

## DRIVING A CULTURE OF CUSTOMER CARE IN THE TRANSPORT SECTOR: THE VEOLIA TRANSPORT EXAMPLE



Global'Ease developed a unique program for Veolia Transport, branded under the name of *Going for Green*, to drive a culture of Customer Care in public transportation networks. In 2011, more than 15,000 employees were trained by 150+ certified internal trainers in 12 countries including the USA.

While the operations were diverse (bus, rail, light-rail, BRT and metro), the results of *Going for Green* were consistent: *a measured decrease in Customer complaints and increase in Customer Satisfaction*. In addition to that, operations recorded an increase in staff motivation and a real enthusiasm for the approach and training that supports it.

The table below presents some of the following results the deployment of the *Going for Green* program.

	↓ Decrease in Customer Complaints	↑ Increase in Customer Satisfaction	↑ Staff motivation has increased	↑ High staff satisfaction in G4G training
Ireland Dublin light rail	-40% in general complaints	+16 points on Customer Service Officers	Turnover less than expected	84% staff believe they can make a difference
Germany NOB rail system	-44% in overall complaints	+9 points on overall customer satisfaction	Service staff sickness decreased by 2,7 points (-30%)	93% staff increased their skills in case of challenging situations
Sweden Stockholm metro	-49% in general complaints	+39% in praise		
USA Las Vegas BRT and bus system	-34% on operator attitudes -44% on lateness		Decrease in disciplinary reports	97% staff rated the program highly applicable
USA Denver bus system		90% customers say drivers do their best to find a solution		
France Nancy suburban bus system		+10% on overall quality of service	Increased staff motivation	95% staff rated the program excellent

**Going for Green is an integrated approach that includes training and activities to drive a spirit of customer service at all levels of the company.** Training modules include a Core Module built around situations from making a positive first impression to deflecting verbal abuse and handling outraged passengers. Supervisor modules, refresher modules and specialised conflict-resolution tools are also available, each with a complete trainer and learner kits.

The measurements related to specific programs within *Going for Green* also show positive results. In Ireland, Dublin light rail was the pilot for the LISTEN program on welcoming Customer Feedback (questions, concerns and complaints) in January 2009. **Every member of the Customer Care Centre team (call center) was trained to read and answer letters, provide a friendly telephone service. In the most recent Customer Satisfaction Survey in April 2009, the Customer rating of “very satisfied” for this time rose from 59% to 78%. In the first quarter of 2011, a refresher module was delivered to all staff. In a Mystery Shopper survey that followed, The Customer Care Centre achieved 99% satisfaction, up from 89%, and for the rest of the staff, a very positive 96%!**

While measurement tools are an integral part of the *Going for Green* program, results have been appreciated in more personal ways. Within 48 hours of the first employee training sessions in Auckland, a glowing letter from a passenger was received and shared with the staff there. And within a few months, the Auckland train network recorded more letters of commendations than letters of complaints! Most appreciated of all, it is the recognition that passengers return to the employees that contributes to the on-going, virtuous cycle of confidence that moves the transit companies, their employees and Customers forward.

## INDUSTRY RECOGNITION

- **National Training Award** winner 2011, delivered by the *Irish Institute of Training and Development*, to LUAS light rail transit system in Dublin
  - Best practice showcased in the **HRD Ireland Best practice & Innovation in HRD leading to Performance Improvement** conference on 29 Nov 2011
- Best practice case study (the Auckland train experience) in the **Stock take of customer service training in the passenger transport sector** commissioned by the *New Zealand Transport Agency*, Dec 2010
- Feature case study for innovation in *TTF Australia* (Tourism and Transport Forum)’s study: **Improving your commute – Lifting customer service in Public Transport**, July 2011
- Full case study (based on experience in the Netherlands) in the **Managing risks to drivers in road transport, Working Environment Information Working Paper**, published by the *European Agency for Safety and Health at Work* in 2011.
  - Cited as an example for driver involvement, for diversity and for combating aggression and violence through training

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