of the endeavor. With the facilitator's objectivity, staff were open and honest with their feedback and the Committee was able to capture authentic and unencumbered ideas and opinions during the sessions.

It is important to note that Expect Excellence is not a program. A program has a start and an end date. This is an ongoing culture shift where Township staff are constantly striving to be better.

8. SUSTAINABILITY

What measures have you put in place to ensure the continued operation of this initiative? (*e.g. staff time, resources, financial*)

The Expect Excellence Committee meets several times a month to generate new ideas, events, contests, training opportunities, and ways to engage staff.

The Township's Senior Management Team is very committed to Expect Excellence and continues to support it by allocating a portion of the annual budget towards ongoing endeavors including training, activities, and events.

The Expect Excellence logo is identifiable to all Township employees and appears within our signature standards, on permanent placards in each facility, on notepads, on aprons for staff barbecues, etc. This advertising of the logo serves as a constant reminder to staff to provide excellent service always.

9. BEST PRACTICES

What sets this program/project apart as a winning idea? Why should it be considered a best practice, in comparison to other similar programs?

Expect Excellence was introduced with a survey measuring how Township of Langley staff felt themselves and their colleagues measured up in terms of the degree to which they received and provided excellent service. The common theme was that Township employees provide and receive good service. It was this unique good to great philosophy that drove Expect Excellence into fruition.

Expect Excellence is a culture shift, a change in the way Township of Langley employees think about service delivery. It is neither a program, nor a project, it is a change in employees' attitudes; what does it take to go from good to great?

Over time, the culture shift becomes commonplace. Reflection is no longer necessary, the positive attitude becomes habit, and excellent service becomes the norm.

10. TRANSFERABILITY

How is this program/project transferable to other local governments?

Township of Langley staff were already doing a good job; Expect Excellence is about realizing the gap between good and great, filling it, and being recognized for it.

The glue that holds Expect Excellence together is the steering committee. The initiative is transferable to any local government if you have a committed team willing to put in the work and the time.

11. KNOWLEDGE SHARING

What helpful advice would you share with other communities looking to embark on a similar project?

A culture shift takes time and requires buy-in from all levels of the organization. Be realistic in your goals and ensure you have full and sincere support from your key players. Stick with it and do not be discouraged by a slow start, pushback, noise, or lulls throughout the process.

12. TELL US MORE

Please share any other information you think may help us better understand your submission.

Although Expect Excellence recently celebrated its one year anniversary, it is still in its infancy; culture shift takes years to achieve. The Expect Excellence Committee feels significant strides have been achieved in the past year. We are encouraged and motivated by the positive feedback received from staff and residents acknowledging the Township of Langley for excellent service.

The committee strives to ensure that employees are recognized for their commitment and dedication to Expect Excellence. By receiving validation from UBCM, would lend to the continued energy of our initiative and further encourage and motivate staff.

UBCM