

# Part 3: Administrative Support— Your Responsibilities

Chapter 12:

Developing Customer Focus

# Customer Focus Defined

*Customer service can be demonstrated in a number of ways,*

*and it is often defined as the ability of an organization to consistently give customers what they need and want.*

*Successful businesses and organizations are committed to providing high-quality customer service to all their customers.*

*This attitude and commitment is called customer focus .*

[Self-Check]



# External Customers

1. Greet the visitor.
2. Determine the purpose of the visit.
3. Make the wait pleasant.
4. Remember names and faces.
5. Handle interruptions.
6. Handle the difficult visitor.
7. Deal with abusive visitors.
8. Maintain a customer focus.



*Greet people you have not met with a smile and a handshake.*

# Customer Focus Strategies

- Show respect for customers.
- Seek customer input.
- Take responsibility.
- Explain the situation.
- Follow up on the issue.

## People @ Work

### Print Shop Employees

Employees in the printing services department of a company serve the needs of other employees. These employees are the internal customers of the workers in the printing services department. Without the services this department provides, others in the company would not be able to do their work. Even employees who have no direct contact with external customers, like those in printing services, must have a customer service focus for the entire organization to be effective.

# Handle the Difficult Visitor

- Do not take it personally.
- Take a deep breath and tell yourself to stay calm.
- Try to defuse the visitor's anger by letting him or her talk.
- Listen; try to understand the visitor's viewpoint.
- Depending on the situation, ask what you can do to solve the problem, or make an apology.

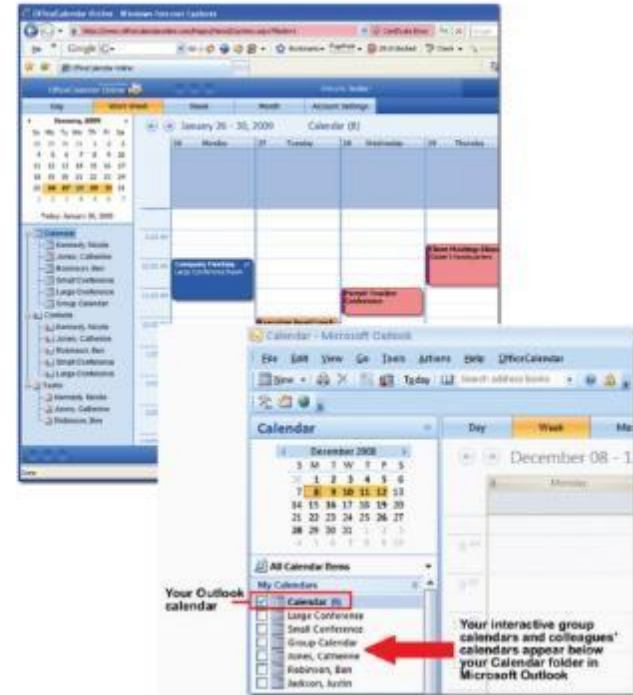
# Deal with an Abusive Customer

- You cannot help an abusive customer until she or he calms down.
- Do not let yourself become angry, as this behaviour would merely escalate the situation.
- Look for points of agreement with the customer and voice those points.
- If the customer continues to be abusive, you may have to ask the customer to call back later when he or she can discuss the issue calmly.
- Find out what the company policy is and observe it.
- Customers may be less likely to make threats or inappropriate comments if they know the call may be recorded.

# Maintaining Calendars

- Schedule appointments
  - By telephone
  - By e-mail or mail
  - In person
- Cancel appointments
- List appointments
- Use electronic calendars and online appointment systems

FIGURE 12-3  
OfficeCalendar Online



See, edit, and delete your personal and shared Outlook calendars online via a Web browser.

# Using Electronic Calendars

## Advantages

- Can be easily edited—appointment details revised or cancelled
- Provides a visual or audible reminder of an upcoming scheduled event
- Can be minimized while using other programs
- Unlimited additional details can be included
- Integrates with the mail program—notices and agendas can be automatically sent to meeting participants
- Automatically generates a list of appointments, tasks, and reminders that can also be printed out
- Recurring events are entered more easily
- Includes task list

## Disadvantages

- Access is always password-protected—if you are absent from the office, it will be impossible for anyone else to check your calendars. Provide details about your scheduling procedures and access to the calendar information to someone else in the office.

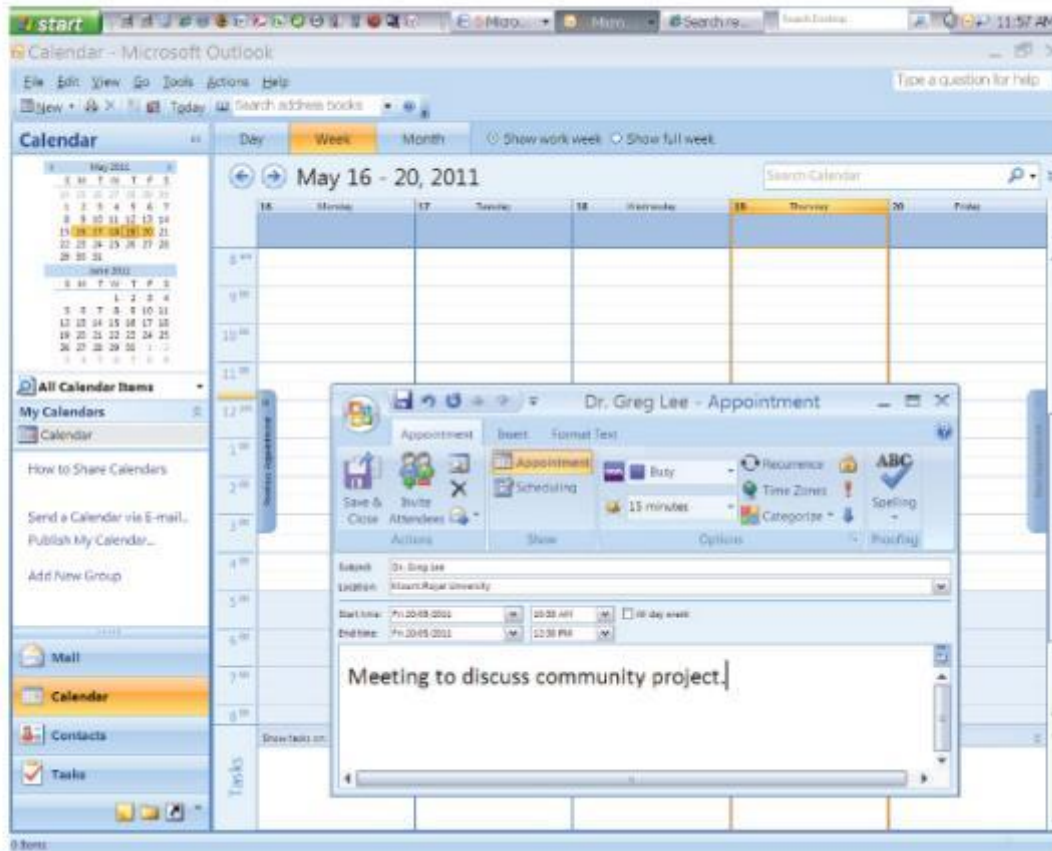
Figure 12-2  
Advantages and Disadvantages of Using Electronic Calendars



# Outlook Calendar

**FIGURE 12-4**

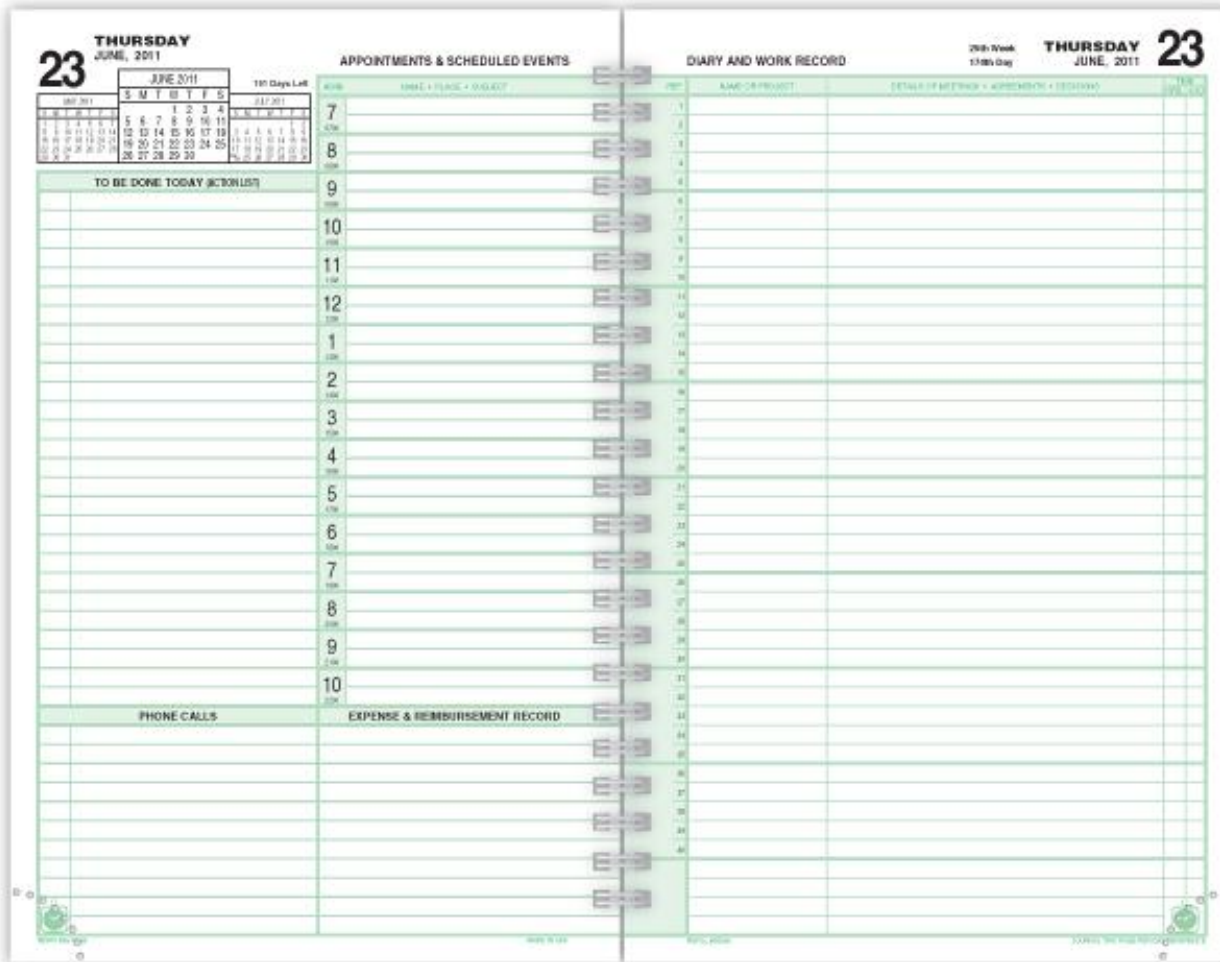
**Outlook Calendar in One-week View with Current/Next Month and New Appointment Screen Displayed**



Used with permission from Microsoft

# Paper-Based Calendars

**FIGURE 12-5**  
Day-timer Appointment Calendar, Two-Page-per-Day Format



Courtesy of Day-Timer, [www.daytimer.com](http://www.daytimer.com)

# Scheduling Guidelines

- Know preferred times for scheduling appointments.
- Record the exact time, location, and purpose of the appointment.
- Ensure that scheduled appointments do not overlap.
- Accurately record the name, company, and phone number/ e-mail address.
- Avoid scheduling appointments on Monday morning.
- Avoid making appointments the day before your supervisor leaves on a business trip.
- Schedule any away-from-the-office appointments either early or later in the day.
- Provide a client or visitor with more than one option for an appointment with your supervisor.
- Specify the beginning and end times for an appointment.
- Provide an alternate time as well as a legitimate reason for doing so if you must refuse a request for an appointment.

# Summary

- An organization that has a customer focus demonstrates effective customer service in interactions with internal and external customers.
- When receiving workplace callers, know your employer's expectations. Your employer will usually see certain people without an appointment. Your employer may also decide not to see certain people.
- Appropriate techniques for receiving office callers include the following:
  - Greet the visitor with a handshake if you have not met him or her previously.
  - Determine the purpose of the caller's visit.
  - Make the wait pleasant by offering the caller coffee or tea and reading material.
  - Call the visitor by name.
  - Introduce the caller to your supervisor if appropriate.
  - Do not be discourteous to callers—even the difficult ones.

# Summary (cont'd)

- Understanding how to respond to difficult or abusive customers will help you provide effective customer service even in difficult situations.
- Providing excellent customer service is important for success in businesses and other organizations.
- Strategies that you can use to develop a customer focus include showing respect for customers, seeking customer input, taking responsibility, explaining the situation, and following up on issues.

# Summary (cont'd)

- As an administrative professional working for one or several supervisors, consider the personal preferences of each individual when maintaining calendars.
- Enter regularly occurring appointments and/or meetings into the calendar once per year.
- When making appointments over the telephone, confirm that you and the caller have identical information by repeating the time, date, and place of the appointment to the caller as you enter it into the calendar.
- If they are not networked or synched, check your supervisor's calendar daily to verify that both of your calendars contain the same information and that there are no conflicts.

# Summary (cont'd)

- Use the calendar to schedule dedicated blocks of time to work on major projects or reports, or to allocate time for daily or weekly planning session between you and your supervisor.
- Networking software includes a flexible and powerful set of applications that provide the members of an organization with the tools to organize, schedule, and collaborate.
- Access to electronic calendars is always password-protected. Provide details about your scheduling procedures and access to the calendar information to someone else in the office.
- When cancelling an appointment, provide a reason, and offer to reschedule.