

Catalyst

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Customer Service Excellence Foundation is a not-for-profit organization
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Only happy customers come back



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There is a lot of focus on customer service and customer loyalty. All companies talk about building relationships with customers (CRM), providing superior service and thus hopefully building customer loyalty and retaining customers. What is customer loyalty all about? It's about customers coming back to us over and over again. What do we need to do to get customers to come back to us? Of course, ensure that our products or services have features that are relevant to customer needs. Give them a product or service that meets specifications and delivers the promise. Unfortunately this is not enough. In today's competitive environment almost all leading brands in any category offer features that are almost identical to one another with fairly high or equal levels of reliability. Differences between one brand and another on basic specifications is almost non-existent. In fact I am sure we all realize that most products have features way beyond what the average customer actually needs or uses. How many of us actually use even a small percentage of what our television or audio system offers? We probably use less than 10 per cent of the features that our standard word processing or presentation software offers.

Yet continuous innovation and feature addition are important more from a marketing angle to attract

customers in the first place. They are not however enough to hold on to customers. We need to do something beyond giving a good quality product retain customers and build loyalty.

What makes customers come back?

So what makes customers come back? What can we do to make customers want to come back to us? It's actually quite simple. Make them happy. That's when customers come back to us. We do not go back to people or places that make us unhappy. We like to go to places that make us feel good. That's the name of the game - make customers happy and make them feel good. Easier said than done - and yet not really that difficult. Let us see what makes people happy and remember us?

I am reminded of a fairly regular situation I face when I attend a marriage function alone and get back home. My wife would bombard me with questions about the bride and the groom, what they were wearing, how they looked, what others looked like, the decoration in the wedding hall and so on. I generally find it extremely difficult to remember or recall any of these things that will help me give a meaningful reply to my wife. Many marriage receptions are about going through the mandatory hand

shake with the couple and family, the video and still picture and then off to dinner or lunch or whatever. But I certainly bring back some memories from such functions. It's always about the hosts and how they greeted and treated the guests in the

function. What makes an impact on me are not just the decoration and the food and the set up - all of which money can buy - but how I was received, the warmth and affection or the lack of it from the hosts, the attention paid by them and so on. I am sure I am not different from others in this respect.

Two types of needs
Let's move to a business situation and see what puts off people. Let's say you are a quality conscious person and you need a shirt. You walk into the show room of a leading brand of shirt on M.G Road (almost every city in India will have an MG Road and almost every MG Road will

Two types of needs

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have the leading brands of shirts). When you walk in, you find three salespeople behind the counter engrossed in a story that one is telling the others and they pay little or no attention to you. They look at you, wave to the counters to browse around and continue with their story. What are you likely to do? At least 90 % of participants in my workshops say they will walk out. I don't blame them because I would do the same. I ask why? The replies include - because the salespeople did not pay attention to me, my ego was hurt; they did not give me importance and other similar reasons.

Why does the customer walk out of a shop because he did not get attention when what he walked in for was a shirt?. We all believe that we are rational and objective in our buying behaviour. Yet when we go to buy a shirt we would have no hesitation in walking out for a reason that has nothing to do with the quality of the shirt. This seems extremely illogical, unreasonable and crazy - yet this is reality. This is how, very sane, reasonable, good customers like you and me will react and behave. The customer walks out because he can always get the shirt in another shop - on MG Road. He gets the same brand or an equally good brand in another shop and thus he does not compromise on his requirement of the shirt. What makes you different from others is not just that you have good quality shirts but how you handle him and how you make him feel - his experience with you. If you were to dispassionately assess the buying behaviour of this customer (who is not really unique but a normal customer like you and me), what the customer is really saying is that I am paying you Rs. 1200 for how you deal with me and make me feel and not so much for the shirt. I can always get that shirt anywhere.

This simple illustration is powerful to help us understand what customers are really looking for when they do business with you. Of course they want a product or service that satisfies their need. This is what one might call a physical or tangible need. There is obviously another need they have and sales and service people need to recognize this. Customers also have an emotional or psychological need that needs to be satisfied. It is the satisfaction of this need that makes a customer happy and makes her want to come back to you.

Whether we are dealing with shirts and sarees or televisions and washing machines or even electric motors or machine tools, we must remember that we are essentially dealing with a customer who is a human being. This is the crux of business everywhere. Business is really about managing people and relationships. When we deal with customers (people) we have to satisfy two kinds of needs - a tangible or physical need and a personal or psychological need. Today's reality is that today there are numerous products in all categories that will satisfy physical needs equally well. The differentiator that keeps customers tied to you is the way you deal with her and how you make her feel. Did you make her feel good; was she happy that she came to you? That is what customer facing people have to constantly ask themselves.

(This article has appeared in Hindu Business Line)

Custommerce National Convention 2011 Participant Feedback

- Brilliant initiative and the only one of its kind in India. Keep up the great job! - Alok Kumar (Aircel)
- This is "the movement". "Keep Rocking" - Raamkumar (Tejas)
- Excellent Program! Keep doing! - Ponraj (Kluber)
- Very good and simple insights which can be applied on the field and tried. - Balakrishnan J (Airtel)
- Warm and well planned event. The speakers were incisive and kept the sessions lively. - Sharatee Ghosh (Kotak)
- Extremely insightful. Greater practical sharing and interactivity of specific business issues. - Priya Nayak (ICICI Prudential)
- Very informative and helpful, understood new/emerging trend for CX. - Venodha Preyan (Tata Teleservices)
- Very informative program, great insights and surely helping in germination of a CX mindset. Thanks for the event!! - Hitesh Kakkar (Tata Teleservices)
- Helped me think from customer satisfaction to customer experience. Thanks. - Shankar (Aspire)
- Little more Indian flavour and more of detailed explaining on how to apply in smaller companies will be useful. - Rajesh Ahuja (Sleek)
- It was a wonderful experience to attend first time. It's a good occasion to meet successful professionals from varied industries talking same challenges. - Sanjeev Aggarwal (Toyota)
- Overall it was very effective with a lot of interactions with people from various industries. - K. C. Panda (HDFC ERGO)
- I could feel the difference between the first time I attended the program and now. Custommerce has come a long way and the experience is impressive and informative. Great takeaways from top class speakers. - A. Meenakshi (ING Vysya)
- As a Market Researcher, this program gave me a lot of ideas which helped structure some thoughts, useful examples and anecdotes. - Chandramouli (Feedback)
- Great understanding of Customer Experience. Definitely will implement in our group. - Shivakumar CTS (Netaccess)

Touchpoints Bring the Customer Experience to Life

Adam Richardson

.....Once you have mapped your customer journey, you can move on to looking at touchpoints. I generally find that touchpoints fall into four general categories (you may need some modified categories of course, feel free to experiment):

Products: Using the term "product" loosely here, this includes the hardware, software, and services themselves. In the case of Progressive, this includes its vans and website. (I'm classifying the website as a product as it's central to every aspect of Progressive's business, from acquiring to servicing customers. Frei examines how the website's feature of quoting competitive prices, for example, also has positive business benefits for Progressive. But for company's where the website is a straightforward marketing tool, it may be better to classify it in Messages, which we'll see below.)

Interactions: Two-way interactions that can be in-person (such as in a store), on the phone, or virtual (web sites, blogs, social network and user forum presences, and so on). Progressive minimizes in-person interactions to reduce costs and tries to have customers self-serve on the website, but when an accident does occur, the interaction with the agent in the white van is crucial. An interesting contrast is online shoe retailer Zappos, which wants customers to call, as the company sees that as a loyalty-builder for the brand, even if it's relatively expensive. CEO Tony Hsieh says, "We believe that forming personal, emotional connections with our customers is the best way to provide great service."

Messages: One-way communications that include brand, collateral, manuals, advertising, packaging, and the like. Progressive advertises heavily, with its minor-celebrity spokesperson Flo who works in the Progressive "store" in the TV commercials. In the previous article I mentioned the importance of the out-of-box-experience stage of the customer journey, and that typically falls into the Messages category as it focuses on establishing the brand voice and explaining a complex product to first-time users.

Settings: Anywhere that the product is seen or used: a retail store, a friend's house, TV product placement, events, or shows. Especially in Big Box retail, we have seen that manufacturers and vendors have less and less influence over how their products are presented, making this a tricky touchpoint to manage.

Chances are that you are already creating these touchpoints. You are creating a customer experience. But what turns this collection of touchpoints into a superlative customer experience? The key is coordinating and integrating the touchpoints so that they seamlessly meld together.

Look at each touchpoint and ask yourself:

- What specific things are we doing at each touchpoint?
- Are the touchpoints addressing customers' motivations, and answering their questions or allaying concerns? Are they working for your target customers, and for novices and experts alike?
- Are the touchpoints addressing your customers' unmet/underlying/latent needs? Are there needs going unstated that neither you nor competitors are solving?
- Are all the touchpoints speaking with the same tone, the same message, even the same words? Is your brand being communicated effectively and clearly?
- Are there hiccups in the flow from one stage to the next that may cause potential customers to drop off, or cause dissatisfaction for current customers (and perhaps costly product returns or help-line calls)?
- Are the touchpoints differentiating you from competitors and helping retain the customer?.....

For the full text, visit,

http://blogs.hbr.org/cs/2010/12/touchpoints_bring_the_customer.html

Customer Service Quotes

(Source: www.customer1.com)

- Spend a lot of time talking to customers face-to-face. You'd be amazed how many companies don't listen to their customers.
- *Ross Perot*
- If you do build a great experience, customers tell each other about that. Word of mouth is very powerful.
- *Jeff Bezos, CEO Amazon.com*
- The customer experience is the next competitive battleground.
- *Jerry Gregoire, CIO, Dell Computers*
- Quality in a service or product is not what you put into it. It is what the client or customer gets out of it.
- *Peter Drucker*

TITAN INDUSTRIES LIMITED

Titan Industries (www.titan.co.in) was established in 1984 as a joint venture between the Tata Group and the Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Corporation. The company brought about a paradigm shift in the Indian watch market when it introduced quartz technology and complemented it with international styling in watches retailed under the Titan brand.

Today, the company is not only the largest Indian watch maker but also the world's fifth largest integrated watch manufacturer. Subsequent diversifications have also made Titan Industries the leader in the Indian market in branded jewellery under the Tanishq brand name. With its own retail network for selling watches and jewellery, Titan is among the country's leading retailers. The company has also diversified into precision engineering and, most recently, into prescription eyewear. Titan Industries currently employs over 5,900 people and Titan and Tanishq are among the most admired brands in their categories.

The Titan brand of watches was followed by *Sonata*, as a value brand of functionally styled watches at affordable prices. Then followed a brand focussed on the youth *Fastrack*. The company also later acquired a licence for premium fashion watches of global brands such as Tommy Hilfiger, Hugo Boss, FCUK and launched its first Swiss-made watch brand *Xyllys*.

In 1995, the company diversified into jewellery under the brand name of Tanishq to capitalise on a fragmented



market operating with no brands in urban cities. In 2005, the company launched its second jewellery retail brand, Gold Plus, to focus on opportunities in small towns and rural India. In 2009, the company launched Zoya, as a retail chain in the luxury jewellery segment.

In 2002, the company leveraged its manufacturing competencies and branched into Precision Engineering Products catering to global majors across industry verticals like aerospace, automotive, oil & gas, engineering, hydraulics, solar and medical instruments.

The company entered into prescription eyewear in 2007 and launched the Titan Eye+ chain of world class optical stores.

With 737 retail stores across a carpet area of 9,14,611 sq.ft. as on 30th September 2011, Titan Industries has India's largest retail network. The company has over 310 exclusive 'World of Titan' showrooms and 700 after-sales service centres. Titan Industries is also the largest jewellery retailer in India with over 120 Tanishq boutiques, over 25 Gold Plus stores and over 180 Titan Eye+ stores. The company has two exclusive design studios for watches and jewellery and manufacturing / assembly units at Hosur (Tamil Nadu - the company's first and still its largest unit), Dehradun (Uttaranchal), Roorkee (Uttar Pradesh), Bengaluru (Karnataka), Pant Nagar and Goa. The Hosur units for both watches and jewellery are certified under ISO 9001:2000. The turnover of the company in 2010-11 was Rs.6,571 Crores and are targeting a turnover of Rs.14,000 Crores in 2014-15.

