

Customer service as a movement

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Hyderabad, Aug. 10, 2007: 'ATHIDHIDEVOBHAVA' is the Sanskrit saying which gives a guest the status of a God, and striving to extend this status to a customer is Cusommerce, an initiative which started off as an annual industry event and is now turning into a public interest movement.

' Custommerce India Chapter 4', a two-day annual residential conference, will be held in the city on Aug 24 and 25 to debate challenges in customer interaction, discuss case studies and evolve strategies to improve customer service.

Speaking on the movement, Mrityunjay Athreya, management guru and mentor of Cusommerce, said the objective of the initiative was to improve customer interaction practices of the organisations in such a way that customer became their focal point and over a period of time the entire economy turned into a customer-driven one.

In the era of surplus products, customer was not a helpless follower but an active decider and what could draw him and then make him stick to a product was customer service, added Athreya, a former IIM, Kolkatta faculty. Citing various surveys he said, "Seventy-four customers leave a company for poor service, 97% are unhappy with inconsistent service, 64% switch service provider at least once a year, like in the case of mobile phone service providers and 92% form an opinion in one interaction."

The forum would bring the three stakeholders – consumer, service provider and technology provider – on a single platform to work out strategies and adopt technologies towards developing a customer-experience driven, globally competitive Indian economy. Management gurus, industrialists, regulators like TRAI and thought leaders would also take part in the movement. The organisation would position itself in customer interaction field like CII was for industry, Athreya said.

Shankaran Nair, President of Servion Global Solutions and convener of Custommerce, said 150 senior executives from various segments like banking, BPO and insurance, would participate in the conference to be held at hotel Marriott in the city. The organization, started in 2003, was a non-profile one and was funded by sponsors and through memberships. It already had 1,000 informal members and a membership enrolment scheme would be launched at the event.

Kuruvilal Markose, head, HR and Training, E2R SerWizSol, said under the guidance of an eight-member panel of eminent persons, two subgroups of the organisation were on the job of preparing frameworks and methodologies and dealing with knowledge issues.