

OHvation Customer Service Designation Program Overview

About the Program

In June 2012, the OHTO launched a new and comprehensive customer service program across the region that is designed to assist tourism operators in becoming customer service leaders. The OHvation Customer Service Designation Program comes as part of the OHTO's broader vision of improving the overall quality of customer service delivery in Ontario's Highlands and ultimately becoming a destination known for offering exceptional service.

This one-of-a-kind program was developed with assistance from the Ontario Tourism Education Corporation (OTEC) and provides a framework for tourism operators to build a culture of customer service within their businesses and a road map for becoming designated as customer service leaders in the region. Through this program, the OHTO aims to develop a customer-centric industry committed to providing outstanding service to visitors. In return for this commitment, the OHTO will recognize and promote designated businesses as OHvation Customer Service Leaders for delivering quality service.

How it Works

The OHvation Program is a simple process designed to assist businesses with evaluating their level of customer service delivery, learning how to address identified service gaps, and ultimately become designated as a customer service leaders.

Evaluation

Businesses who apply to the program will receive a resource kit which includes a customer service checklist that walks through the entire service delivery process from the perspective of the customer. This **Organizational Self-Assessment** is the first step of evaluation and provides operators with preliminary insight regarding service gaps that can be immediately addressed.

The kit also includes **Customer Satisfaction Comment Cards**, which are sample surveys which businesses can place at their sites to collect feedback from customers. What better way to find out what your customers think than to ask them directly! Businesses are welcome to adapt or modify these surveys to suit their specific needs.

Training

Through the Organizational Self-Assessment and the feedback provided from the Customer Service Comment Cards businesses will become aware of any areas of improvement. The OHvation program also provides resources to assist with addressing some of the identified service delivery issues. The **Customer Service Training Resources** includes a list of additional workshops, courses, and training and development programs that can help an organization to develop, perform and succeed at delivering great customer service.

Equally as important to the visitor is a well-informed and knowledgeable tourism workforce able to answer questions and provide recommendations about other things to see and do in the region. Not only does demonstrating knowledge of the local area and broader Ontario's Highlands region meet visitor's needs, but it also encourages a culture of tourism ambassadors and actively promotes the region to guests. The **Regional Tourism Ambassador** resource has been designed to assist businesses with increasing their knowledge and appreciation of the broader tourism experiences in the region.

Mystery Shop

Once businesses have had some time to work through the program resources and tools and are confident that they are ready to be assessed by a third-party, the next step is to contact the OHTO to arrange for their mystery shop. **Mystery shopping** is an important tool used to measure the quality of customer service being delivered to visitors and is a crucial element of the program as it allows businesses to collect insight into how guests perceive the entire experience, from start to finish. The OHTO works with a third-party mystery shopping company to arrange for the mystery shops. Along with an anonymous assessment that evaluates customer service delivery, businesses are also provided with a full report of the mystery shop, an invaluable tool to learn what is being done well and any areas for improvement.

Designation and Recognition

Businesses achieving above 80% on their mystery shop will become designated as OHvation Customer Service Leaders. The purpose of the designation portion of the OHvation Program is to create a benchmark of service excellence for the region. Designated businesses will be recognized and promoted for their commitment to quality service. If by chance businesses do not achieve 80% their first attempt, businesses will be encouraged to re-assess and the OHTO will work with businesses to support them in becoming designated.

Costs and Eligibility

The OHvation program is open to tourism-related businesses in Ontario's Highlands. The program includes one complimentary mystery shop which is booked on a first come first serve basis. For further information regarding costs and booking a mystery shop please contact Stephanie Hessel at 613-629-6486 or designation@ohto.ca.

How to Apply

Simply download application form at <http://ohto.ca/wp-content/uploads/OHvation-Application-Form4.pdf> and submit it to the OHTO at designation@ohto.ca, by fax at 613-629-6488 or by mail to 9 International Drive, Suite 129, Pembroke ON, K8A 6W5.

OR

Apply directly online at <http://ohto.ca/ohvation/>.

Program Significance

Today's travel climate is more competitive than ever. Consumers are more discerning, utilizing the Internet to gather information, receive recommendations and book reservations based on their assessments of experiences. The total customer experience and quality of interaction between businesses and guest plays into a visitor's decision to choose a travel destination and also their decision to return. The tourism industry in Ontario's Highlands has the opportunity to become a premier tourist destination by ensuring visitor needs and expectations are not only met, but exceeded.

Customer Service Matters

Research shows that providing outstanding Customer Service has direct benefits for businesses, including:

- Increases Customer Loyalty
- Increases Staff Morale/Employee
- Increase Revenues
- Builds Reputation
- Increases Recommendations
- Creates a Niche
- Decrease Customer Complaints