

## **The Customer Solutions and Insight Revolution**

At CarillionAmey we get plenty of complaints, this isn't something I'm proud of, but it does provide an opportunity to recover a failure and learn a lesson. Unfortunately we appear to have been missing the latter point as well, so I decided to try and start a mini revolution.

Complaints were taking ages to resolve, weeks, even months, and often without any update to the customer. Some of the cases being escalated to me were really upsetting and I was becoming increasingly frustrated at our poor results. So in September I joined the complaints team and we announced an imminent restructure.

We quickly assembled a small team comprised of Chris Williams, Helen Thompson, Ayaz Jan, Denise McCombe, Marg Webster and me. We reviewed our processes, our complaint data, our people and structure and our customer engagement strategy.

**Process:** We ripped up the old process and started with a blank piece of paper. We wanted two things: a process that focused on dealing with issues efficiently and creating ownership out in the field for putting things right. I think we now have that process, we create action plans for resolving issues, with clear action owners and agree these actions with our customers.

**Complaint data:** The data was pretty bad, but Ayaz did an amazing job of quickly getting us the data we needed to review individual performance on a daily basis. We set up a meeting at 08:30, every morning and we analyse our performance.

**People and Structure:** Blank page time again. I drew out our dream structure, a new department called Customer Solutions and Insight, I worked through the concerns with DIO and our Board and gained approval. The new department has four discrete parts: Customer Solutions headed up by Chris, with fully empowered Customer Solutions Managers with clear targets (Marg and Denise joined this team). Casework headed up by Helen, with Mobile Customer Solutions Managers out in the field and ownership of high profile issues. Local Customer Service Centres headed up by Mike Lewis, empowering our Local Advisors to have full ownership of complaints on their patch. And Customer Insight headed up by Ayaz, a team dedicated to gathering feedback, analysing results and driving improvement. Each of the four managers report to a new role called Head of Customer Solutions and Insight, which is me for the time being. We launched our new department at the start of October, a happy coincidence that it was during National Customer Service Week!

**Customer Engagement:** I joined Twitter! I started listening, and tweeting, and listening some more. I got invited out to visit customers, so I jumped in my car and went to meet people. Customer's started referring issues to me (my wife has had to confiscate my phone a few times when I've been tweeting late in the evening) and our new team has been highly engaged in helping get things fixed. Laura has also been a massive support on the social media front, and I can't thank her enough!

So, this is the start of a journey, a new department, and a new focus, trying to inspire better customer service and improvement across our whole organisation. I know we're not there yet, but the compliments we're starting to get within the new team are a big inspiration and help to validate the work we're doing. I'd like to personally thank service families for being so patient with us. This contract has been a nightmare to mobilise, funding for improvement is sorely needed across the estate, rents are increasing and who knows what the outcome of the future accommodation model will be, much of which is beyond all of our control. Things will inevitably still go wrong, CarillionAmey will make mistakes, but I want to commit to you that our new team will be there to help, and I want to personally pledge my own support in whatever way you think I can help.

**Stuart Jones – CarillionAmey – tweet me @StuartJonesCA**