
MWR MANAGERS' OPERATIONS GUIDE

Create and Maintain a Focused Program Image

DO THIS TASK WHEN

- Working on initiatives to achieve extraordinary customer service.
 - Working to change how your customers perceive your current FFR Program.
 - Trying to increase usage/business in your Program.
 - You have outgrown an image that was appropriate a few years ago.
 - The size/scope of your Program has changed as a result of down-sizing, regionalization, competitive sourcing, reorganization, re-invention or growth.
 - You have changed (or are preparing to change) location, facilities, etc., including significant renovations.
 - You, your staff and your customers are confused about the purpose, vision, mission, goals and objectives of your Program.
 - You and your immediate supervisor and other senior FFR leaders believe (or sense) that your Program is in a rut and could profit by an updated or more focused identity.
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REFERENCES

- Improving Your Company Image, Silvia Ann Blishak, Crisp Publications, Inc., Menlo Park, CA, 1992.
 - Star Service Training, FFR Training Branch.
 - Fabled Service, Betsy Sanders, Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco, CA, 1995.
 - Raving Fans, Ken Blanchard and Sheldon Bowles, William Morrow & Co., Inc., New York, NY, 1993.
 - Knock Your Socks Off Service, (the series), Ron Zemke, (et.al.), American Management Association (AMACOM), New York, NY, 1998.
 - What Every Supervisor Should Know, Lester Bittel and John Newstrom, McGraw Hill, New York, NY, 1990.
 - Maximizing Golf Shop Profits Workshop©, Kathy Talbot Denton, Education, Training, and Consulting (E.T.C.), Inc., San Antonio, TX, 1995.
 - Softlines Merchandise Presentation Standards, Army & Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES), Human Development and Training Division, Dallas, TX.
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**SUPPLIES/
RESOURCES**

- The results from accomplishing Ensure Merchandising Effectiveness
- Current FFR customer survey and similar assessment data indicating your customers' preferences, wants, needs, priorities, opinions and expectations (Customer Oriented Service Improvement data)
- Current demographic, cultural, generational, educational, experiential, attitudinal, beliefs and values information about your customers
- Current performance data (e.g., financial data, customer/participation numbers, customer satisfaction scores, etc.)
- Your MWR Managers' Operations Guide and all reposed resources, links, training, etc.
- Staff members who possess the skill, knowledge, ability, and commitment to meet/exceed your customers' needs and expectations.
- A clean, attractive and safe environment (facilities, grounds and machinery/vehicles) necessary and appropriate for the delivery of extraordinary FFR Program activities, events, products and services
- Quality equipment and "just-in-time" supplies and merchandise in sufficient quantities for you and your staff to deliver extraordinary FFR Program activities, events, products and services

**SUPPLIES/
RESOURCES
(cont.)**

- FFR Program vision, mission, goals and guiding principles that define how you and your staff will meet and exceed your customers' needs and expectations
 - Applicable Navy customer service training for all FFR managers and staff
 - Computer and survey software
 - Typical office supplies and equipment
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**THIS TASK
IS DONE
CORRECTLY
WHEN**

- You have a written description of how your Program is unique as compared to others that do the same or similar things.
 - You, your staff and your Program's physical environment project a unifying identity that reflects the vision, mission, personality and goals of your Program, the FFR Department and senior management.
 - Your internal and external customers' *first* impression is a positive and memorable one.
 - Your internal and external customers' *enduring* impression of your Program is positive.
 - Your internal and external customers' impression and perception of your Program align with your Program's guiding principles, beliefs, ethics and values.
 - Your customers' expectations of your Program align with what your Program actually does.
 - The experience you and your staff provides exceeds the expectations of your customers
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NOTES

Your Program's/business' "image" is the result of:

- Everything you and your staff say and do, and how each of you behaves in each and every customer interaction.
- The value, effectiveness and professionalism of each of your Program's activities, events, products and services.
- The convenience, functionality, appearance and locality of your facilities, grounds, equipment, vehicles, supplies, and merchandise.
- The effectiveness of your:
 - Merchandising
 - Advertising
 - Promotions
 - Publicity
 - Public relations
- The skill, knowledge, capabilities, competence, confidence, tact and manners used on the job by you and each of your staff.
- Everything you and your staff do to satisfy your customers and provide a pleasant experience.
- The apparent joy and willingness of each of your staff members to consistently, fairly and professionally serve all customers.
- Service recovery process, staff development, delegation and authority to resolve customers' issues and respond to complaints.
- Fair and reasonable fees, prices and/or charges for your activities, events, products or services provided.
- **Consistency -- doing what you say you will do, every time!**

This task is not just about the invention of a new name, spiffy decor, matching uniforms, clever slogans, an advertising campaign or updated signage, although these are all important aspects of your image.

It is about the total experience – the view of the exterior and interior, what you and your staff say, how you and your staff

behave, the smell of a clean facility – that create impressions. It is the sum of your consistent internal and external customer service impressions that establish, demonstrate and sustain your image.

This task will ask you to examine your current image and challenge you to thoroughly define your Program and staff.

Using applicable tasks in your MWR Manager's Operations Guide you will develop a plan of action to improve or sustain your Program's image.

Your Program's image is how you are perceived and are remembered by your customers. Your image is created and maintained, in part, by having and/or accomplishing the following:

- Professional and committed management and staff
- Customer service training and processes that achieve and reward extraordinary customer service results
- Attractive, clean and well-maintained facilities, equipment, vehicles and grounds
- Quality and appropriate activities, events, supplies, products, and merchandise
- A reputation for value pricing.
- An effective marketing plan that includes:
 - Customer needs/assessments
 - Measurable goals
 - Merchandising
 - Advertising, promotion, publicity (news), and public relations
 - After-action reports (ROI, lessons learned, best practices, etc.)

Maintaining a positive image and providing “Fabled,” “Knock-Your-Socks-Off,” “Raving Fan,” and “Dazzling” customer service results in attracting and retaining customers and in receiving their loyalty to your Program.

Customer loyalty is demonstrated by repeat sales or usage, and in their willingness to tell their family, friends, colleagues and even casual acquaintances about you and your Program.

**NOTES
(cont.)**

A less-than-positive image will:

- Work against your vision, mission, guiding principles, goals and objectives.
- Cost you your customers' goodwill and their willingness to talk positively about your Program.
- Cause some customers to actually find joy in hurting your reputation.

This task will:

1. Ask you to examine the image of other businesses and Programs.
2. Examine your own Program image through your eyes and the eyes of others.
3. Describe the image you want your business to project.
4. Develop and implement a plan of action to achieve this new image.

A great image comes from a great imagination, teamwork, effort, time, willingness to change and individual flexibility!

So, let's get to it!

PROCEDURE

Step 1 Examine the image of other businesses.

- ☐ Before going to the location, review the business' website/social media.
 - What image does the business project?
 - Can you tell what the business sells or what service(s) it provides?
 - Where is it located?
 - What days and hours does it operate? Are these convenient hours?
 - Is this an option to contact the business, ask questions, etc.?
 - What is the business promoting currently?
- ☐ Take one or two of your staff members or other FFR Program colleagues, so you can discuss what you see and don't see.
- ☐ At each place you visit, study the following:
 - What is your first impression as you approach and enter the business?
 - Before you enter the store, can you tell what the business sells or what service(s) it provides? Was it easy to find (directional/external signage)?
 - Is the information on the website/social media correct regarding location and days/hours of operation?
 - Does this location seem convenient and safe?
 - When you entered the business, were you greeted/acknowledged? Do you feel welcome?
 - How does the décor and design look? Size, shape and arrangement of signs?
 - Is the facility clean? How does it smell? What sounds (music, noise, etc.) are present?
 - If this is a self-serve type business, look for a few things: Are items easy to locate? Did a staff member quickly offer to assist?
 - Does the in-store promotion align to information on the website?
 - Does its advertising and products/services match?
 - Is the pricing clear? Does the pricing seem competitive? Does it use "loss-leader" promotions?
 - Without being too obtrusive, introduce yourself and your purpose and ask one or several customers/clients how often they use the business and why.
 - Talk with their staff. What is your reaction? Are they well mannered, considerate, articulate, knowledgeable, and professional? Are they clean, neat, well groomed, in a uniform?
 - If this is not a competitor, ask one or more of the managers or the owner/operator how they see themselves. How do they project the business' image? What publicity/public relations initiatives do they use?
 - How and where do they advertise? What media? How often? Is it effective?
 - What is your impression as you leave the business? If you were a customer, and this wasn't the only business of its kind, would you return? Why or why not? Were you "thanked" and/or invited back?
 - What would you tell others about this business?
 - Call the business and ask for assistance. What impression did you form from the call? Did it match impressions you had from your visit?

Step 2 Consider the image that pops into your mind when you think of major local and national/international businesses.

- ☐ Discuss with your team and colleagues what “image” comes to mind when you think of these various businesses? What constitutes the images of their various businesses?

NOTE: You don’t need to discuss each of these. This list is just to “prime the image discussion pump”.

- K-Mart, Walmart, Target, etc.
- Sears, JC Penny, etc.
- Bloomingdale’s, Macy, Nordstrom, etc.
- McDonalds, Burger King, KFC, Chick-Fil-A, etc.
- Bell South, AT&T, Sprint, Verizon, etc.
- Ford, GM, Honda, Nissan, Toyota, Volvo, Mercedes, BMW, etc.
- Delta, United, Southwest Airlines, etc.
- Kroger, Whole Foods, Trader Joes, etc.
- Izod, Gant, Ashworth, Polo, Van Heusen, Arrow, etc.
- US Postal Service, FedEx, UPS, etc.
- Shell, EXXON, Texaco, AMOCO, Citgo, BP, etc.
- Roadway, Atlas Van Lines, Yellow Freight Lines, etc.

- ☐ What image came to mind? Why? What has the business or organization done to achieve this image? How do they sustain it?

If you have used the products or services of one of these businesses or organizations, does its image match the actual products and/or services? Why or why not?

What is it about these businesses or organizations that have helped them sustain significant market share or lose market share over the years?

Step 3 Using the outcomes of Steps 1 and 2, decide which image issues are important to your Program and to you, your staff and to the FFR Department, command and the Navy.

<p>NOTE: Resist the urge to check each of these image elements. While it would be great to integrate all of these and perhaps be “perfect,” it is probably not very realistic.</p>

- ☐ Honesty, integrity, decency and fairness
- ☐ Consistency, dependability and reliability: Doing what you say you will do, every time!
- ☐ Manners, protocol and professionalism
- ☐ Fun and the apparent joy and willingness of your staff to consistently, fairly, appropriately and professionally serve each of your customers
- ☐ Extraordinary customer service
- ☐ Keep promises
- ☐ Meet/exceed your customers' expectations
- ☐ Value. Fair and reasonable fees, prices and/or charges for your activities, events, products and/or services
- ☐ Quality activities, events, products and services
- ☐ Product knowledge (lines, features and benefits)
- ☐ Adhere to rules, regulations, policies, practices and procedures
- ☐ Service recovery: Process, staff development, delegation and authority to resolve customers' issues and respond to complaints
- ☐ Attractive and modern facilities
- ☐ Appearance, safety and cleanliness of your Program's facilities, grounds, equipment, vehicles, supplies and merchandise
- ☐ Unique, focused, identifying and memorable business name, slogan, trademark, logo, mascot, etc., aligned with your Program's vision, mission and guiding principles
- ☐ Convenient location
- ☐ An effective marketing plan
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Step 4 Gather information about your Program's *current* image.

NOTE: Every FFR Program, like every business or organization, projects its own unique image. You may not have consciously planned it or given it much thought, or just the opposite – you may have planned it and created an image that attracts and retains customers.

- ☐ Ask your customers and others about their first impressions.

NOTE: According to studies, first impressions are formed within as little as five seconds. And many of these initial impressions about your Program's activities, events, products and services are lasting ones.

Negative first impressions create a poor image and can permanently alienate your customers. Positive first impressions create a good image and may predispose your customers to overlook minor problems.

- ☐ Ensure your Program is not giving your customers mixed/wrong messages.

For example:

- Having an upscale atmosphere, decor and equipment, and then serving products with plastic baskets and plastic ware
- Serving meatloaf, mashed potatoes, gravy, hot roast beef sandwiches and similar “comfort foods” on fine china by formally attired wait staff
- Selling an upscale catering menu out of your snack bar
- Appearing to focus **only** on profit rather than **value** and **benefits**
- Running a major promotion or publicity campaign that over promises activities, events, products and services that you cannot deliver/sustain

- ☐ Ask your colleagues from other Programs to be “secret shoppers.”
- Have them use your Program and comment on its “face-to-face” image.

**Step 4
(cont.)**

- Ask them to call your Program on the telephone to request information and services. Ask for their comments on the telephone image presented.
- Ask them to go to your Program's website/social media and review the information. Ask for their comments on presentation, ease of use, thoroughness of information and accuracy of information.

- ☐ Look for misalignments between what your Program promises, your customers' expectations, and what your Program actually does, provides and/or practices.

The areas to examine include:

- All your Program's activities, events, products and services
- The appearance, safety and cleanliness of your Program's facilities, grounds equipment, vehicles, supplies and merchandise
- Your Program's implementation of the marketing plan
- Your pricing/perceived value
- Your customer service

- ☐ Make copies of the worksheets available at the end of this task.

- ☐ Ask your customers, gatekeepers, other Program managers and your senior leadership about their observations, perceptions and opinions of the following image elements:
- Program recognition elements
 - Customer first impressions
 - Customer service specifics
 - Staff and management behavior with internal and external customers
 - Staff and management appearance
 - Activities, events, products, services (meeting customer needs)
 - Merchandise, if applicable
 - Equipment, machinery, supplies and vehicles
 - Marketing (advertising, promotions, publicity and public relations)
 - Fees, prices and charges (value and benefits)
 - Keeping promises and customer service recovery
 - Face-to-face, telephone and website/social media communications
 - Misalignments between what your Program promises, your customers expect and what your Program actually provides.

Step 5 Write a description of an ideal image that uniquely and specifically identifies your Program. (See example description at the end of the task)

NOTE: Remember: A positive image communicates a clear message about the personality of your Program and why your activities, events, products and services are special.

- ☐ Involve your staff in the development of your ideal image to enlist their support, ensure accomplishment and create a powerful force for building and sustaining a positive image.
- ☐ Ensure your image includes the elements you checked in Step 3.
- ☐ Ensure your image uniquely and specifically identifies your Program from what others do or offer.
- ☐ Ensure your image serves as a screening device as well as a promoting/advertising device. This will save you and your customers time by identifying and appealing to your Program's limited segment of the market and discouraging unrelated business inquiries. (Remember: Your Program cannot be all things to all people.)
- ☐ Include the use of a name, logos, mascots, and slogans that identify, support and promote your Program and its image.

NOTE: These Program-identification elements make it easier for customers to identify/differentiate your business and let your customers know what you do.

Example: Which names are better at telling customers what you do? Eagle's Nest or Eagle's Nest Golf Course? The Landings or The Landings Family Restaurant?

**Step 5
(cont.)**

- ☐ Describe your staff dress code/uniforms and grooming standards.

NOTE: Staff appearance, clothing, grooming and uniform items significantly contribute to a positive business image. You and your staff should determine what dress codes, grooming standards and uniform items enhance the image of your Program.

- ☐ Detail your communication standards.

NOTE: Staff members should have a similar telephone greeting, which states a greeting (good morning/good afternoon), business name, staff member name and an offer of help. Also, impressions are tarnished when the call is not answered promptly; the caller is put on hold for an extended time; cut off; answered by an indifferent person; told “no” too often; not getting answers or being passed on to another staff member; receiving outdated or inaccurate information, etc. **Your Program’s telephone image is vitally important to your success.**

Step 6

Prepare a plan to implement your new/enhanced image.

NOTE: Now that you know your ideal image and your current image, identify what changes are needed to close the gap.

These changes might involve your current culture and traditions. You may need to change your policies, procedures and practices. You may also need to change your Program’s activities, events, products, services or your customer service behaviors.

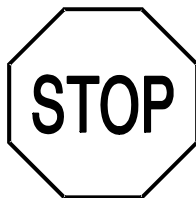
- ☐ Work with your staff to identify what changes are needed to close this gap. Allowing staff members to be involved gives them ownership of the changes.
- ☐ Ensure you and your staff brainstorm, evaluate and prioritize ways to implement these ideas.

Step 7 Record your image improvement plans/initiatives in whatever planning documents you use.

- Program goals and objectives
- Short/long-term (five-year) program management plan
- Daily things-to-do list
- Tickler files/database
- Detailed activity plans
- Post results (customer usage, financial trends, customer comment cards, etc.) on a bulletin board in the break room, lunchroom, etc. to reinforce positive changes. Talk about positive changes in staff meetings, etc.

Step 8 Observe and coach your staff to ensure their skill/knowledge, abilities, attitudes and behaviors support your Program's image.

- ☐ Every member of your staff presents a clean, neat, well and professionally groomed and properly attired image.
- ☐ Every member of your staff presents an informed, helpful, willing, articulate, good natured, pleasant, caring, friendly and well-mannered image.
- ☐ Provide constructive feedback and reinforce good behavior.



Congratulations! You've completed this task.

CURRENT IMAGE WORKSHEET	
Ask your customers, gatekeepers, other Program managers, and your senior leadership about their observations, perceptions, and opinions of the following image elements:	
1.	Program recognition (name, slogans, logo, mascot, etc.)
2.	First impressions
3.	Customer service specifics
4.	Staff and management behavior with internal and external customers
5.	Staff and management appearance
6.	Activities, events, products and services (meeting customer needs)

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CURRENT IMAGE WORKSHEET	
7.	Merchandise, if applicable
8.	Facility, grounds, equipment, machinery, vehicles and supplies
9.	Signage (directional, external and internal)
10.	Marketing plan
11.	Fees, prices and charges (value and benefits)
12.	Keeping promises/customer service recovery

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CURRENT IMAGE WORKSHEET	
13.	Mixed/wrong messages
14.	Misalignments between what your Program promises, your customers' expectations, and what your Program actually does, provides, and/or practices
15.	Colleague's and immediate supervisor's comments on your "face-to-face" image
16.	Colleague's and immediate supervisor's comments on your "telephone" image

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EXAMPLE IMAGE DESCRIPTION

Our image goal is to be our customers #1 choice for their ... (whatever). After meeting, our managers, supervisors, staff, and key members from the command, and selected customers identified and decided to focus our "image" improvement efforts on the following:

1. Demonstrating that we are professional and committed

- Indicators:
- Staff members are knowledgeable, trained, informed, friendly, and empowered to solve customers' problems and answer complaints.
 - Staff appears clean and well groomed and wears appropriate dress/uniform.

2. Providing extraordinary customer service and relations

- Indicators:
- Staff members call customers by name and acknowledge/greet promptly.
 - Staff members exhibit observable fun, joy, care, willingness to help and serve others, and appropriate business protocol and manners.
 - Staff members use the Human/Business Model.
 - Customers praise the Program.
 - The Program receives high customer satisfaction scores.

3. Providing superior, top-quality activities, events, products and services

- Indicators:
- All activities, events, products and services are designed/selected based on customer input/needs data.
 - All activities, events, products and services are provided/delivered so as to meet/exceed our customers' needs, wants, expectations and perceptions.
 - Our systems, procedures, processes, policies, habits, and our culture are designed to be "customer-friendly" and "policy-transparent".
 - Our activities, events, products and services are comparable to like items in the private sector for similar target audiences.
 - Our activities, events, products and services are reported by our customers as providing both VALUE and WORTH.

EXAMPLE IMAGE DESCRIPTION

4. Ensuring that we have and maintain attractive facilities, equipment, machinery, and supplies

- Indicators:
- We maintain clean and sanitary facilities as indicated by the highest marks/averages on safety and sanitation inspections.
 - We maintain our equipment, machinery and facilities to minimize “Out-of-Order” conditions.
 - Customers comment on their “positive” first and continuing “good” impression.
 - Minimal or no negative remarks from our customers about the facilities, equipment, machinery, and supplies.

5. Be perceived as providing customer value and worth

- Indicators:
- Repeat business and customer loyalty.
 - Customers tell others about the Program.
 - Minimal or no complaints about pricing.
 - Customer comment cards rate “HIGH” overall satisfaction.

6. Providing effective advertising, promotion, publicity, and public relations

- Indicators:
- Activities, events, products, and services appropriate to the target audience(s).
 - Customer expectations are created by advertising and promotions.
 - Usage/sales high/increasing.
 - Advertising and promotions are consistent with actual delivery.
 - Advertising/promotion timely so that customers can “PLAN” their recreation/FB&E experiences well in advance.