



WATFORD PALACE THEATRE

CUSTOMER CARE POLICY

JULY 2005

Customer Care at Watford Palace Theatre

Mission Statement:

Watford Palace Theatre places its customers at the centre of all that it does, actively working to build genuine relationships with all its partners and associates and delivering excellence in everything it does whilst repeatedly adding value. Taking responsibility for the WPT brand both internally and externally strengthens the company's ability to provide a service which reflects the theatre's ideals and standards. A customer is anyone who comes into contact with WPT, from audiences to funders. Everyone is a potential customer whose first and lasting impression is crucial to the future of the WATFORD EXPERIENCE.

Key Objectives:

- To provide clear and efficient lines of communications to all
- To be active in the promotion of customer feedback, listen and respond accordingly
- To ensure that all public contact with WPT from receiving a brochure to leaving the theatre after a performance is met with the highest standards
- To provide suitable and adequate training to all staff
- To encourage customers to enjoy a closer relationship with WPT
- To ensure high standards of service, up to date information and efficiency
- To exceed the customer's expectations and encourage repeat visits
- To be the benchmark within the arts for excellent customer care

A **customer** is anyone who comes into contact with WPT, including;

- Current audiences and potential audiences
- Suppliers, businesses, the press
- Visiting companies (actors, creative teams, producers)
- Members of staff
- WPT Board and funders

Senior Management and Heads of Department

Artistic Director - Jointly responsible for the overall operation of the theatre, artistic planning, programming and Board/funders/WPT liaison

Executive Director - Jointly responsible for the overall operation of the theatre, scheduling, programming, budgets and Board/funders/WPT liaison

Literary Director - Responsible for WPT's new writing policy

Head of Finance - Responsible for all aspects of WPT's financial management

Theatre Manager - Responsible for building maintenance, licensing, Front of House operation, IT, telephones and house keeping

Head of Sales & Marketing - Responsible for marketing, press, sales, customer care and liaison with catering operation

Sales Manager - Responsible for sales team and Box Office operation

Development Manager - Responsible for corporate/business sponsorship and partnerships and the Circle membership scheme

Associate Director (Active) - Responsible for the education and participation work of WPT

Young People's Theatre Director - Responsible for Watford Palace Young People's Theatre and Hertfordshire County Youth Theatre

Production Manager - Responsible for Electrics, Wardrobe, Stage Management and set construction

Stage Manager - Responsible for Stage Management team and visiting companies

Head of Electrics - Responsible for lighting and sound

Head of Wardrobe - Responsible for costume and wardrobe maintenance

Construction Manager - Responsible for the workshop team and set construction

Leaf Catering - Responsible for providing daytime and evening catering at WPT in liaison with WPT's Head of Sales & Marketing

NB: Leaf Catering is an external company who hold the franchise to operate a catering facility at Watford Palace Theatre

WPT staff are available to the public from Monday to Friday 10.00am to 6.00pm (although these hours will vary for Theatre Management, production and sales team).

Customers wishing to meet with a member of staff should make an appointment in advance. WPT cannot guarantee staff availability when prior arrangements have not been made.

WPT aims to respond to any contact from a customer within a maximum of 3 working days.

Enquiries

In situations where a customer wishes to contact WPT regarding matters about the service it provides, they should in the first instance contact the head of the relevant department either in writing, by telephone or email. The theatre's main telephone number is 01923 235455, from where calls will be redirected to the relevant person.

Customer Comments

Customers wishing to offer comments may do so by contacting the Head of Sales & Marketing by; email at marketing@watfordpalacetheatre.co.uk, completing a customer comment card available from the Box Office, reception or Café Purple, writing or telephoning 01923 257462.

Customer Complaints

Telephone: Wherever possible, a customer's complaint will be dealt with over the telephone. Calls will be transferred to the relevant Senior Manager or Head of Department. Complaints related to the Box Office should be directed to the Sales Manager – 01923 257474. Any complaints of a general nature will be transferred to either the Executive Director or Head of Sales & Marketing.

Written or email: All written complaints will be passed to either the Executive Director or Head of Sales & Marketing who will discuss with the relevant Heads of Department in order to gather information and agree the best way in which to respond.

Copies of all written correspondence are kept by the Head of Sales & Marketing.

Any action taken that will affect other members of staff as a result of a customer complaint will be conveyed to all concerned before a response is given to the customer.

Consultation and Feedback

WPT consults its customers on a regular basis through quantitative customer questionnaires, specific focus groups, customer circles and one to one interviews.

Feedback is also recorded on each show report by Theatre Management.

The results from each piece of research are collated and made available to all Heads of Department for discussion. Major policy changes are conveyed to WPT's audiences through season brochures, direct mail, the Box Office, website and email correspondence.

Participants for each focus group are invited to return after one year to discuss any implemented changes and improvements.

Access

WPT is a fully accessible building; wheelchair ramps, toilet facilities for disabled people, a lift to all floors and audio described and STAGETEXT performances are available.

Box Office

Ticketing

WPT continues to strive for wider access by offering a broad range of ticket prices and discounts. These are reviewed annually and adjusted in line with inflation and budgets.

Discount tickets are available to senior citizens, registered unemployed, disabled people, students in full time education, under 21's, Watford residents and employees, wheelchair users, schools, groups and the visually and hearing impaired at all Watford Palace Theatre productions.

Up to 10 standby tickets are available on the day for all WPT productions.

A membership scheme – Circle – offers audiences added value benefits including; discounted tickets and priority booking and encourages customers to enjoy a closer relationship with WPT. Circle members are kept up to date with all the WPT news via email and bi-annual newsletters.

Refunds/Exchanges

WPT's policy on refunds and exchanges is as follows;

Once paid for, tickets cannot be refunded unless under exceptional circumstances and approved by the Sales Manager or Head of Sales & Marketing.

Tickets may be exchanged for another performance of the same production providing the tickets are returned to the theatre at least two working days before the performance they are valid for. A fee of £1 per ticket will be charged.

WPT will also accept, but cannot guarantee tickets for resale.

If a performance is cancelled, customers will be offered a full refund.

Training

WPT is committed to an ongoing training programme for all members of staff including; disability awareness, customer care and health and safety as well as all aspects of WPT operation.

High standards of customer care are dependent upon well trained and happy staff who are proud to be associated with WPT.

Well informed staff deal with customers' enquiries quickly and efficiently. Regular interdepartmental meetings, emails and strong lines of communication ensure that staff are kept up to date at all times.

Recruitment

WPT has an Equal Opportunities and Diversity Recruitment Policy which is adhered to throughout the recruitment process. All applicants are our customer and should be offered the same respect and courtesy as all other customers, whilst ensuring high levels of discretion.

Applicants are invited to download job descriptions, an application pack and mission statement from WPT's website, www.watfordpalacetheatre.co.uk or by telephoning reception on 01923 235455. In the first instance, all enquiries should go through the Administrative Assistant unless otherwise stated in any recruitment advertising.

Evaluation and Review

A Customer Care Committee comprising of WPT's Theatre Manager, Deputy Theatre Manager, Head of Sales & Marketing, Sales Manager and a representative from Leaf Catering, meet once a month to discuss and review the theatre's commitment to its customers.

An annual strategy to achieve the theatre's Customer Care Mission statement is formulated by the Customer Care Committee. The strategy outlines annual targets and sets an action plan for its implementation.

Procedures and policies are reviewed and tested throughout the year and changes made where necessary.

The Watford Experience - Exceeding Customer Expectations