
COLORADO
Department of Agriculture
Customer Service &
The Customer Experience

Who am I?

Rakel Sanchez

Grants Manager for Colorado Department of Agriculture

Managing Grants PROS:

Managing grants is a rewarding job. I get to assist producers and conservation districts implement different projects across the state. I get to help them reach their conservation goals and make a difference on the land we all use and love.

I literally get to give out money.

Managing grants cons: rules! rules! rules!

As a grants manager there are a lot of rules. Depending on the funding source you must hold all your grant recipients accountable to whatever set rules there may be. I love rules. I don't operate well in grey areas. But believe it or not, not everyone is like me. Being the one in charge of holding people accountable to the rules means having to have difficult conversations from time to time.

I'm here to show you that you can have difficult conversations while still delivering exceptional customer service.

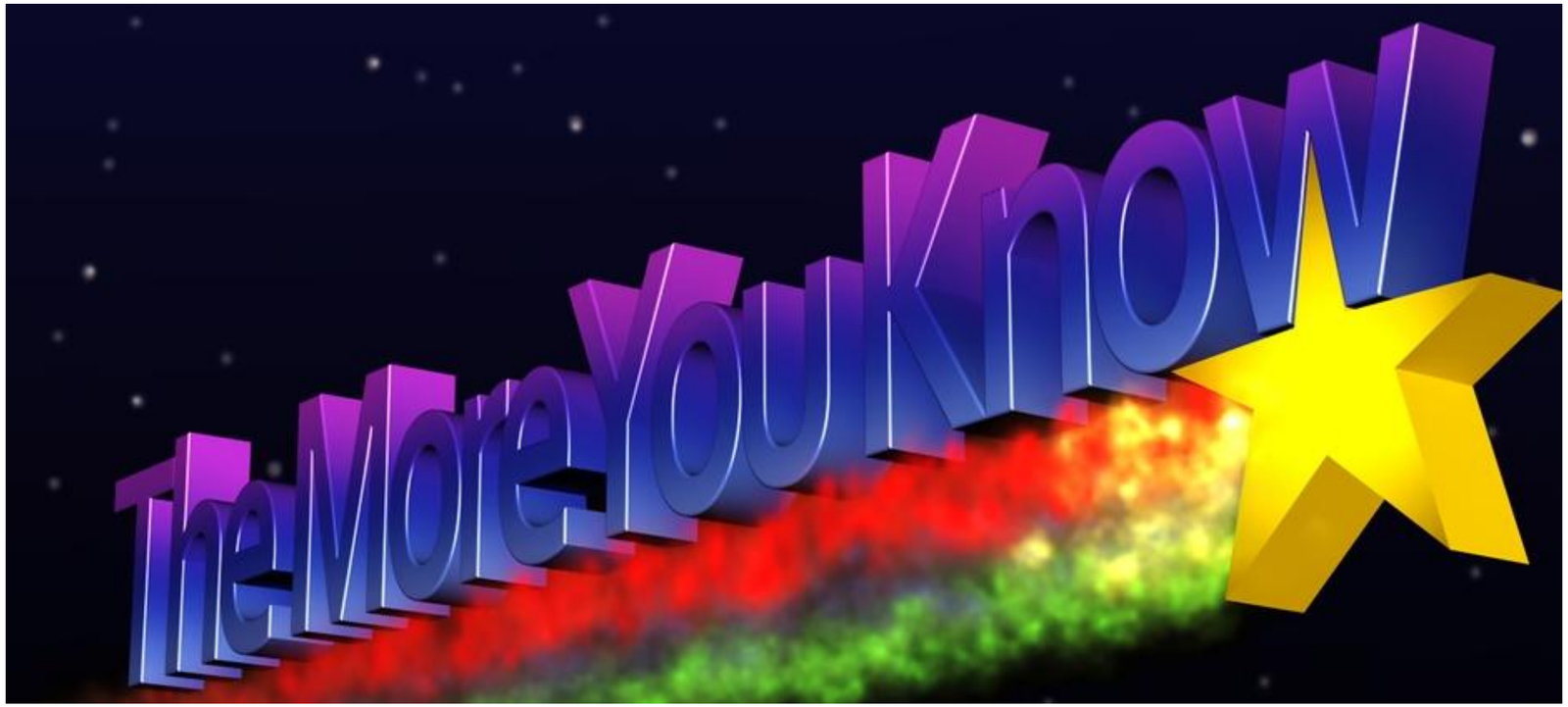
X Rules
X Rules
X Rules
X Rules

CUSTOMER SERVICE

You know what it is. I know what it is. You've probably had good customer service. You've probably had bad customer service, but hopefully you can learn something new today from me.

cus·tom·er serv·ice

- the assistance and advice provided by a company to those people who buy or use its products or services.



Define your customers

- Partners
- Conservation Districts
- Producers
- Stakeholders
- The person on the phone with the wrong number



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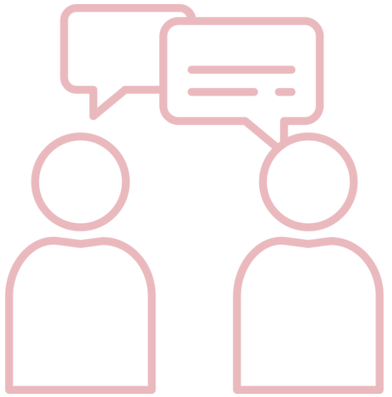
In short..... ANYONE!



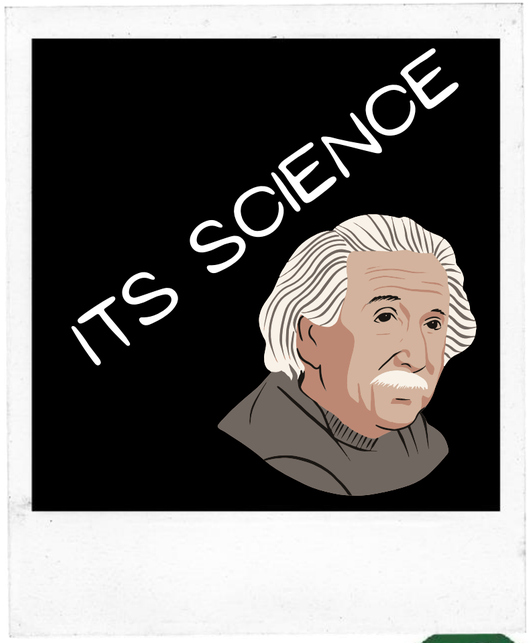
Anyone can be a customer. Whether they are a future customer or a current customer they are having an experience with you. Even the person with the wrong number. One day they might need your services and they are going to remember how you made them feel. Even if it was only a brief encounter, treat everyone with respect

TOP TIPS!

- Smile through the phone
- The answer is never no
- Own up to your mistakes
- Communication is key
- Actively listen
- Go the extra mile
- Empathy
- The golden rule

Smile through the phone..... or email

- **People can sense a smile though the phone**
- **It sets the tone for the entire interaction**
  - **you get the energy you give**
- **It puts the person at ease (and you)**



Smiling through the phone isn’t just for your customers. Its for you too. It's been proven that smiling boosts the individual's mood and attitude as well. Most of my correspondence is through email and emails have tone too. Don’t believe me? Ever got a text saying ‘K’ and you just *knew* there was a tone to it. Try to smile through your emails as well.

People want to be heard

Active Listening **Empathy** **Communication** **Own it**

When someone is frustrated, they want to feel heard. Listen with intent and try to truly understand why they are frustrated. You might not be able to fix the problem but just showing that you care and empathize with the person can help them feel validated. Its all about tone. Think about a time where you felt frustrated about something that was out of your control. How would you want to have been treated. Put yourself in their shoes and be patient.

Did you make a mistake? Own it! People are humans and the majority will respect your ability to communicate ownership and apologize. Figure out how to make it right.

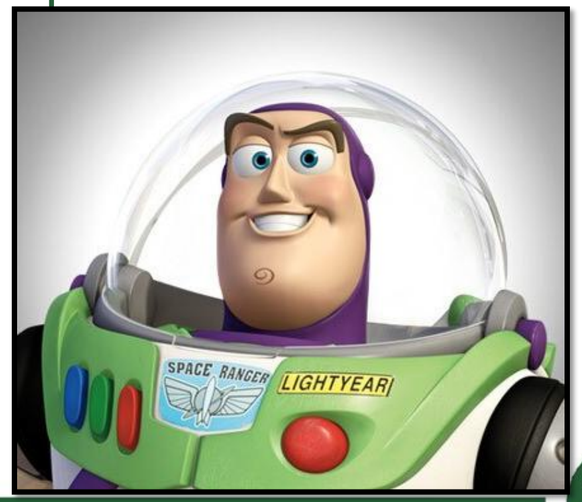


To infinity.... and beyond

- The answer is never no
- Go above and beyond

Ok, sometimes the answer is no. Especially when it comes to the RULES. But its never I don’t know. If you don't know the answer to something, find it. If you can’t help a person because they called the wrong department, guide them in the right direction. It might take a couple of extra minutes, but that person will not forget that you went above and beyond to help them.

How do I go above and beyond as a grants a specialist?



✦ The Golden Rule ✦

When in doubt follow the golden rule. Treat people the way you want to be treated. I've always taken it a step further and treated people the way I wanted my grandparents to be treated or my mother.



COLORADO

Department of Agriculture

Conservation Services Division

Thank you!

Rakel Sanchez

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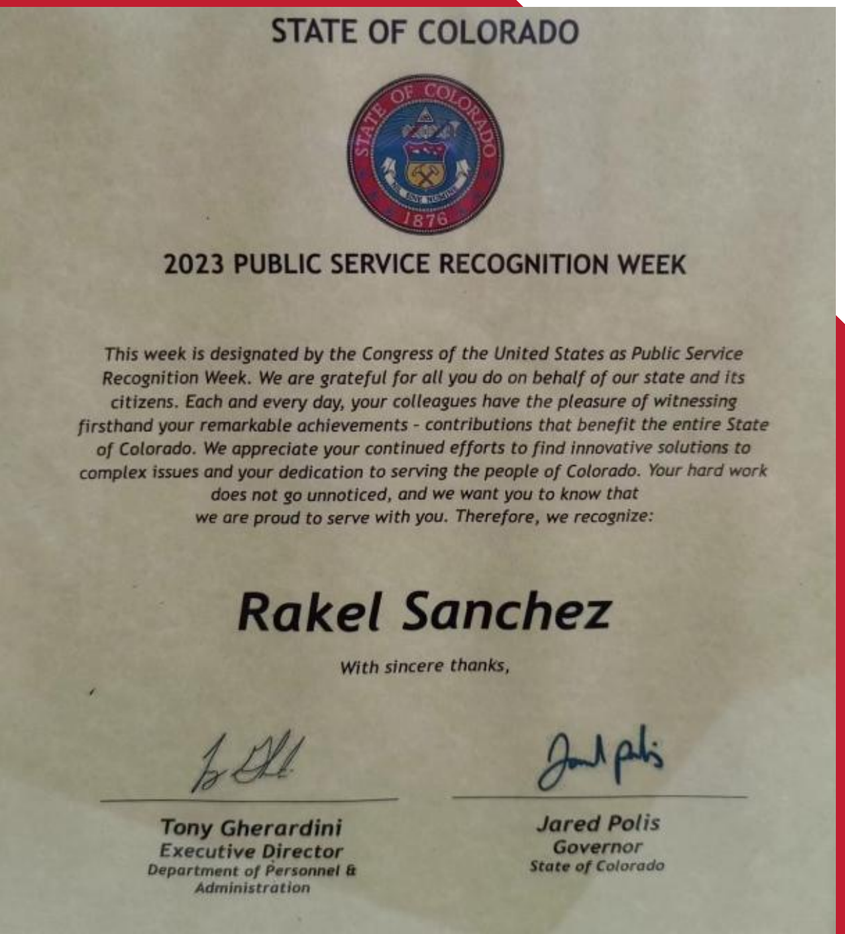

STATE OF COLORADO

2023 PUBLIC SERVICE RECOGNITION WEEK

This week is designated by the Congress of the United States as Public Service Recognition Week. We are grateful for all you do on behalf of our state and its citizens. Each and every day, your colleagues have the pleasure of witnessing firsthand your remarkable achievements - contributions that benefit the entire State of Colorado. We appreciate your continued efforts to find innovative solutions to complex issues and your dedication to serving the people of Colorado. Your hard work does not go unnoticed, and we want you to know that we are proud to serve with you. Therefore, we recognize:

Rakel Sanchez

With sincere thanks,

Tony Gherardini
Executive Director
Department of Personnel & Administration

Jared Polis
Governor
State of Colorado

