

# Road School Wrap Up

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Whether you are in the Indiana Department of Highways or in a local department, there are four management concepts that are relevant to how you go about your work. They are the customer, excellence, team work, and leadership.

The first concept, a customer focus, is important. We need to understand what our customers need. Customers want roads and bridges. The customer also wants information, answers, and assistance in the form of training and expertise. We develop guidelines and standards, and we provide designs and contracts. We provide all these items to our customers, including the public who uses the facilities, residents who are relocated due to construction projects, the taxpayers, vendors, consultants, contractors, legislators, and all local elected and appointed officials. We can even think of Federal Highway Administration officials as our customers. Finally, our customers are each other, and we owe each other the kind of treatment our customers expect to get.

Customers expect value for their transportation dollar, or the best road system possible at a reasonable cost. The concept of value is difficult to define, and there are a lot of trade-offs in defining quality, but we must keep trying. While a taxpayer wants the cheapest product, a driver will be upset if the road falls apart. Customers also expect our bureaucracy to make decisions, prioritize, and accomplish objectives expeditiously. We need to work to streamline our processes and enable people to make the decisions that they have the talent and ability to make. We need to be responsive to our customers and in so doing, we will gain credibility with them.

To serve our customers, we need to do our job right. We need to provide them with what they want or need to do their work. It is our job to accommodate our customers. Even when a customer's needs seem to be an intrusion or an interruption, it is our job to be responsive to them.

Excellence begins with serving customers with the highest quality that is cost effective. Excellence also means doing what is expected, which is required for credibility. Excellence is being disciplined where it is important, but being flexible wherever possible. We have many rules, regulations, and procedures to follow, and they serve a purpose. Yet we need to listen to new ideas. Excellence means that all customers will feel respected and well treated.

Team work is very important. It makes a job fun, interesting, and worthwhile. All people must contribute to improvements. All people will learn and grow more skilled and flexible, if given the chance. All people deserve to be treated with dignity and respect, white or black, male or female, republican or democrat, engineers or non-engineers. In an environment where team work is encouraged, everyone understands that they have the ability to make his fellow worker's job either easier or harder.

To perform the task of leadership in this management environment, be clear about your objectives. State how you plan to meet the customer's needs. We need to be prepared to change objectives as circumstances improve or change. We need to be agile, to move with the times. We need to get feedback about what we do. To do a good job, employees need to have good direction and know what is expected of them. They need the right training, the right tools, and the right equipment to do their jobs. Leadership means providing them with the right tools to do their jobs and setting high standards. Finally, leadership needs to set a good example. Be willing to change to improve. The customer, excellence in the way we do our jobs, team work, and leadership all play an important role in making it all happen.