



November 2014 Client Newsletter

Dear Judi,

Since half of Americans stop doing business with a company after only two poor customer service experiences (according to an American Express survey), it's imperative that we all succeed in providing exceptional customer service. I am therefore sharing an article about ways you can accomplish this and a few masterful examples.

The team at Customer Perspectives want to wish you a Happy Thanksgiving!

Judi

The 6 Commandments Of An Exceptional Customer Experience

Managing the customer experience across multiple channels is one of the more complex challenges many companies face. But it's also the path to customer loyalty and continued growth. The companies most attuned to crafting a seamless, swift, and memorable customer experience are the ones that develop lasting relationships by creating more value for customers.

Here are six tenets that the most successful companies use to cultivate their customer experience:

1. Let customer feedback be your compass. Listen to your customers and encourage them to talk. Conduct surveys and research to identify where you excel, where you fall short, and what customers value and expect with each channel they use. For example, even though millennials are more likely to contact your company through social media than older generations, a recent survey we conducted showed that they'd still rather use the phone when they have a customer service issue. By having solid feedback on customer sentiment and preferences at your fingertips, you take the guesswork out of the equation, give customers exactly what they need, and proactively design the right customer experience for your organization.

2. Create easy and improved interfaces for the customer on every channel. Everyone is busy and no one wants to spend what little free time they have on a lengthy customer service call. So it's not surprising that ease ranks high when it comes to the customer experience. A survey of consumers about their customer service preferences found that personalization is key: Customers want companies to remember their past three to five interactions so the experience is smooth and continuous, no matter what channel is used. This way, customers don't have to waste time repeating any information. Having a

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customer's address, history of interactions, and even recent social media activity in the system, for example, promotes faster and more personalized service. An effortless customer service experience is becoming more and more of a differentiator-96 percent of consumers who expended little effort while resolving an issue with their service provider reported high loyalty. And since loyalty is an emotive state rather than rational, aim to create experiences that resonate with your customers' needs.

3. Focus on creating distinct experiences that can be repeated. Design your customer experience to uniquely align with your company vision and brand values. You shouldn't aim to create an entirely new customer experience across the whole customer journey, but by shaping it around your specific brand personality at key touchpoints, you can make it distinctive and memorable. This is where technology allows you to scale that signature experience to more and more customers as your company grows. For example, presenting your agents with guidance callouts, including key words and phrases that exemplify your unique brand personality, provides a signature feel during a call center interaction. To scale that experience so it's repeatable requires technology.

4. Innovate and explore creative, new ways to engage customers. Constantly reinvent the way your organization communicates with customers, even in little ways. It might be a redesigned bill to show customer savings or a list of family members who spent the most time on the phone in a given month. Find inspiration in customers' feedback about their experiences. When a customer ranks you a 9 or 10 for a particular interaction, find out why. See if you can replicate that experience for every customer. Start small, testing a new initiative with just a couple teams for a few weeks to explore how it works and how it can be improved before a larger roll out.

5. Be proactive; first and foremost, it's a state of mind. Leverage big data technology to identify trends and process bottle necks, so you can address them proactively. Anticipate customer needs in the next few days after an event. For example, one large telecommunications company wanted to provide a more seamless experience after customers purchased a new phone. By looking into call records, it found out most people were calling back within the first 48 hours regarding settings on their new phone. Expect to help your customers transfer contacts, provide disposal of the old phone, and foresee other events that customers might not have even anticipated yet themselves. Analyze data to see not only what other customers have needed, but what individual customers might need based on their individual history, behavior, interactions and transactions, or other information.

6. Weave customer experience into your company's DNA. This final commandment is perhaps the most important. The secret here is that creating a signature, exceptional customer experience starts with your employee experience. Without dedicated, attentive, and proactive employees, the customer experience will inevitably fail. But when organizations take the time to engage and nurture employees - that care trickles down to customers.

Ultimately, customer experience is driven from the top. The CEO has to take charge of this kind of culture change in order to value employees and mirror that experience for customers.

While improving the customer experience is a full-time commitment, there are many resources to draw on to give your customers a superior experience on every channel. Harness the insights from surveys, customer feedback, and big data to experiment with new initiatives. Draw on technology to ensure your company's singular customer experience is consistent for everyone whether they contact you by phone or tweet. And most importantly, engage your employees. The quality of your employee experience determines the success of your customer. And nothing is more important for continued growth.

By Idit Aloni Halfon

What is Good Customer Service?

We've all had those experiences:

- a retail clerk that cannot put their cell phone down long enough to answer your question.
- a customer service rep on the other end of the phone who says they can't help you, so they transfer you to someone else who also can't help you...and then hangs up on you when they try to transfer you again.
- the waitperson that clearly is not happy to be there, or to take your order, or to bring your food. They exude the "why are you bothering me" vibe.

And we all know good customer service when we see it, right? Positive customer service experiences, like so many other positive human experiences, come down to strong communications and feeling like we have been seen and heard. *Validate me*, that's all we ask.

Some examples:

- Our innkeeper at the charming seaside inn while on vacation recently was masterful. She used our names during check-in, was warm, but not overbearing, supplied us with useful information about the area, and then left us blissfully alone. Happiness.

- The Capitol One service rep that not only cheerfully solved my problem, she actually apologized for putting me on hold in order to solve my problem and then waived a fee on my account that I didn't even know I had. Big score.

- The waiter in a restaurant that sensed my anguish over the tiny glass of water and brought me, without being asked, a pitcher of ice water and kept it full all during dinner. Contentment.

What do all of these have in common? Each person providing a service made the effort to observe. They observed *who* I was and *what* I needed...and they supplied it. And then they did a little extra. Amazing.

Good customer service is about making the customer feel seen and heard.

By Christine Halvorson

We are happy to make changes in your shopping program (e.g. - changes to forms, to scenarios or to data reports) but please, please inform us at least 30 days prior to expected implementation.

Upcoming Events:

The International Quality and Productivity Center customer experience summit will be held Dec. 8-10 in New Orleans. For complete information, [click here](#).

Corp Events annual conference, **Data Marketing 2014: Unlocking the Power of Your Customer Information** will be held Dec. 10-11 in Toronto.

For complete information, [click here](#).

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Customer Perspectives | 213 West River Road | Hooksett | NH | 03106