



Singapore Healthcare Management 2021



Singapore General Hospital
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Expanding Porters' Service Training Program: Delivering Quality Service to Patients and Users

Introduction

Good customer service rendered by porters play a central role in fulfilling the needs of patients and users. When porters empathise with the multi-fold challenges users (e.g., nurses) go through in caring for patients, porters will develop a greater appreciation of the situation and provide more quality service to the users. Through great teamwork with users, porters feel supported and will take greater care in addressing patient needs. In turn, patients feel comfortable when well-trained porters interact with them or assist the nurses in transferring them from the wards to the procedural departments and vice-versa.

Porters' service level can be measured by the number of compliments and complaints provided by the patients and users. Excellent service can be benchmarked against the number of Service with a Heart awards. Monthly baseline data obtained for the period from Jan to Jun 2019 were 1.17 compliments, 0.33 complaints and 0 awardees respectively.

Aim

The improvement project aimed to deliver quality service to patients and users. The objectives are:

- ✓ To increase the number of compliments by 100%.
- ✓ To increase the number of Service with a Heart Awardees.
- ✓ To reduce the number of complaints by 50%.

Methodology

The PDCA methodology was utilized for improvement in porters' service quality indicators.



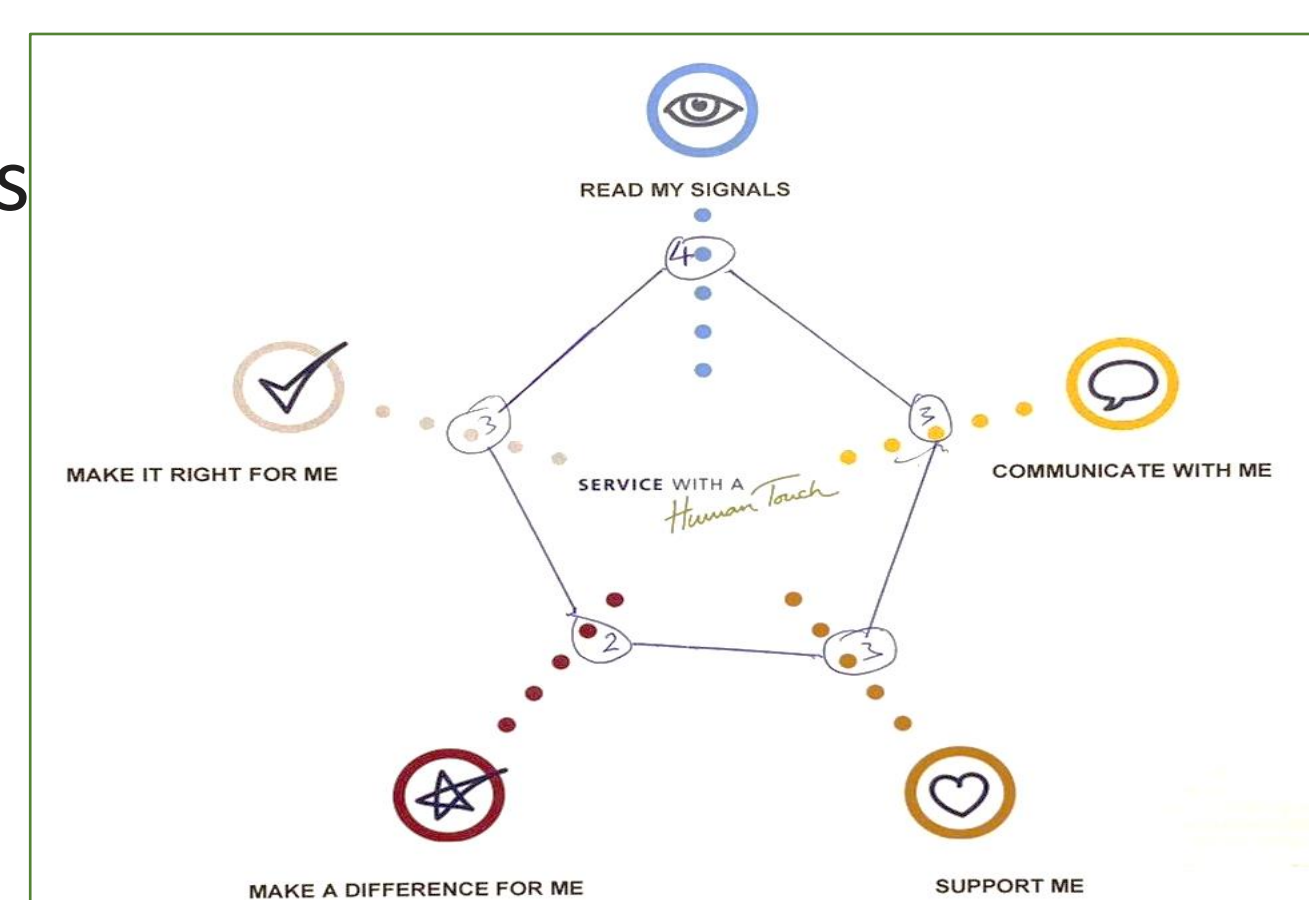
Intervention

An enhanced, integrated service training program comprising 5 tiers of interventions, was launched sometime in July 2019.

1. Living "Service with a Human Touch" (SWAHT) – Ongoing foundation program for every porter to learn service concepts and create value-added service moments to elevate customer experiences. For example, porters were trained how to communicate with customers by projecting a positive image, listening, updating customers, and checking satisfaction level.



2. Leading "SWAHT" – Ongoing intermediate program for portering leaders to actualize service expectations, assess service behavior, address poor service behaviors and recognize good service behaviors. In addition, these SWAHT leaders also help to coach and guide good service conduct in the porters.



Intervention (Cont'd)

3. In-house Customer Service Training – Introduced in Mar 2018, program was highly customized to deliver targeted service behaviors for patients and users in the hospital context.



Patient Transfer – Wheelchair (WC)			
Porter	Requestor	Requestor (Patient)	Receiver
<p>Porter proceeds to get wheelchair and check on any facility parts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wheels Handrails Seat belt Arm rest Seat cover Brakes Upholstery Leg (foot rest) <p>For safety parts, porter reports immediately to supervisor and please a safety wheelchair</p> <p>Porter conducts hand hygiene</p>	<p>End-user (Nurse / Clinic Staff) Request</p> <p>Porter: "Good morning / afternoon / evening, may I help your patient ABC please?" (Specify patient's name and End location)</p> <p>"May I know if there is any isolation precaution for this patient?"</p> <p>Porter may need to ask this if there is a precaution sign on his mobile device</p> <p>Porter will don accordingly: surgical mask, gloves, gown, shoe cover, contact precaution - yellow gown & gloves</p> <p>Porter conducts hand hygiene</p> <p>Porter will proceed to the patient's room with the patient</p>	<p>End-user (Patient) Request: "Good morning / afternoon / evening Sir/Ms/Ms/Ms?"</p> <p>Porter: "Good morning / afternoon / evening, I will be assisting you to... (specify patient's End location)"</p> <p>"For proper identification, Sir / Ms/Ms, may I check your name tag? May I know your name and NDC?"</p> <p>Porter will assist the patient to transfer to the wheelchair, ensuring the patient is seated properly</p> <p>"For your safety, Sir/Ms/Ms, we will use the seatbelt"</p> <p>Porter will check on the patient's comfort: "Do you want to bring along the blanket with you?" "Do you feel comfortable in your sitting position?" "Do you feel okay?" (please note: safe)</p> <p>Porter needs to check that the case notes, medications and properly handed over by DR</p>	<p>End-user (Nurse / Clinic Staff) Request</p> <p>Porter: "Good morning / afternoon / evening staff, May I handover the patient ABC please?" (specify patient's location)</p> <p>"Staff, patient needs assistance for the transfer. Can we assist you?"</p> <p>Porter will assist DR for patient transfer</p> <p>After the transfer, porter may be asked by patient's case notes to DR</p> <p>End-user (Patient) Request: "Please wait for enable the doctor will attend to you shortly"</p> <p>Porter will do WC after case and conducts hand hygiene</p> <p>Porter: "Thank you staff"</p>

4. Customer Service Interaction Training – Rolled out in Oct 2019, the enhanced communication program aimed to improve interactions with patients and users at all touchpoints to provide excellent service and positive experiences. It covers the different types of tasks that porters would perform and, in the process, would need to interact well with patients and users.

5. Customer Service Excellence Competition – Launched in Jul 2019, the event energized and incentivized excellent service delivered. Held in two quarters to transform key learning into practical application and benefits for patients and users.



Results

Table 1: Average Improvement Results for Compliments, Complaints & Awardees

Implementation - July 2019	Jan 2019 – Jun 2019	Aug 2019 – Mar 2021	Improvement (%)
Ave Monthly Compliments	1.17	7.05	502.5%
Ave Monthly Complaints	0.33	0.10	67.7%
Ave Monthly Service with a Heart winners	0	0.25	N.A.

Conclusion

An effective and expanded service training program ensures that high quality service can lead to greater patient and user satisfaction. Porters are empowered and incentivized to upgrade their service excellence mindset to wow patients and users with their exceptional service.

The project is scalable in the service industry. Future directions include more service training enhancements and refresher training that would sustain and motivate service excellence which would translate into more positive patient experiences during their stay in the hospital.