

- business model which has been formulated, implemented and measured by the Chief Executive Officer, and the senior management team.

In facilitating interactive workshops for in-house sessions of “Service that Satisfies SELLS”, care is taken to explain the context and content when dealing with the typical “customer from hell”. *The issue at hand is often not the issue at hand is a key and fundamental principle.*

Condescending and personal outbursts are often the consequences of unrelated, precedent experiences. In-store perceived or real deficiencies can be a trigger that compounds an earlier instance of road rage, a domestic argument or difficulty in finding a parking bay.

Sometimes, minor shortcomings and infractions are the trigger that “breaks the camel’s back”.

COMPOUNDING ACCELERATORS

The current Australian finance, insurance and service sector Royal Commission has revealed, highlighted, and forensically analysed appalling instances of the neglect, abuse and contempt of customers.

Deficient and inappropriate corporate cultures and staff member reward systems have been uncovered and roundly criticised. Employment contracts have been terminated, and career paths shattered. Moreover, consumer rights have been profiled, and accordingly, expectations and demands have been heightened, sharpened and are being pursued by a more sensitised customer and client base. There has been a recorded 35% increase in complaints submitted to the telecommunications industry regulatory authority.

Clearly, for all and sundry, there is no place to hide. Service excellence is a non-negotiable performance indicator.

Fine-print provisions are no protection. Simplicity, focus, transparency and accountability are dominant driving forces in a challenging and challenged marketplace.

Concerns about the surging increments in the costs of power and public utility services including water, sewerage and rubbish removal... are being addressed by politicians, governments and regulatory authorities. Comparative cost charts are being drafted, distributed and applied to the advantage of the consuming public and business sectors. However, consumers’ satisfaction languishes.

Some 25 years ago Cathay Pacific, the Hong Kong-based international airline, learnt about and profited from the advantages of simplifying the value-package and retail cost offerings. Little wonder, the success is in delivery.

The promise: “32 European destinations - 1 price”

Brilliant. Easy to comprehend, to assess value and to be satisfied. No-one was going to get a better deal.

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

- 1 Document a detailed job description – specified duties.
- 2 Script a job specification – outline essential human attributes.
- 3 Recruit discerningly – match profiles with individuals.
- 4 Induct into a comprehensive service culture.
- 5 Support, reinforce and celebrate consistent service delivery.
- 6 Empower. Delegate authority to self-monitor and self-regulate behaviours.
- 7 Reward consistent standards.
- 8 Embrace P.R.I.D.E. – personal responsibility for delivering excellence.
- 9 Insist on “one-touch” service.
- 10 Provide on-going customer feedback, and training.

FOLLOW-UP, FOLLOW-THROUGH

A major concern and annoyance to customers is the lack of follow-up and follow-through once a sale or service issue has been successfully concluded.

A personal expression of “thank you” is a strikingly effective relationship enhancer. Such sentiments and emotions are noticeably absent in the many transaction experiences that typify the prevailing digital marketplace.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

For most entities there are eight to ten matrices that define a total positive customer experience (read: great customer service).

These arise before the initial face-to-face (voice-to-voice) interaction, and then evolve following the conclusion of the transaction or issue resolution.

Appropriately and consequentially applied, these factors ensure customer satisfaction and negate the need to distribute letters threatening the sack for infractions which, supposedly, result in customers being “unhappy”.

Structure, discipline, belief and enthusiasm contribute to a corporate culture which provides delight for all ... Chief Executive Officers included. ■

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