

## Customers Are The Business! Part Three/ Last



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**In** part two of these articles, I explained the first seven needs of customers that must be met in order to achieve customers' service excellence. They are: help, information, options and alternatives, fairness, quality service, adequate price and quality.

The eighth need is action. The organization is responsible and must act for the customer when the need arises. It is necessary and important not to use any of the following words or sentences; "I do not know, not my job, I am busy now, you have to talk to my manager, call me back, it is not my fault, and calm down". It is important to show the customer that you care by taking the necessary action to help him or her.

How many times did you come across an organization that you have complained or asked for help and it did not take any action? I personally know an organization that is providing complain forms for the last year and I (and many other customers) have filled that forms many times, and we still face the same problem. Surprisingly, that organization still wonders why it is not doing well. The best strategic plan in anything in life is doing things; action.

The ninth need is trust. Trust is the key and the essence of leadership, management, and every aspect of human relations, including customers' service. No one can maintain trust in any relationship unless one is trustworthy. Customers need to trust the organization and to feel trusted by the organization. Gaining the trust is so simple to explain understood, but it is hard to practice and maintain.

I would like to thank the amazing psychologist Dr. Dee Hock for his explanation and teaching about gaining trust. He said, "Make a list of things done to you that makes you abhorred. Don't do them to others, ever. Make another list of things done to you that you loved. Do them to others, always".

The tenth need is friendliness. One of the major reasons that create customers' dissatisfaction is that they have personal attitude against you or your staff. Their attitudes come from the way they feel about you, your business and or your staff. In other words, they were treated poorly.

I am sure that you came across many organizations where the front-line people showing long face in away that makes you feel that you never want to come back again. In some organizations, the staff would show you that they are doing you a favor by serving you. These attitudes and behaviors may happen for reasons. It could be the work stress, fatigue, or anything else; however, the customer is last person on earth to see or feel that.

Organization must find the means to create self-motivated staff. McDonalds pays extra 1 dollar/per hour for those workers who show smiling friendly face and positive attitude towards customers.

The eleventh need is understanding. No one will ever be able to deal with any one else unless they both understand each other. Thus, it is hard to provide excellent customers' service unless and until the organization is ready, willing, and able to understand its customers' needs and feelings.

The twelfth need is to be made feel important. One of our personality needs is the need of being significant and to feel important. We all feel good when someone remember us, send us greetings, give attention and offer his/her willing cooperation. Hank Paulson, the former CEO of Goldman Sachs, said, "I call 60 CEOs - in the first week of the year - to wish them happy New Year". These CEOs are his customers; the people with whom he dealt and who pays his and his people's salaries. How many calls - as a customer - have you received? How many calls - as a salesperson - have you made? If none or less than what you should do, you are not doing what would help creating long-term satisfied customers. If none, I wonder why organizations are collecting business cards from their customers. Is it to call them to sell them new products or service only?

How many times have you received a call that offering you a new product or service, or asking you if you like to renew your membership, but never even call for any kind of personal touch?

The thirteenth need is appreciation. It would not cost much, it almost cost nothing, but it has a significant impact on the customer's feelings. It is a simple 'thank you for'. The reason for that is that we have to thank any one who does us a favor. The customer is doing the organization a favor by choosing to spend his money with it. People like to be

thanked. However, do not just say that usual “Thank you”, be more specific. (Thank you for visiting us.) (Thank you for being so patient.)

The fourteenth need is comfort, compassion and support. Another reason that customers feel dissatisfied is that they feel that no one listens to them. Have you get angry or annoyed, or refuse to listen when a customer complained about a mistake? Think again. When a customer notices that you are making an effort to understand support, and comfort him or her, it is likely that the customer will see you positively.

The previous fourteen needs, if they are met, they will automatically create the last need that is satisfaction. No one pays for a product or service; everyone pays for the satisfaction that the product or the service brings. However, the company cannot sell satisfaction. It can provide the means that provide satisfaction. One cannot find satisfaction on the shelves of a supermarket or a retail shop. It only can be created by understanding and fulfilling all of the customers’ needs.

If the service provided is not satisfying, and since the product and service are easily accessible, the business will never have a product or price advantage again. What will last in the customers mind is the satisfying service attitude that cannot be easily duplicated.

Again, customers are people, who are free to choose where, when, how, why and from whom to buy. If you like to create long-term satisfied customers, find the ways and the methods that will make the entire organization aim at fulfilling these needs.