
The Mathis Group's

Messenger

Vol. 3 No. 3

March, 2005

Customership

Delivering Superior Customer Service

Customership is the delivering of superior customer service each and every time a customer uses a product or service. It is building a long term relationship with that customer - a partnership. You are building such a relationship with the customer that is goes beyond normal customer service to a service that is committed to taking care of whatever problem may surface. Partnering is building a relationship with the customer to such an extent that each will share information and recommendations while maintaining a loyalty in conducting business.

There is a three-fold purpose of customership. First, you retain the customer through good service and loyalty. Second, the customer becomes your best advertising simply by word of mouth. Finally, customership allows a relationship to develop which brings about a distinct partnership.

Customership has several benefits. You will notice an increase in repeat business as well as an increase in the percentage of the market you control. You will gain a trust from your customers which will provide you with a good business reputation. This will lead to high ratings in service and integrity which will lead to additional new customers. Because of the word-of-mouth advertising, you will have a lower cost for marketing. Success leads to high organizational morale which, in turn, leads to a reduction in employee turnover.

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***We would rather have one man
or woman working with us than
three merely working for us.***

**F.W. Woolworth
F.W. Woolworth Company**



Foundations for Effective Partnerships

Partnering is essential for customership. In order to form a partnership with a customer, you must first understand the customer's point of view. What are your customer's needs? What causes them to fail? What are their major expenditures? Where does the competition have a stronghold? Every customer wants increased profits, decreased waste, added value, and convenience/ease in a working relationship.

So, how does one begin the process of forming partnerships? First, examine your customer base and identify one who has the potential of being a partner. Begin to build a relationship with this customer - in all levels and departments of their organization. Lay the foundation for the partnership by making frequent contact, researching their needs, and planning how you can meet their demands. Learn what is important to them, and be prepared to point out what is unique about your organization, your skills, your services, your warranty, your delivery methods, etc.

Do not assume that you know what is best for your customer. As your partnership develops, you will find that there is a mutual exchange of information that will identify problems and areas of need. Then, together you will brainstorm solutions

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Replacing customer service with customership is a mindset. You are going to change the way you perceive your customers. Begin by developing a long term focus on customership. Examine what is keeping customership from expanding now. Begin with your current customer base by creating a follow-up plan. Chart customer retainment goals and profit levels. Gain commitment from all levels of management. Change policies to be customer friendly. Create town hall meetings with employees to gain new insights for customer issues and then reward employees for acts of customership.

As with any change, there will be roadblocks. You may have rules or procedures in place that restrict you and your customers. There may be departmental barriers between sales, promotions, accounting, etc. Your employees may not feel empowered to focus on solving problems for the customers or perhaps they have never been trained in customer service at all.

Even though there will be hurdles to overcome, your organization can embrace the concept of customership. Understand that while your customers are your greatest asset, they are individuals who have expectations. They look for empathy and understanding, knowledgeable answers to their questions, attention to their details, respect, and ethical, fair treatment. By addressing these expectations, you are on the road to moving from customer service to customership!

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to the need. As you build a relationship with the customer, you will begin to view things from a different mindset. By gathering feedback from the customer, you will be more focused on how the customer perceives the situation. You will look for how the product or service is delivered from the view of the customer. You will want to solve any problem immediately and thoroughly. You will begin to create contingency plans for helping the customer prevent or reduce problems. The customer will become the priority.

On the other hand, the customer will see your commitment and dedication to the partnership. You have sought their suggestions on reducing cost, improving quality, and implementing business with ease. This will not go unnoticed. Communication will continue to strengthen and will lead to trust and loyalty. They will make recommendations on your behalf to others while continuing their business partnership with your organization.

Seeking partnerships with your customers is a long term investment, but it is an effort that will create long term value.



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for additional information or to discuss your customized onsite seminar.*

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*Customership
Delivering Superior Customer Service
Ethics In The Workplace
Creating Superior Customer Value
Retaining Customers For Life*