

---

**For Information**

---

**REPORT TITLE: Customer Service Week 2023**

**FROM:** Davinder Valeri, Chief Financial Officer and Commissioner of Corporate Services

---

**OBJECTIVE**

To share Peel Region's customer service framework and measurement results as we recognize and celebrate Customer Service Week 2023.

**REPORT HIGHLIGHTS**

- Customer Service Week is celebrated globally on the first week of October every year. We thank and celebrate Peel employees through both an internal and external campaign that runs throughout the month.
  - Peel Region's Service Experience Strategy created a framework that allows us to consistently meet customer expectations and includes customer understanding, standards, and measurement.
  - We will continue to strengthen our customer-centric culture by developing an inclusive customer service training program, to be delivered to all customer-facing employees starting in 2024.
  - Continuing to deliver services with the level of customer service that Peel residents expect is critical to maintaining trust through the transition.
  - Our employees are proud of the work they do and want to provide the best possible experience to our customers, every day.
- 

**DISCUSSION**

**1. Background**

Customer service matters: it's not just a nice to have. It's the number one driver of trust and confidence for Peel residents (Advanis, 2022). Seventy-four per cent of Canadians say that customer service is the most impactful way organizations can improve their interaction (Gartner, 2023) and 87 per cent say that a great customer experience improves their degree of trust in government (BCG, 2021). That's why Peel has a coordinated and intentional approach to customer experience through our Service Experience Strategy. This commitment to excellence in service delivery is deeply embedded within the culture of Peel. Customer Service Week is one way we celebrate our achievements and recognize our employees who serve and support customers every day.

Customer Service Week is celebrated globally on the first week of October every year. This year's theme is "Team Service". It's an important reminder that no matter where employees

## **Customer Service Week 2023**

are working, what their job titles are, or how they serve customers (directly or indirectly), everyone is on the same team. As part of our recognition of Customer Service Week, we are sharing an overview of our approach to customer experience at Peel, including our recent performance results.

### **2. Our Customer Service Framework and Performance**

Established as part of the 2018-2022 Term of Council Priority, Improve Service and Confidence, Peel's Service Experience Strategy created a framework that allows us to consistently meet customer expectations. It includes customer understanding, standards, and measurement. An overview of each component, as well as current performance and recent highlights, follows:

#### **a) Customer Understanding**

The residents, clients, tenants, and businesses of Peel are our customers. Before we set standards or measure performance, we need to understand their needs and expectations throughout their journey. We conduct customer understanding and listening activities to gain insights, including:

##### **i) Public engagement**

This year we launched [peelregion.ca/engage](https://peelregion.ca/engage) to bring together activities that inform, consult, involve, and collaborate with the public. Customers can also join an email list to be notified of new feedback and engagement activities. 2,137 residents have signed up since February and they're interested in participating: emails sent to this list have a 60 per cent open rate. The public sector average is 29 per cent.

##### **ii) Surveys, focus groups, and journey mapping**

We talk to our customers before we make decisions about service delivery. We use surveys, focus groups, and journey mapping sessions to dig deeper into how Peel residents find, access, and use our services. Rather than setting service standards based on what we think customers want, we ask them. We received feedback from over 7,500 customers prior to updating our standards this year.

#### **b) Customer Service Standards**

Once we know our customers' expectations, we can define the level of service they can expect from us and the experience we promise to deliver. We put that into policy and share it with employees and customers. The two policies that directly affect customer service are our Service Commitment and Service Standards.

##### **i) Service Commitment**

Our Service Commitment is a statement that tells customers what to expect when they receive service from us. It both defines the experience we want our customers to have and guides the activities and decision making of employee. It was updated last year after extensive employee and customer engagement. It's posted at every service location, online, and in multiple languages. Our Service Commitment tells customers that, no matter how they contact us, they will:

- Easily find what you need.
- Receive a timely response.
- Be treated with dignity, respect, and care.

## Customer Service Week 2023

- Receive simple and clear communication.
- Be assisted by professional, knowledgeable, and helpful employees.

We regularly measure if we're living up to this commitment. In 2022, 83 per cent of residents agreed that our commitment meets their expectations (2022 Service Experience and Client Satisfaction survey).

### ii) **Service Standards**

Service standards outline the minimum level of service we will provide our customers when they contact us (via phone, email, chat, in person, and on social media). They're an important part of delivering an accessible, inclusive, and consistent experience that meets customer expectations. Peel's Service Standards are reviewed every year and are set to balance the level of service our customers expect with what we can deliver, given our resources. The last update was in May 2023. Our service targets are:

- Answering phone calls to our contact centres within 3 minutes.
- Answering live chat sessions within one minute.
- Responding to social media requests within one hour.
- Replying to emails within 2 business days.
- Acknowledging customers at counter customers in a timely manner.

As of August, we are achieving the targets for social media, email, and counter. Phone and live chat results are not yet meeting the standard.

### c) **Customer Satisfaction Measurement**

To understand and improve the customer service experience, we need to be able to measure it. Measuring performance at key touchpoints ensures accountability for improving service delivery and supports transparency of performance across the organization, and to the public. Peel has a measurement strategy that was implemented in 2022 that includes three layers for measuring our customer service performance:

#### i) **Annual Customer Satisfaction Survey**

Peel conducts an annual large-scale survey of residents. This identifies what aspects of the service experience drive customer satisfaction and ranks them in order of priority. This ensures we're measuring what matters to our customers. The 2023 survey will take place this fall. Key findings from the 2022 survey included:

- Positive interaction with Peel employees is the #1 driver of trust.
- 78 per cent agree that Peel employees are respectful.
- 71 per cent agree that Peel employees make a sincere effort to help.
- 85 per cent of Community Recycling Centre customers were satisfied with their overall experience.
- 87 per cent of vaccination clinic clients were satisfied with their overall experience.

#### ii) **Real-time Customer Satisfaction Measurement**

We measure the key drivers of satisfaction identified in the annual survey in real-time. This ensures the customer can give immediate feedback and opinions are captured close to the time the service was experienced. Results from this year show improvement over 2022 on all key metrics:

## Customer Service Week 2023

- 84 per cent overall customer satisfaction on phone, email, chat, and counter channels.
- 85 per cent of phone calls were resolved on the first call.
- 50,691 surveys completed (a 10 per cent response rate).

### iii) Complaints Management

Resolving issues when they occur often prevents complaints, but they do occur, and they're valuable data that offer rich customer insights. Resolving them is an opportunity to restore confidence. In 2023, new digital forms were implemented for both informal and formal complaints, as well as an integrated website feedback tool to collect real-time comments on peelregion.ca. This year has seen a reduction in the number of complaints received.

- 640 informal complaints received through the online feedback form.
- 4 formal complaints received by Clerk's.
- 562 website in-page comments actioned.

## 3. Celebrating and Building on Our Success

This Customer Service Week, we are thanking and celebrating our employees through internal and external campaigns that run throughout October. Internally, we collected peer and team nominations of employees who are dedicated to customer service from across the organization, in both front-line and internal positions. We are sharing their stories and recognizing their contributions. We have a new People of Peel video that profiles an Access Peel customer service representative and her thoughts on customer service at Peel. We're sharing it with the public on peelregion.ca and all of our social media channels. We're also using digital billboards and screens with the message "Celebrate the people that make service happen."

Customer Service Week is an opportunity to focus on our accomplishments, while we continue to strengthen our customer-centric culture. We are developing an inclusive customer service training program, to be delivered to all customer-facing employees starting in 2024. The program will directly benefit both customers and employees by ensuring that everyone in the organization understands why inclusive customer experience matters and how it builds trust, knows our customers' expectations, service standards and commitments, and has the customer service skills and knowledge to consistently meet customer expectations.

## BILL 112 RISKS AND IMPLICATIONS

Continuing to deliver services with the level of customer service that Peel residents expect is critical to maintaining trust through the transition. This will likely become increasingly difficult with staff retention and workload challenges brought on by Bill 112. By monitoring the customer experience across multiple touchpoints, we can report on impacts to customer service and capture feedback from customers in real time. This will allow us to adjust services and communicate with the community as needed.

A significant risk is that front-line staff delivering service on the phones, online, and in person are the ones who are most often faced with confused, frustrated, or irate customers. Any impacts to service delivery brought on by the transition will result in an increase in challenging situations. This can impact the mental well-being and psychological health and safety of our employees.

### CONCLUSION

Customer service is more important now than ever. At a time when trust in government is being challenged by factors out of our control, delivering excellent customer service is something we can control. We will continue to listen to our customers to understand their expectations, deliver services that meet them, and adjust rapidly based changing needs.

Our employees are proud of the work they do; they want to provide the best possible experience to our customers, every day. This Customer Service Week, we thank them and celebrate their accomplishments.

---



---

Davinder Valeri, Chief Financial Officer and Commissioner of Corporate Services

*Authored By: Andy Saito, Service Experience Advisor*