

PEOPLE: THE TRIO'S OVERLOOKED SEGMENT

By J.C. Porter, CAPP

We all have a good idea of what sustainability means in regard to the planet and how it can affect the bottom line (profit), but people seem to fall into a gray area of our understanding.

Providing great customer service is something everyone strives to achieve. Customers are an obvious group of people who can see how sustainability programs will directly affect parking operations and create a better service. For example, installing a wayfinding system in a parking garage will help reduce carbon emissions by reducing the amount of time needed to find an open space and reducing the dreaded space-search circle through the structure. This clearly provides the customer with a better experience in the garage, making it easier to enter, find an open space, and exit.

Proximity near bus routes or offering bike programs is another way to provide good customer service while giving you an edge over other parking providers. Vanpool and carpool parking areas help promote your services to a variety of potential customers while you help promote sustainability. Appearance may also help provide a better customer experience. Changing the lighting to be more energy efficient will help your bottom line and create a more customer-friendly environment. Along with lighting, paint and wayfinding signage also help create a space that is aesthetically pleasing.

Employees

Employees are a resource that can make or break an operation. Providing professional development opportunities for employees benefits the employee as well as the employer; the employee will be satisfied with his job, which leads to increased productivity. You will also likely recruit better employees, creating a more positive and effective work environment. Retention of good employees helps save time by not having to constantly work through the hiring process and saves money because resources aren't used constantly training new employees.

There are plenty of sustainability-focused training opportunities, including the Green Garage Certification training administered by the Green Parking Council (GPC, an affiliate of IPI). This training helps your employees better understand the parking industry and how they can help your business operate more efficiently and sustainably. Webinars and IPI's Online Courses and Training are an affordable training option; employees do




not have to travel and can receive training in a conference room or even at their desks or at home.

State and regional conferences are a great way for your employees to receive regionally specific training and to connect with peers to help share ideas and concepts (of course, the IPI Conference & Expo is an outstanding development opportunity for parking professionals at all experience levels). All of these courses, learning opportunities, and certification programs are a great investment in your business, as they not only help employees feel they are important to the company but also produce more informed employees who will offer better service to the customer.

Materials

Using green construction programs reduces a new garage's carbon footprint by making the most of regional materials and workers and reducing the amount of waste that must be placed in the landfill, which is a help to the people of the planet. Helping reduce emissions of any form also helps the people of the planet. That's also true when it comes to recycling gray water because drinking water is something we all need to conserve as much as possible. Solar energy also helps reduce the dependence on fossil fuels for producing electricity.

In all of the sustainable actions you implement, do not forget the people portion of the three Ps: people, planet, and profit. It's all green. 



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