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'Customer care must begin with CEOs'

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CUSTOMER care should pervade entire organisations and ideally start from the top was the message that came through at the 'Customer-care' conference held here, which proposed a return to customer-centrity to improve business performances across sectors. According to management mentor V K Madhav Mohan, plans for empowering customers has hardly been more than lip service and that despite all interventions so far, the customer has remained more or less an outsider.

"In any organisation, the CEO sets the standards and therefore the same principle should apply to customer service. CEO compensation can be linked to customer satisfaction and a third-party customer service survey can ensure that customer service levels are properly measured so that it can then be linked to compensation of CEOs," Mr Mohan said.

He said that if companies walked the talk on customer satisfaction, they would give customers a place on the board, just as every other key stakeholder has a position on the board. According to him the choice of which customer should be on the board could be operationalised through a customers' council that is constituted based on economic importance of customers or through nominations.

"What is important is that there should be a non-discretionary mechanism which gives customers their due," Mr Mohan said.

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