

Why customer service is a feeling

Customer service is the backbone of any organization. Location might be important, your product might be important, your skills might be important, but without customers you'll fail. In this article I am going to write about customer experience and how organizations should think to become customer centric.



Who contributes to the customer experience?



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Customer service is not a department. Your call center is not the customer service department. There is no such thing as a customer service department. Customer service is a companywide attitude. Everybody related to a company provides juice in the customer experience glass. I am not going to restrain myself to the company's employees as partners and closely related services also contribute to the customer experience.

In-house departments

What does your customer value? Customer surveys show time and time again that a "perfect product" is the most important factor to customer satisfaction. Is a perfect product made by your customer service department? No. A perfect product is made from the research & development team working closely with the factory, marketing, sales, management and customer center. A good flawless product is important, because customers do not want to contact your excellent call center. This leaves a natural link to the second most important factor in great customer experience. Delivered on time..

Partners and 3.rd party connections

Unless you work at UPS chances are that you use a partner or a supplier of transport services. The SECOND most important factor for great customer experience is often handles by OTHERS than you; leaving you with a huge responsibility to find a good strategic partner that can WOW you and your customers.

Imagine a company providing technical support to computer related problems. You sell computers and makes a deal with geeksupport inc. to handle support questions for your customers. When your customers open their box they find a geeksupport pamphlet with contact numbers. If geeksupport mess up, you mess up. If you use UPS to deliver your goods, and UPS mess up, you mess up. Remember this when you select your partners. They become you in your customers' eyes.

Why delivering the correct product on time is important

We have covered the two most important aspects of great customer experience. The bad news is that you control only 50 % of the first to important factors. The second bad news, you only control some of the third one as well, unless you have outsourced your warehouse then you control nothing what so ever... Getting the right amount of products and the right products delivered on time is the third most important factor. Delivered on time requires good logistics, customers do expect you to keep your promises.

Customer rescue and recovery

Your call center steps up to the rescue when there is a problem with the product or delivery. A good problem resolution routine is very important. This is the fourth most important factor in great customer experience. When things go wrong, fix it – easily. This is also a management issue, as they need to remove the obstacles for front line employees to provide great customer service. Unreasonable limitations will cause frustration not only with your customers, but also with your employees.

“we could not reduce the price unless we filled in a form for approval no matter the amount” – this is an actual quote from a frustrated employee. The form needed to be approved by middle management and it took days. Trust your employees and your customers to find good solutions.

What about price?

Price almost did not make it to the top ten. I am just covering the four most important factors in great customer experience here. If price where an athlete he would not qualify for the Olympics. If price where important would we have luxury items like hotels, cars, tv-sets and dog spas.

So back to who contributes to customer experience?

As you see, product and delivery is very important. But you must not forget marketing who kind of sets the expectations and sales who promise gold to the customers. Marketing and sales are the people that provides the image of your company, they do all they can to look good. And that is nice. But these two need to work together with the rest of the organization in order to oversell, overpromise or agree to deals impossible to achieve.

We all contribute to great customer experience

I was almost run over by a car once. Not long ago a few years back. The story is quite boring actually, I was crossing the road and a car decided to make it past the crossing before me. The special thing was that this car had a huge company logo on its side promoting a plumber. Imagine the coincidence as I had a clogged pipe at home that I was pondering about that very morning. If you drive a company car, follow the traffic rules. If you represent a company be polite and reach out even outside your field of expertise as you are branding a good experience. When you talk to your friends about your job, how do you promote your company? In a good or a bad way?

So this brings me back to why customer experience is a feeling

Customer service is something you experience. It is not something you get. Great customer treatment results in a warm and good feeling with the customer. You need to create a positive feeling and in return you might get a loyal customer.

Just think about it.

You drive a motorcycle – You drive a Harley

You work on your computer – You play with your iMac

You drive a car – You drive a Volvo

The first one creates an image of an action, the second sentence create an image of a certain type of people associated with the brand or in the end associated with a feeling.

Thank you for reading.

PS! I know I left out accounting...

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