



Nottingham Playhouse

The Perfect Team....?

# Nottingham Playhouse



- Welcome
- The old team and where we were
- History of Nottingham Playhouse customer service strategy
- Training and Coaching
- The new team
- Monitoring
- When we won
- Where we are now
- The future!

# The Old Team



- Existing staff welcoming towards customers
  - However weren't willing to be sales people
  - Product knowledge not high
  - 'We know best' attitude
  - However, customer recognition high
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- Team of familiar faces to our regular attendees
  - Upward management of Duty Managers - but not willing to take responsibility when needed.
  - Box office great at selling, but didn't up-sell
  - Catering franchise with standards different to our way of thinking which initially caused friction

# The History of Platinum Playhouse

- Getting all customer facing staff together for brainstorming sessions
- Working with facilitator (board member with experience in this area)
- Ensuring Senior Management buy in and support
- Recognised areas in which improvements could be made / bringing down barriers.
- Set up of working group including all departmental managers, Head of Finance and Administration, Head of Marketing but also representatives from Box Office, Front of House and Catering – the doers

# Cont/d



- Identify problems and work out solutions – devise timeline for these
- Identify training needs
- Benchmarking - setting targets e.g. programme sales, box office targets, membership, speed of service, quality of information given
- Goal in year one to be nominated for Most Welcoming Theatre award (which we did – more to follow!)
- Compiling, in conjunction with the customer service team **PLATINUM PLAYHOUSE**
- Holistic, organic document. Engages all departments and also grows with the challenges year on year.

# Training



Time to train – splitting into groups, sessions over a number of weeks

Keeping role play to a minimum – keeping training to the pertinent information

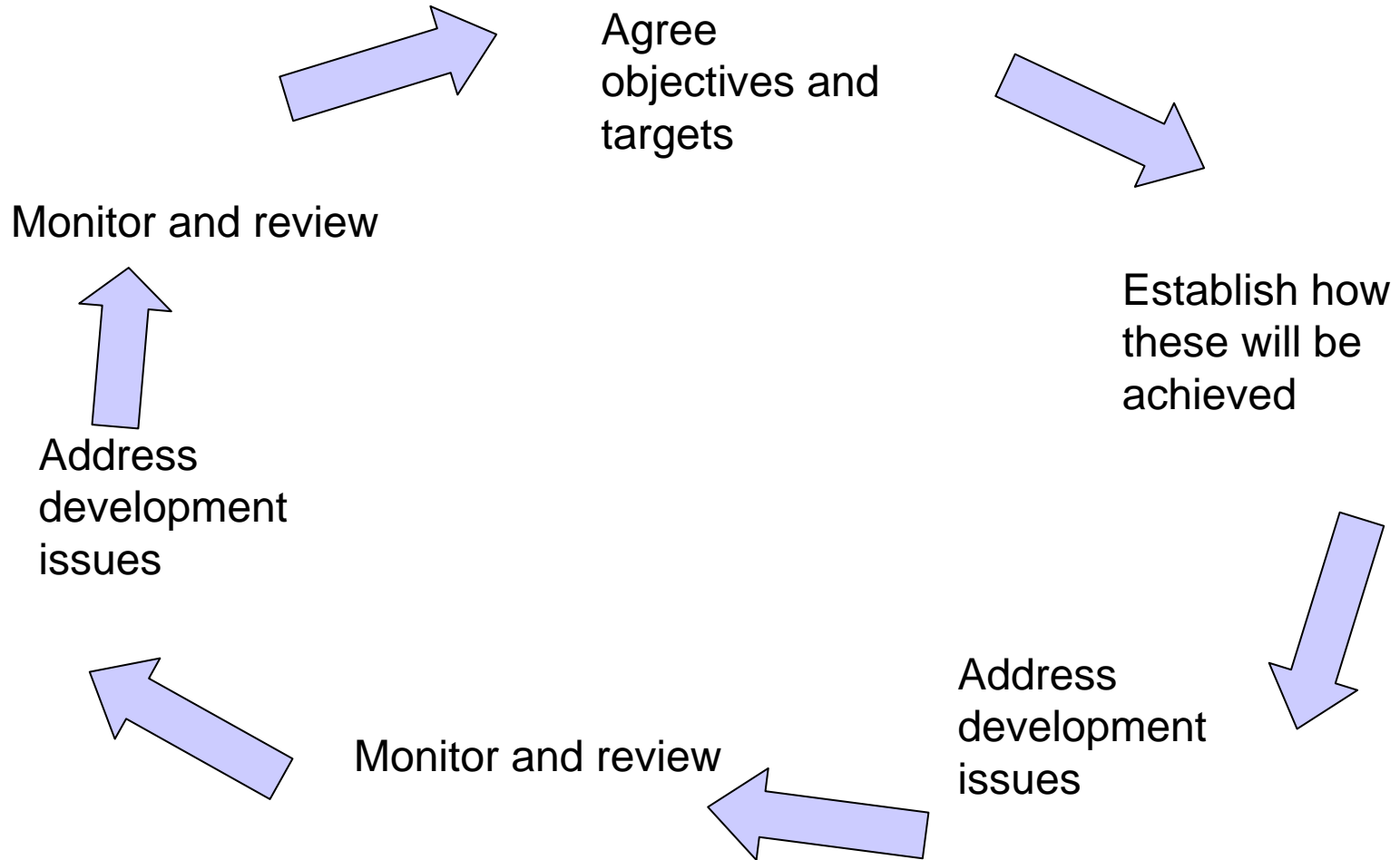
# Cont/d

- Welcoming – positioning of staff. Ensuring that no matter who you see the first time you enter the building you get the same level of service.
- Looking outwards – making sure staff are chatting to each other, ready to face customers, looking for ‘lost sheep’, not using ‘can I help you’ as a challenge but a genuine offer
- Looking speedy – being efficient and business like but also spending enough time with each customer. Offering choices and suggestions, bringing personality into transactions – e.g. “I like to sit ...”
- Ensuring high product knowledge – getting staff to see read thoughts, runs, dress rehearsals wherever possible. For visiting work, go to theatres on the tour before our venue if possible.
- Recognition – being aware of those familiar faces, also being welcoming to new attenders. Ensuring everyone is looked after e.g. group bookings, very easy to forget that although we only have one name and address for the group, it is made up on many individuals who each have their own requirements

# Choosing a coaching approach

- Managers may need to adopt different approaches depending on the circumstances
- “Managing” (POMCE) isn’t enough to manage and optimise the performance of human beings – they are too complex and messy
- Knowing when, how and where are the key challenges.
  - Training the trainer
  - Ensuring knowledge was not lost
  - Cascading information
  - Keeping training materials and going through them with new members of staff.
  - Platinum Playhouse issued with all new contracts

# Personal Appraisal



# The New Team



- Some of the old team found they couldn't become proactive. Led to many people leaving – a shame
- Team took on a new dynamic – slightly younger, funkier individuals who were not only passionate about the arts but were also customer focussed
- Took training on board and were keen to try out new initiatives / ways of working
- Regular catch up meetings, season's briefings, in-house training sessions
- Sense of value established within organisation – well respected, proactive, communicative individuals

# The New Team



- Regular Operations meetings with Box Office, Front of House and Catering management
- New members of staff recruited with all aspects of the new customer service operation in mind.
- Great to have staff who are passionate about the arts, but also must have relevant dynamic skill set including sales, front line customer service work
- Developed further by taking on board volunteers through various schemes
- Still the problem of catering being a franchise and not directly reportable to us – getting their buy in via management difficult – still the area we need to work on the most

# The New Team



# Monitoring



- Qualitative and quantitative
- Feedback book / cards (not effective)
- Questionnaires – not focussing on the show, but on speed and quality of service from the three customer facing departments
- Targets, financial (shows, programmes, memberships), quality (meals, service at the bar, level of information given by Box Office)
- Mystery shopper exercises
- Feedback sessions with staff
- Focus groups with customers

# When we WON!!!



- Application sent in for the first year, based on the development of Platinum Playhouse, focussing also on the excellence of the staff.
- Buy in from the staff had been exceptional
- Everyone tried hard, and worked together as one team
- Fantastic effort – pipped at the post
- Next two years – solid hard work
- Application for 2007 based on improvements made since Platinum Playhouse had kicked in

# Cont/d

- Very low staff turnover – most members of staff the same, quite rare for Box Office / Front of House teams
- New staff fitted in well and adopted all aspects of Platinum Playhouse
- Nomination for 2007 for Most Welcoming Theatre – against Unicorn Theatre and Oxford Playhouse
- WE WON!
- Also nominated for Team of the Year – Nottinghamshire STARS awards – had to rush back from London for black tie do at local posh stately home
- Recognised for an innovative and dedicated approach to customer service across the organisation



# Where are we now?



- Staff continuing to work well together
- Results from Customer Satisfaction surveys consistent and rising in areas where action needed to be taken
- Regular team meetings / briefing sessions
- Nominated again for 2008 Most Welcoming Theatre, this time just missing out to the Millennium Centre
- Fantastic effort – three nominations in four years, including a win!
- Participation in ArtsQuest to identify areas in which we are doing well / not doing so well
- Incorporate findings into Platinum Playhouse – sending timescale for these areas to be worked upon
- Develop skills internally – identifying training needs

# The Future



- Ensuring Nottingham Playhouse delivers world class customer service alongside its innovative programming
- Ensuring visitors feel they have made the right choice in a visit to NP
- Maximising satisfaction across all areas. Going the extra mile to ensure all customer requirements are met
- Further training, access issues, development of other performing spaces, new CRM system – exciting times and developments to be had.