

ECG Education & Development

The *Smart Way* to Grow Your **UTILITY EMPLOYEES**

Utility Customer Service

Excellence As A Supervisor | Utility Management | PowerLine Workers | The Basics of Electric Rates



City Manager | Smart Grid | Customer Service | Elected Officials | Economic & Community Development



Presented in association with the Municipal Gas Authority of Georgia. ECG's Leadership Academy is your academic source for educational programs designed specifically for utility enterprise communities.



Utility Customer Service - 2011

ECG's Customer Service Training Program is *customized* for municipal utilities.

Providing municipalities with the necessary skills and resources to provide excellent service to your customer. This program is designed to offer guidance with the unique demands of the utility industry. Customer *satisfaction* is a key component of the overall *success* of your municipal enterprise systems. You will gain insight on *effective* communication skills.

The 2011 Customer Service program provides hands-on participation, role playing exercises, and *practical solutions* to daily dilemmas related to customer interaction. We will explore strategies to become a successful communicator, learn to deal with angry and dissatisfied customers and *improve* internal communication and collaboration. You will discover methods to understand and *connect* with a diverse customer base.

The Customer Service training program is designed to provide *maximum* benefit while limiting time away from your job duties. Divided into two distinct series of classes, our training allows *flexibility* in scheduling and the option of attending individual classes for subject concentration. Upon completion of each series of classes, a Certificate of Completion is presented.



"The ECG Customer Service Series has provided our Customer Service team with invaluable information. The series provides many thought-provoking topics, as well as, specific information that can be used directly with our customers. The individual classes and the series as a whole will help our organization provide our most important service...Customer Service."

- Lynn Williams, Asst. City Manager, City of Thomasville

ABOUT THE INSTRUCTOR

Debra Ballard is a graduate of Mercer University in Macon, GA, with a BA in Business Administration. She began her management career with Knight Ridder Newspapers in 1974. Eight years later, she moved to Atlanta where she served as assistant division manager for ARA Transportation.

After returning to her native Macon, she went to work for a local utility as Customer Service Manager. While working with the utility, Debra was responsible for managing customer service, developing communication plans and working with the area media.

Debra brings a thorough knowledge of the operations of an electric utility. She also conducts training for the U.S. Government, various city and county governments, corporations, chambers of commerce, small businesses and non-profit organizations.

One of Debra's students said:

"I very much enjoyed these classes, they were taught by someone with infinite experience and with a sense of humor that kept it from being boring. I highly recommend this for any employee in the customer service line of work."

Utility Customer Service - 2011

SERIES I & II REGISTRATION

Organization

Attendee Name

Title

Email

Phone

SIMPLE WAYS TO REGISTER

Contact Kim Bearden Blair with registration information

- Email kblair@ecoga.org
- Phone 770.661.2770
- Fax 770.956.1909

PRICING CATEGORIES

*Please select the appropriate pricing category

- ECG Participant / CSG Subscriber – Each Series - \$1,075.00, Individual Class - \$235.00
- ECG Participant / Non – CSG Subscriber – Each Series - \$1,350.00, Individual Class - \$295.00
- Non-ECG Participant - Each Series - \$1,350.00, Individual Class - \$295.00

***Don't forget to complete the following sheet with Series/Module Selection**

PAYMENT POLICY

ECG Participants → All fees will be deducted from the Community Solutions Group subscriptions. If you are a participant of ECG, but do not subscribe to CSG; your fees will be billed as Non-CSG subscribed hours.

Non-ECG Participants → For Non-ECG members, your payment in full is due upon registration. Please make checks payable to **Electric Cities of Georgia, Inc.** and mail registration and check to the following:
Electric Cities of Georgia, Inc.
1470 Riveredge Parkway, NW
Atlanta, GA 30328
Attn: Kim Bearden Blair

CANCELLATION POLICY

If you are unable to attend, substitutions will be permitted up to **one week** prior to the **first** class date with written notification, there will be **no refunds** given. Attendee must attend each of the modules to receive Certificate of Completion. ECG reserves the right to reschedule or cancel any scheduled training class or to replace personnel.

*While ECG has made reasonable efforts to provide quality training services, it makes no representations or warranties of any kind, express or implied, about the completeness, accuracy, reliability, or suitability with respect to any training for any particular purpose. Any reliance you place on such training for a particular purpose is therefore strictly at your own risk. All information and material presented herein are subject to copyrights owned by ECG and other individuals or entities. Any reproduction, retransmission, republication, or other use of all or part of any information found herein is prohibited, unless prior written permission has been granted by ECG or the appropriate copyright owner. Copyright 2010. Electric Cities of Georgia, Inc. All rights reserved.

For information about our programs, or if you have any training needs, please contact us.

Michelle Holbrook - Manager | 770.661.2768 | mholbrook@ecoga.org

WHO SHOULD ATTEND

- › Customer Service Professionals
- › Marketing & Sales Professionals
- › Customer Service Managers
- › Cashiers
- › Billing Clerks
- › Meter Readers

CLASS LOCATIONS

MEAG Forsyth Training Center
148 Powerhouse Road
Forsyth, GA 31029

Thomasville Utilities
326 Fletcher Street
Thomasville, GA 31792
(Tom Berry Bldg.)

CLASS LEVEL

There are no prerequisites or preparation required.

CLASS SCHEDULE

All classes are one-day.
Classes are held from 9:00am to 4:00pm.

**Lunch provided each day.*

Utility Customer Service - 2011

Please list Attendee name and selection of Complete Series or Individual Modules with the desired location.

Attendee Name

Forsyth

Series I Certificate (Includes All 5 Modules)

The ABC's of Effective Customer Communication

Jan 19 An introduction to the basic principles of effective customer communication and customer evaluation of service delivery. Class discussion along with small group exercises in a variety of business related situations. Emphasis on dealing with customers in stressful circumstances.

Using SELF Strategies to Build Effective Customer Service

Feb 16 Trains employees to identify and understand their own behavior patterns and how it effects interactions with customers. Insight into various behavior styles and how to adapt effective styles when relating to customers. Participants will become more aware of how to improve professionalism through the development of improved attitudes and teamwork.

Dealing with Angry and Difficult Customers

Mar 17 Designed for anyone who may find themselves on the receiving end of hostile, aggressive, or manipulative behavior from customers. The module helps employees effectively manage intensely emotional customer interactions. Participants will gain insight into various patterns and dynamics of behavior.

Responding to High Bill Complaints

May 18 In spite of attempts to promote competition, complaints over the cost of residential utility bills continue to increase. This module is designed to look into the phenomenon of "high bill" complaints and the reasons behind them. Emphasis is given to the most effective communication skills to resolve emotional complaints over the increased cost of a utility bill.

Collections and Disconnections

Jun 16 Collecting past due debts is time-consuming, stressful and subtracts from overall productivity. Designed to assist utility service personnel in collecting with a maximum ROI and minimum hassle while remaining within compliance rules and regulations. This module presents tips and techniques to increase the effectiveness of communication regarding cut-offs and past due collections.

Forsyth

Series II Certificate (Includes All 5 Modules)

Controlling Stress and Emotions to Make Better Decisions

Jul 21 Few would argue that life and work are hard enough without complications surrounding self-defeating habits. This module will help participants understand how to stay focused on work and personal goals, while ups and downs occur. Participants will learn to develop personal flexibility to deal with uncertainty and to find meaning in what they are doing.

Improved Customer Service by Phone

Aug 17 Through class discussion and interactive exercises, participants will develop and enhance their skills for dealing with customers over the phone in scenarios such as product sales, service connects, disconnects, technical support, and billing concerns. These skills serve to enhance the performance of all employees that interact with customers with an end result of reduced stress and improved customer satisfaction.

The 9 Most Misunderstood Things We Say to Our Customers

Sep 14 Learning to communicate effectively with customers can sometimes be like walking on eggshells due to the sensitive nature of some business transactions, such as overdue payments or perceived billing errors. This module focuses on the most frequent communication gaffes committed by utility personnel, and how to alter a customer's negative interpretation.

Improving Internal Communication and Cooperation

Oct 19 The impact of cost controls, business process dynamics, and higher expectations by customers challenge organizations to perform at higher levels of productivity, which result in an even greater necessity for improving interdepartmental cooperation and teamwork. This module is designed to introduce participants the importance of internal customer service and the effect on the external.

Serving the Diverse Customer Base

Nov 16 The second most common spoken language is Spanish – can you communicate effectively? This module is designed to provide an introduction as a means of helping develop the skills necessary to provide enhanced service to the Hispanic customer. This highly interactive, utility-specific module focuses on specific scenarios, basic conversation and proper pronunciation.