



LINN COUNTY CUSTOMER-CENTERED CULTURE



August 2, 2017

LC3 Newsletter Series Part 3 of 3

In [Part 1](#) of this newsletter series, we looked at the 25-year history of Linn County's journey toward a customer-centered culture, ending with the current initiative based on the work of Robin Lawton. In [Part 2](#), we took a brief look at what a customer-centered culture is, including a discussion of products and customers and why this is relevant to Linn County. In this final part, we give examples of Linn County's commitment to our cultural transformation and look at ways Linn County is working to build the Linn County Customer-Centered Culture, or LC3, so that we are renowned as a place to work and to do business.

Cultural Transformation for the Long Haul

After more than 20 years of transformation packaged under various names, Linn County is establishing a consistent identity for it. Because the centerpiece for the County's current initiative is Robin Lawton's Customer-Centered Culture (C3), and because the "C3" shorthand seems to have caught on with employees, we are adopting the label of "LC3" (Linn County Customer-Centered Culture). So, as we continue with our journey, look for the LC3 logo!

However, a logo is not enough. Internalizing a customer-centered culture means building it into how we think about our jobs and how the County operates. This is happening in a number of ways:

- Linn County's [Strategic Plan](#) contains this strategic outcome: "Linn County embraces a customer-centered culture that provides excellent service for all using transformational leadership and strategies."
- The Board of Supervisors adopted a [Customer Satisfaction Policy](#) that states, in part: "(This) policy intends to advance the understanding of Linn County products and customer expectations by measuring the extent to which product expectations and outcomes are met, and by empowering employees to reconcile differences between customer expectations and customer experiences." (Think about this for a moment. The Board has adopted a policy that explicitly says we need to understand what our customers want, to design products to meet those desired outcomes, and that empowers employees to fix problems!)
- Linn County's **Core Values**, the **Core Values Academy**, **START training**, and the **Learning Institutes**

Linn County's Core Values

- Communicate openly and effectively
- Demonstrate personal integrity and respect for others
- Be accountable for our actions and decisions
- Recognize valued contributions
- Create a supportive, positive work environment



LINN COUNTY CUSTOMER-CENTERED CULTURE



Cultural Transformation for the Long Haul—continued from page 1

are all built around making Linn County a great place to work and to empower employees to perform at their highest level.

- The Board of Supervisors has allocated approximately \$230,000 over the past five years specifically for this ongoing transformation effort. This funding has enabled the Core Values Academy, START Training, the Learning Institutes, a lending library with resources for employees, consultant-led projects with several departments, and workshops featuring nationally renowned presenters.
- Some **job descriptions** now incorporate “product development” and “alignment of departmental products and strategic outcomes” as essential functions of the position.
- In the **hiring process**, many departments now consider an applicant’s customer service experience and their values regarding a positive, supportive workplace – in addition to their technical qualifications.
- In its **Budgeting for Outcomes** process, the Board of Supervisors gives funding priority to budget offers that support or implement the LC3 initiative. For FY18, LC3-related approved budget offers include funding a new staff position in HR that will be responsible for implementing LC3 projects, and funding two additional semesters of the highly successful LC3 University with Ted Garnett.

Linn County Customer Satisfaction Policy

“The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines which promote a customer-centered culture focused on positive customer experiences. This policy intends to advance the understanding of Linn County products and customer expectations by measuring the extent to which product expectations and outcomes are met, and by empowering employees to reconcile differences between customer expectations and customer experiences.”

- From Linn County Customer Satisfaction Policy

Linn County Mission Statement:

Provide all customers the most satisfying products while maintaining sound fiscal management in order to enhance the quality of life in Linn County.



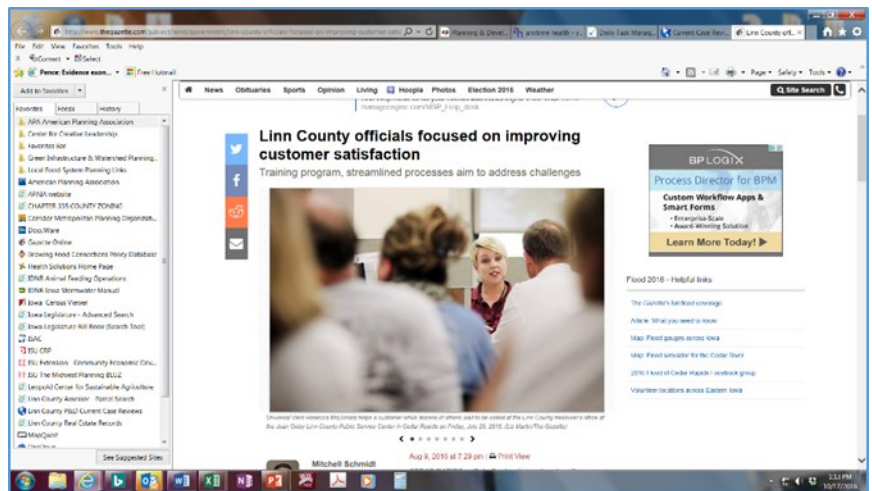
LINN COUNTY CUSTOMER-CENTERED CULTURE



Linn County's Efforts Getting Noticed

Linn County's efforts are starting to gain attention. On July 6, 2016, The Gazette ran a guest editorial from Supervisor Ben Rogers highlighting Linn County's Customer-Centered Culture initiative. The Gazette then followed with a front-page article on August 10, 2016, that examined the County's LC3 initiative and spotlighted the work of the Treasurer's Office and Planning & Development Department, as well as employee training. The Gazette then ran a follow-up story on May 9, 2017, highlighting additional efforts by the County focused on customer satisfaction.

In addition, presentations about Linn County's efforts have been included at the State of the County luncheon and at several state and national conferences, including the 2016 Iowa Chapter of the American Planning Association annual conference, the Treasurer's Affiliate of the Iowa State Association of Counties 2017 spring conference, and the 2017 World Conference on Quality and Improvement in Charlotte, NC.



Linn County's Commitment to a Customer-Centered Culture

By reading this newsletter (and the two previous issues), we hope you now have a better understanding of Linn County's commitment to working toward a workplace culture that values all customers – from employees to the public. We are guided by our Core Values and our desire for continuous improvement. Our goal is to be known for our commitment to a customer-centered culture – a place where we listen to, respect, and encourage input from each other. We want to become renowned as a place to work and to do business.

What will it take for us to reach our goal? It will take an ongoing commitment by elected officials, managers and staff. It will take a culture of empowered and engaged employees who understand what customers need, want or expect, and use information from customer interactions to improve Linn County products. And it will take leadership that embraces this culture, welcomes the risk of ideas and allows employees the freedom to exceed customer expectations. **In short, it will take all of us.**

For more information...

For more information about Linn County's Customer-Centered Culture initiative, please contact HR Director [Lisa Powell](#) at 892-5124 or Planning & Development Director [Les Beck](#) at 892-5151 or visit the LC3 website at www.linncounty.org/LC3. All three issues of this newsletter series are available on the LC3 website.