

Woodbine Entertainment

‘We are never satisfied with the status quo here’

*Jane Holmes,
Vice President, Corporate Affairs,
Woodbine Entertainment*



Number of Employees: 2300 fulltime & part time employees

Location(s): Woodbine Racetrack, Mohawk Raceway, Turf Lounge, Champions Off Track Wagering, Greenwood Off track Wagering, and Horse Player Interactive, Turf Lounge and Wegz Stadium Bar

Our Side of The Story

Providing accessible customer service is nothing new for Woodbine Entertainment. In 2005 Woodbine embarked on a major strategic plan that incorporated Service Excellence; a unique program that includes making accessible customer service a priority for all of their staff and patrons.

“We have been focusing on inclusive customer service for the past 6 1/2 years” says Jane Holmes, Vice President of Corporate Affairs, “even before the AODA. You can obtain a lot of information by just observing your customers, approaching them, and asking how to make things easier for them.”

“Woodbine’s training philosophy is simple; we teach the staff to view situations from the perspective of the customer”, explains Pamela Berger, Director of Guest Services and a key player in the development and delivery of Woodbine Entertainment’s Service Excellence program.

Woodbine continually offers training that involves all levels of staff and numerous departments. One of their approaches is to use real life examples and debrief these situations. One example referenced was a situation where a customer brought her dog with her in her vehicle to Woodbine. The dog was



outside the vehicle in a restricted area close to the horses. Security staff approached the customer from behind and started speaking to her asking her to move the dog away from the horses, however she appeared to be ignoring the security guards. It was finally discovered that the customer was deaf and this was her working dog. The customer had not heard the requests from security. Once we were aware that the customer was unable to hear, we were able to accommodate her needs. Pamela has

utilized this experience as an opportunity to educate her team and uses this as one of the examples when providing customer service training.

“This is one of the scenarios we use during role playing to educate staff about visible and non-visible disabilities. Our staff now understand that if someone is not responding in a manner that we would expect, then perhaps there is more to the situation, such as the inability to hear, see or understand”.

Our Quick Tips

- Empathize With Your Customer
- Debrief & Role Play Service Scenarios With All Employees

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