

Operating With A Customer Focus

In every type of organization whether large or small, it is necessary to ensure that the customer is kept happy and satisfied. Customers are the people necessary for a business to survive. Figuring out what customers want and how to give it to them in a cost effective way ensures success for your business. It is important to know your customers so that you can seek out similarities and use these traits to market to specific groups. Some common groupings could be based on age, amount they are willing to spend, and how far they are located from your business, etc.

There are different types of marketing strategies and theory that can be utilized to target specific customers. However, keep in mind that there are costs involved in keeping every customer happy. There needs to be a balance to make sure that the efforts provide a payoff. At what point are your efforts useless? Are you coming on too strong and scaring customers away? You may be able and willing to spend more time with large volume customers or customers who are purchasing big ticket services or products. However, do not leave others out. A mixture of trial, error, and planning can provide the right strategy for your business.

How you deal with and treat people has a big reflection on your business and how others perceive you. You want to get along well in the business community. A few additional steps can retain a customer the next time they need to use your business again and attract new customers. Extra attention can convince a customer to refer you to a friend. Providing more useful products to a customer for a better price can attract new customers. A good name, honest reputation, and friendly employees can make a big difference.

Keep in mind that a bad image or experience may do more harm than a good experience creates benefits. When consumers are unhappy they tend to be more vocal. They tell their family

and friends about their unpleasant experiences. If you make one member of a large family upset, you will probably never get to serve their family members. This is why it is particularly important to have a method to deal with grievances and complaints. Customers may also perceive a negative experience for other factors. Consider how a customer would feel if your business was not clean and if there were unorganized objects or papers lying around your business.

Selections that you allow your customers to purchase from should give them enough choice and quality to be useful. Do you offer a variety? Do different products go together or are they stuck with one brand or type? Are products and services bundled to benefit the customer, or to force them into unnecessary purchases?

When using the Internet to connect with the customer, make sure that it is in a useful manner. Almost all businesses have web pages containing assorted information. The Internet is also used as advertising. Keep in mind that Internet content can be seen by all customer segments and should be tailored in such a manner. Many businesses use the Internet for placing orders and sales. Make sure to provide contact information, a place for feedback, and helpful information. Use the web as a tool, not a sole device for reaching or dealing with customers.

In order for employees to work well with customers, the whole overall culture should be oriented in acceptable means of dealing with customers. It might also be of benefit to allow employees to have the authority to remedy solutions with the customer. Establish a formal complaint policy that employees can follow. Ensure that enough people are aware of the problem so that it can be dealt with. When a problem is dealt with quickly, it becomes less of a problem. Allow all workers to know how their work directly or indirectly plays a role in serving the customer. Have behind the scenes employees work with customers, or talk to those that come

into direct contact with them every day. Share feedback from customers all throughout your organization. Do not leave some of your organization in the dark.

There are many ways of gaining customer feedback and feelings. Most customers who are angry or extremely pleased will be the ones who volunteer information. This may skew the overall results in the perception of your business. When you gather information, consider how situations affect consumers differently. Be willing to compensate respondents for the revelation of personal information. Realize that some customers may not be fully honest. Many individuals do not like to share bad news or they are afraid of severing relationships. Information can be gathered by comments that are over heard or surveys. For more general feedback, consider having a focus group that uses various consumers and provides for a more open discussion. The customer should not have to conform to your service or product. You should strive to fit their needs.

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