The Saint Mary Way Guidebook

A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear colleague,

Since the University of Saint Mary's early beginnings, our founders and sponsors, the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth, have remained consistent in their demand for excellence in all things – in particular, they have challenged students, faculty, and staff to do their best and continually strive to do their best. We approach service the same way.

The University of Saint Mary expects all employees to provide high quality service to our students, constituents, and each other. A big part of the Saint Mary experience is you—your smile, your friendliness, your eagerness to help, your willingness to go above and beyond to show a student, a parent, or a visitor how much we care.

When it comes to the Saint Mary brand of customer service, we look upon students as professional clients rather than customers. The relationship is similar to a doctor/patient relationship. Doctors are there to give you the best advice, the best direction you can to make your life stronger, healthier, and to help you meet your goals. In much the same way, we work with our students, telling them they've got to exercise their brains. It's their decision whether they want to do it or not. And if they don't, they will suffer the consequences.

When we measure quality client service at Saint Mary, satisfaction is not enough and is never the goal. We strive to reach beyond mere satisfaction. Every single member of the staff and faculty has a significant impact on a student by making them feel welcome and valued.

In fact, every member of the USM community should be given courteous, concerned, and prompt attention to their needs and value. Providing excellent service is one of the most important ways you can help Saint Mary succeed and grow.

As you read this guidebook, I hope you will affirm your commitment to this Saint Mary tradition of striving for excellence in all things. You are the key to keeping our heritage alive and creating an unparalleled experience for our students during their time with us.

Sincerely,

Sister Diane Steele, SCL, Ph.D.
President
University of Saint Mary

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The purpose of this guidebook is to educate Saint Mary employees about the service theme and service standards, set service expectations, and to provide a resource for basic information for employees that may help you better serve our students.

UNIVERSITY OF SAINT MARY SERVICE THEME
We expand minds and enrich lives by providing a high quality education in a caring environment to diverse students from around the globe.

SERVICE STANDARDS
Integrity
Respect
Quality
Efficiency

"If you see a job that needs to be done, consider it yours."
—Mother Xavier Ross, Foundress of the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth

Everything sends a message- from the way the campus grounds look, to the way we dress, to the way we treat our students, guests, and each other. The University of Saint Mary has a long-standing reputation for being friendly and caring. Does our service say we're friendly and caring?

How You Are Perceived by Others

Face to Face Communication	**Telephone Communication**
55% Body Language	0% Body Language
38% Tone of Voice	86% Tone of Voice
7% Words Used	14% Words Used

CLIENT SERVICE FACE TO FACE GUIDELINES

1. MAKE EYE CONTACT AND SMILE
   This is a way to acknowledge clients and guests and make them feel special. It also sends the message that you know they are there.

2. GREET & WELCOME EVERY CLIENT OR GUEST
   At Saint Mary, we are known for our courtesy and friendliness. Students or guests can never be an inconvenience. Always stand when shaking hands.

3. SEEK OUT GUEST CONTACT
   Look for opportunities to approach clients. Listen to their needs, answer questions, offer assistance, and be assertively friendly, not aggressive. If someone looks lost, don't simply tell them how to get there, escort them there personally.

4. DISPLAY APPROPRIATE BODY LANGUAGE
   Don't lean. Have good posture. Smile and look happy. Don't be preoccupied. Have an attentive appearance. Focus on the student or guest. Have a pleasant look on your face.

5. PROVIDE IMMEDIATE SERVICE RECOVERY
   Find a way to make a situation better. Be sincere. Say you are sorry and mean it. Look for some alternatives. Just because someone else did a dis-service does not relieve you of correcting the injury. Ask your supervisor for assistance.

6. PRESERVE THE SAINT MARY EXPERIENCE
   Be courteous, friendly, and helpful—even under pressure. Be professional at all times, no matter what. Never get defensive or rude with students or guests. The louder they get, the quieter and calmer you should get. Treat them as if you would a cherished friend, and that is what they will become.

   DO NOT talk about personal or job-related problems in front of our clients or guests. Difficult conversations that could possibly embarrass the student, parent, or guest should be conducted in a private location where others cannot overhear.

7. THANK EACH AND EVERY CLIENT AND GUEST
   This is a common courtesy that is really is appreciated by everyone. Do it with sincerity and a smile.

TELEPHONE GUIDELINES

1. A phone call is never an interruption—it's an opportunity.
2. You should always try to answer the phone after the second or third ring.
3. You can hear a smile. When the phone rings, a smile should come across your face automatically. Greet callers warmly and sincerely.
4. The effective telephone greeting has four parts
    1. A friendly hello
    2. University of Saint Mary
    3. Your Name
    4. And a "call to action"

    Sample phone script:
    Hello, University of Saint Mary, I'm _____ (name)
    How may I help you?
5. Speak slowly, with conviction.
6. Give callers your full attention.
7. Avoid interrupting.
8. Tell the truth.
9. When putting someone on hold, always let them know you are doing so. Always give the caller a choice as to whether to be put on hold or not.
10. When a caller is on hold, you should get back on the line with them every 60 seconds.
    When you get back on the line with a holding caller, the first thing you should say is "Thank you for holding."
11. People often misunderstand statements that are framed in the negative. Words like "no," "not," and "can't" carry a negative connotation.
    Instead of saying, "She's not in," try saying, "She's away from the office."
12. If you have an irate person on the phone, the most important thing you can do is listen.
13. When listening to an irate caller, it's important for you to affirm the caller's concern.
14. Be sure to thank the caller for bringing the university's attention to the problem.
15. If your supervisor is going to handle a caller complaint after you've spoken to the caller, you should brief the supervisor regarding the nature of the problem.

Note: Always record an "out of office" message if you plan on being away from the office for more than one weekday. Callers will be more understanding about why there could be a delay in you responding. Don't forget to update your voice mail greeting first thing in the morning when you return to work.

CELL PHONE & TEXTING GUIDELINES

In this techno-age of instant—and constant—connection, taking calls on your cell phone or texting at the inappropriate time sends the wrong message in a university setting.

Courtesy, consideration, and respect for others is the primary reason to adhere to good and safe cell phone and texting habits. Since others judge you by your behavior, demonstrating good etiquette practices will place you in higher esteem in their eyes. Look around at the faces of others being annoyed by cell phone users—it is often looks of disgust or annoyance.

When you have your head down while texting, you are ignoring the people with you. You are modeling a behavior that says, “You are not as important as the person I am texting!”

Using your cell phone or texting is a convenient means of communication. You may be ignoring the negative message you are sending to those around you if you fail to use good business and social etiquette.

Here are a few cell phone and texting guidelines:

1. Always turn off the ringer when in meetings, in restaurants, or other public places with other colleagues or clients. The people in your immediate presence should be the focus of your attention.
2. Place your phone in your briefcase, purse, or pocket. Don't lay it on the table. The vibration sound will be distracting to others and you will not be able to resist looking at it from time to time.
3. Avoid checking for messages and texting when you are with colleagues or clients. If you are expecting to hear from someone about an urgent concern, let the others know that you will need to check periodically and apologize for the distraction. It should be for a very good reason: emergency situation, important client issue, etc.
4. When you do take (or make) a call, monitor the level of your voice. No one else wants to hear your conversation and it is distracting and disturbing to have to listen to it because your voice is too loud. Remove yourself from the area before continuing your call.

Source: Business Etiquette - The Do's and Don'ts of Cell Phones and Texting by Sherry Day

EMAIL GUIDELINES

1. Be concise and to the point.
Don't make an email longer than it needs to be. Reading an email is harder than reading printed communications and a long email can be very discouraging to read.

2. Answer all questions, and pre-empt further questions.
If you do not answer all the questions in the original email, you will receive further emails regarding the unanswered questions, which will not only waste your time and your customer's time but also cause considerable frustration.

3. Use proper spelling, grammar, and punctuation.
This is not only important because improper spelling, grammar, and punctuation give a bad impression of the university, it is also important for conveying the message properly.

4. Make it personal.
Not only should the email be personally addressed, it should also include personal, customized content. For this reason, "auto replies" are usually not very effective.

5. Respond swiftly.
Clients send an email because they wish to receive a quick response. Therefore, each email should be replied to within at least 24 hours and preferably within the same working day. If the email is complicated, send an email back saying that you have received it and that you will get back to them. This will put the student's mind at rest and usually they will then be very patient.

If you are out of the office for more than one business day, be sure to turn on the "Out of Office Assistant" on Outlook and include who a person may contact if they need immediate assistance in your absence.

6. Use proper structure & layout.
Since reading from a screen is more difficult than reading from paper, the structure and lay out is very important for email messages. Use short paragraphs and blank lines between each paragraph. When making points, number them or mark each point as separate to keep the overview.

7. Do not write in CAPITALS.
IF YOU WRITE IN CAPITALS IT SEEMS AS IF YOU ARE SHOUTING and might trigger an unwanted response.

8. Don't leave out the message thread.
When you reply to an email, you must include the original email in your reply. A "threadless email" may not provide enough information and you will have to spend a frustratingly long time to find out the context of the email in order to deal with it. Leaving the thread will save the recipient much more time and frustration in looking for the related emails in their inbox.

9. Avoid long sentences.
Try to keep your sentences to a maximum of 15-20 words. Email is meant to be a quick medium and requires a different kind of writing than letters. Also take care not to send emails that are too long. If a person receives an email that looks like a dissertation, chances are that they will not even attempt to read it!

10. Set up an automated email electronic signature. This will help others contact you in the future. Be sure to **include your name, title, direct phone line** (if you do not have a direct line, include the university's main phone number and add your extension, i.e. (913) 682-5151 ext. 6420), **and the university web address.**
Main Campus: www.stmary.edu
Overland Park Campus: www.stmary.edu/success
Call the help desk at ext. 6420 if you need assistance in setting up your electronic signature.

11. Read the email before you send it.
Be sure to proof for spelling and grammar mistakes in your emails. Reading your email through the eyes of the recipient will help you send a more effective message and avoid misunderstandings and inappropriate comments. Remember that "Spell Check" doesn't catch everything. Emails with typos are simply not taken as seriously.

12. Do not use email to discuss confidential information.
Sending an email is like sending a postcard. If you don't want your email to be displayed on a bulletin board, don't send it. Moreover, never make any libelous, sexist, or racially discriminating comments in emails, even if they are meant to be a joke.

13. Use a meaningful subject.
Try to use a subject that is meaningful to the recipient as well as yourself and always put something in the subject area of your emails. This also helps when you or your recipient is searching their inbox for old messages.

14. Take care with abbreviations and emoticons.
In university emails, try not to use abbreviations such as BTW (by the way) and LOL (laugh out loud) or internal acronyms. The recipient might not be aware of the meanings of the abbreviations and in business emails these are generally not appropriate. The same goes for emoticons, such as the smiley :-). If you are not sure whether your recipient knows what it means, it is better not to use an emoticon.

Source: *Netiquette* by Virginia Shea

PROPER USE OF THE UNIVERSITY'S NAME

1. **As part of our USM Branding Standards, we never abbreviate "Saint"** when spelling out the institution's name. We also avoid the possessive form when referring to the University of Saint Mary.
   We are the University of Saint Mary
   NOT the University of St. Mary, Saint Mary's, or Saint Mary's University
   The only acceptable exception for abbreviating "Saint" is in our web address: www.stmary.edu
2. **Call us by the right name**
   Our acronym is USM.
   In written correspondence, only use USM after you have first spelled out University of Saint Mary (USM) in your copy.
   Do not refer to us as Saint Mary University– we are USM, not SMU

WRITING STYLE AND STANDARDS

The USM Marketing and Communications Office follows the Associated Press Stylebook for USM writing standards. There are a handful of writing styles specific to the University of Saint Mary or academic life on campus. Please refer to the USM Branding Standards and Style Guide, located on the T Shared Drive in the Marketing folder for more information

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THE SAINT MARY LOOK – DRESS GUIDELINES

The way we present ourselves to our clients and visitors in our appearance sends a message. Your dress and personal upkeep should give an impression that instills confidence in a prospective student or parent—confidence that we are highly professional at the University of Saint Mary, that we care, and confidence that students and parents are making a good investment by choosing the University of Saint Mary.

As noted on page 38 in the Employee Handbook regarding dress code and hygiene for all faculty and staff:
All employees (both faculty and fare expected to present a businesslike appearance in dress, personal grooming, and hygiene. On university approved dress-down days, casual attire is acceptable.

For staff in frontline areas who receive regular visitors and guests, attire should be professional. When "Jeans Day" Friday has been announced by Campus Ministry, check with your supervisor to make sure this is appropriate dress for your department. We do not want to be dressed in jeans for a Friday Open House or Discovery Day when we are greeting prospective students and parents.

Again, if you have any questions regarding appropriate work attire, speak with your immediate supervisor.

Wear Your Nametag –
We are a first-name institution. All employees are issued a nametag once they have filled out a nametag request form available on eSpire. We encourage all employees to wear their nametag as much as possible.

DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE

Embrace the angry client. Often they are the catalyst or stepping stone to improving to the next level of quality.

Listening Skills – from New Directions Behavioral Health

1. **"Be in the Moment"**
   Use this or another phrase to help you slow down your thought process and focus on the message being sent.
2. **Minimal Encouragers**
   Minimally encourage someone to keep speaking. This can be with non-verbal gestures (head nods) or verbally ("I see"). Try to use a variety of encouragers as repeating the same one of leads the speaker to believe you are not listening.
3. **Summary Statements**
   Summarize what you hear your partner saying. A summary statement enhances your partner's self-esteem by showing that you were listening carefully.
4. **Empathy Statements**
   Communicate to your partner your understanding of what they are feeling and why they feel that way.
5. **Confirm Your Understanding**
   Provide feedback to your partner communicating your understanding of what you just heard.

   Examples: #1: Use a confirming statement
   "Let me make sure I understand your request…"

   #2. Summarize key facts:
   "You want to be sure your child is treated fairly."

   #3. Ask if your understanding is correct:
   "Did I get that right?"

Strategies with Challenging Callers

1. **Your Problem, but Don't Take it Personally**

   It may not be your fault, but it's still your problem. Focus on the problem – not the person. Approach all angry customers with this attitude. Even if it is your fault, don't take the complaint personally. Customers complain because they want you to address a perceived shortcoming, not because they don't' like you. Ask yourself, "Am I seeking resolution or do I want to 'make a point'?" Resist the temptation to right back. Even if you win the battle, you lose the war.

2. **Listen**

   In order to address the customer's problem, you'll need to know exactly what the problem is. As with all other endeavors, listening is a key skill. Besides giving you some insight into the reason for the customer's distress, it also helps to exorcise some of the initial anger the customer is feeling.

3. Let the Venting Proceed

Let complainants express themselves. Don't stop them mid-flow. Let them vent their anger; it will be easier to reason with them afterwards. If you find yourself getting angry or defensive, stop the conversation politely and get yourself under control. Seek help from others if needed.

4. Calm your Complainant and Clarify the Problem

When your customer has finished complaining, show some empathy. Explain that you understand why he or she is so upset, and you're going to try to sort things out. Then clarify your understanding of the problem. Ask questions and qualify comments. This will calm your customer and ensure that your suggested solution will address all aspects of the perceived problem. Step into your customer's shoes. Look at your company, your products, the problem, and your actions from the customer's perspective, and then decide whether or not the complaint is justified.

5. If it's Your Fault, Say So. If it's Not, Don't

When you fully understand the complaint, decide whether or not your company is at fault. Don't automatically accept blame before you know it's warranted. But if it is clearly your fault, admit it early in the process. Accept responsibility and ton' hide; don't try to pass the buck. Adopt a genuinely humble tone.

6. Solve the Problem

Think about how best to solve the customer's problem. If you need some time to come up with a response, tell him so and commit to getting back to him on a specified timetable. Do so. Make sure all of your responses project a clearly concerned, but calm, manner. Maintain focus on problem solution and avoid blaming internal or external sources. Stress your eagerness to resolve the problem, and project a calm confidence that you are the person to do it. When you have a suggested solution, agree with the customer about the steps you'll take and the timeframe or correction. Assure the customer that you'll take personal responsibility for seeing the resolution through, and do so. Nothing is more important than resolving customer complaints. Attend to them with the utmost urgency.

7. Don't Accept Abuse

Don't accept it if the complainant steps over the line between the reasonable right to complain and outright personal abuse. Calmly explain that you will address problems, but you can do so only if they speak and act courteously and respectfully. If the complainant continues the abuse, terminate the conversation. You don't need that kind of customer!

8. Pin Down Moving Targets

If you're dealing with a problem that seems to grow every time you implement an agreed solution, ask your customer to put the complaint in writing so you can better understand and address it. This will help you focus on agreed solution. Also, working things out on paper can sometimes make a complainant recognize if his is an unreasonable viewpoint.[1]

[1] Source: *40 Strategies for Winning in Business,* a book by Bud Haney and Jim Sirbasku

Specific "Difficult" Situations

Saying "No" and Still Be Helpful to the Customer

1. Don't assume that **you can't** – check it out
2. Adjust your attitude: caring and courteous
3. Listen to the entire situation
4. Avoid the phrase "It's policy"
5. Follow the steps:
   Empathize: "I understand how you feel"
   Acknowledge emotions: "I hear how upset you are"
   Decline: "I can't give a full refund, but I can…"
   Suggest alternative: Tell what you can do
   Decline with a Reason – Explain safety/privacy/etc.
   Use self-disclosure: "I have felt like that too…"
   Ask open-ended questions: "How will that work for you?"
   Use the broken record technique; repeat what you've already said.
6. If you do not know the answer to a question, admit it, and promise to find the answer.

A Final Word on Service Delivery to our Clients

Practice the Golden Rule: treat others the way you wish to be treated, or even take it one step further: treat others the way you think that particular individual wishes to be treated. (these two could be different.)