



Business

FOR THOSE WHO WANT TO UP THEIR GAME



Why & customers
Prefer & Recommend

CEXINO

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE INNOVATION

Vision

INSPIRING FACILITATING & CREATING REMARKABILITY



Mission

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE INNOVATION AND PROBLEM SOLVING THROUGH WORKSHOPS, FACILITATION, TRAINING, COACHING, CONSULTING, CUSTOM SOLUTIONS AND CUSTOMER VALUE PROPOSITIONS DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT...

Values

PROFESSIONALISM, RELIABILITY, INNOVATION, COLLABORATION, FLEXIBILITY, CREATIVITY, QUALITY, RELATIONSHIP NETWORKS, ACTIVE THINKING AND FUN...



"I formed this company because I want to help professionals become more successful at attracting and retaining customers, becoming more creative, innovative, collaborative, customer centric and able to solve problems better. To be Preferred and Recommended should be the number one goal for any customer centric organization or professional and in this issue of CEXI business I explore the different areas that are critical to address if you want to be preferred and recommended. Enjoy it and please feel free to contact me.

Take @ New

PERSPECTIVE

Why are customers leaving you? Why are you not making sales? Is there a reason for the number of account closures this month? Do you know why your store is almost empty on the busiest day of the week? Why are people ranting and raving about your competitors, when seemingly, you offer the same thing - are you just not getting why this is all happening?

In today's day and age, customers are looking for something different. They are looking for more than just a fancy product or a synthetic smile. Customers are looking for genuine value. Value that they can trust in to be consistent in quality. Customers want to feel that you, the business, are trustworthy and that you care about them personally as individuals and not just as your next paycheck, holiday or rent. As a business, you need to convince customers of:

- ✓ The quality of your product or service
- ✓ The reliability & trustworthiness of your business
- ✓ Your ability to be fast, efficient and effective
- ✓ Your ability to follow through on promises
- ✓ Your ability to be flexible with your offering
- ✓ Your ability to continuously provide new offerings
- ✓ Your ability to be relevant, caring and top of mind
- ✓ Your ability to be easy enough to find
- ✓ Your ability to make them want to join you
- ✓ Your ability to keep relationships alive
- ✓ Your ability to be knowledgeable and professional

You may think that these factors are not so necessary and that if you just try harder while ignoring these basic criteria your business will flourish. Unfortunately, this will not happen. Customers today have far too many choices at hand to have to choose you. The only reason a customer will choose or try you is that you are either 'the only one', 'the cheaper one' or 'the preferred and recommended one'. Which one do you want to be? The real challenge for business is to find the balance between operating the business in an efficient and effective manner and being so relevant and remarkable in the eyes of customers

For years now there have been books written and published on the subjects of customer service, customer experience, customer relationship management and innovation practice. All these books stress the importance of being top of mind and heart with customers. Yet there are still so many out there that ignore the fundamentals.

Businesses should aim to become preferred and recommended as a measure of success. To be 'the cheaper one' is not a sustainable strategy and will only work in certain industries for a while until somebody becomes cheaper than you. To be 'the only one' is a bold approach and requires you to really stand out in your product or service in terms of uniqueness. To be 'preferred and recommended' is the strategy that requires you to drive high quality, consistency, efficiency and customer relationships. It is the strategy that will lead to success because it clearly highlights which areas trigger the desired response from customers to continue to hold your business in high esteem and as a result to tell others of your glory and recommend more business to you. To be preferred and recommended should be the goal of any business looking for success.

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Quality

The Oxford English Dictionary describes quality as the degree or level of excellence in high quality as well as general excellence. What does quality mean to your business? In order to achieve high quality, you have to understand what customers expect from your product or service. When we say something is of high quality, what we mean is that the product or service rates highly when meeting or exceeding our expectations. All businesses should aim to deliver high quality products or services. However, because not many businesses are customer centric they do not understand what expectations needs or wants their would-be customers have of them.

In order for a business to have high quality, it needs to define the standards of quality across its entire customer experience. So how do you know if you have a high quality product or service? Are you just guessing? Are you asking your customers? Have you defined your standards? Do you know how you rate comparatively to other businesses in your industry? Do you care? The problem is that businesses have not defined the standards of quality across their entire customer experience. The typical scenario is that businesses only define the quality standards of their customer experience at certain levels of the customer experience but not all.

In large organisations, the standards of service delivery are defined across business units that do not communicate with one another effectively or at all. The result is an inconsistent definition of quality in the business that the customer subsequently experiences. This is probably not the intention but it happens all the time. Small businesses, have better communication and may not experience inconsistency but typically only define their quality in one or more areas but rarely in the total customer experience. The message is simple; you need to define your quality in all the areas of your customer experience. You then need to ensure that the quality you provide is a higher standard than competing businesses. You need to measure the satisfaction and loyalty of your customers to determine how well you are doing on a continuous basis. Finally, you need to strive to improve your value proposition, through innovation, in order to continue to remain preferred and recommended.

"For a business to have high quality, it needs to define the standards of quality at every step of its customer experience"



QUALITY CHECKLIST

- ✓ HOW DOES MY PRODUCT, SERVICE, AND ENTIRE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE RATE IN COMPARISON TO OTHER BUSINESSES I COMPETE WITH?
- ✓ HOW CAN I IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF MY TOTAL CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE?
- ✓ WHERE DO I NEED TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF MY TOTAL CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE?
- ✓ WHAT DO I NEED TO START DOING, STOP DOING AND KEEP DOING TO ATTAIN AND RETAIN HIGH QUALITY AND DURABILITY?
- ✓ WHAT DO CUSTOMERS SAY ABOUT THE QUALITY AND DURABILITY OF MY PRODUCT, SERVICE AND CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE?
- ✓ IF MY BUSINESS WAS PERFECT WHAT KIND OF QUALITY, WOULD I BE PROVIDING?
- ✓ WHAT DO CUSTOMERS EXPECT FROM MY PRODUCT OR SERVICE IN TERMS OF QUALITY?
- ✓ WHO ARE THE BUSINESSES I COMPETE WITH? (MAKE A LIST OF AT LEAST 10)
- ✓ HOW DO I MEASURE THE QUALITY OF MY PRODUCT OR SERVICE ON A CONTINUOUS BASIS?
- ✓ HOW CAN I GO ABOUT CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVING MY PRODUCT OR SERVICE?

& Trustworthiness

RELIABILITY

"To earn the customer's trust you need to instil in them a sense that you are honest and that you care about them as individuals"



TRUST & RELIABILITY CHECKLIST

- ✓ DO I PROMISE TO CALL BACK AND THEN FORGET TO DO IT?
- ✓ DO MY CUSTOMERS OFTEN COMPLAIN OF BROKEN PROMISES?
- ✓ DO I MAKE CUSTOMERS WAIT TOO LONG OVER THE PHONE OR AT THE CALL CENTRE?
- ✓ ARE MY STAFF RUDE TO CUSTOMERS OVER THE PHONE, E-MAIL OR AT THE STORE COUNTER?
- ✓ DOES MY PRODUCT OR SERVICE HAVE A GUARANTEE, WARRENTY, MONEY BACK OR EXCHANGE POLICY TO SHOW THAT I AM CONFIDENT IN THEIR SATISFACTION & DELIGHT?
- ✓ DOES MY PRODUCT OR SERVICE HAVE A QUALITY STAMP OF APPROVAL?
- ✓ WHAT ARE ALL THE AREAS IN MY CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE THAT SHOULD BE EXAMINED TO IMPROVE TRUSTWORTHINESS AND RELIABILITY?
- ✓ HOW CAN I CHECK HOW CUSTOMERS FEEL ABOUT MY BUSINESS ON A REGULAR BASIS?
- ✓ DO I TELL CUSTOMERS ONE THING AND DELIVER ANOTHER?
- ✓ IS MY BUSINESS CONSISTENTLY TRUSTWORTHY THROUGHOUT THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE?

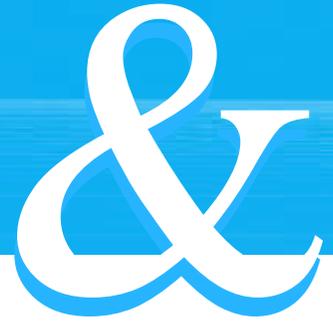
Do you consider your business to be trustworthy? Do you consider yourself reliable? Do you know what these two terms mean and what you should do about them? The answer is that most businesses do not know what it means to be either of these. The Oxford English Dictionary describes trust as the firm belief in the reliability, truth, or strength of a person or thing as well as confident expectation. Does your business encourage confidence? Do customers feel safe, secure and confident in your business? Trust is the fundamental basis for a successful relationship whether it be business or personal. The activities which your business conduct and the way you treat customers will determine whether customers come back to you or not.

From a customer experience point of view in order to earn customers trust you need to consider all the factors that will determine whether customers will trust you or not. This requires you to identify all the moments of contact with customers and design the customer interaction in such a way that it instills trust. Reliability is a synonym for trust. The Oxford English Dictionary describes reliability as been able to be relied on, consistently good in quality or performance. To instil that kind of confidence in your business is a science as well as an art. The science comes from rigorously examining and designing the customer interaction as you would like it to occur. The art comes from the manner in which you deal with customers emotionally as well as going beyond the call of duty with their needs wants and expectations. A great teacher once said that customers only care about two things when it comes to business: how much you care about them as well as how much you care about your product or service.

To earn the customer's trust you need to instil in them a sense that you are honest and that you care about them as individuals with their unique needs, wants and expectations as well as give them the sense that you love what you do and have confidence in your product or service. To look at how to care for customers examine the section on caring further in this journal.

Professionalism Credibility

KNOWLEDGEABLE



Have you ever dealt with a business that was not professional? What did that feel like? To me it always felt like the person representing the business was not really interested in my needs. The Oxford English Dictionary describes a professional as someone who is highly skilled at a particular role; the Flip Dictionary describes a professional as an expert, master, and highly skilled and trained. The implication is that the person is able to meet and even exceed your expectations. To be preferred and recommended the people who represent your business need to be professional not only in technical terms but also in the manner in which they treat customers.

To be professional implies that you are knowledgeable about all the aspects of your business. If customers have any questions, regarding products, services, contact details, price, features and benefits, your staff should be able to answer them. Does your business overlook the way it portrays itself to customers? A common mistake is that a business may be providing a very high quality product but does not pay enough attention to whether it is treating customers in a professional and knowledgeable manner. As a result, customers form an opinion of the business from the way they were treated by staff members etc... Customers prefer and recommend based on the total customer experience and not only on certain parts of it, even though certain parts may be more relevant than others. The message is simple, make sure that you treat customers in a professional and courteous manner. Make sure that your staff and call centre agents are knowledgeable, responsible, reliable, and courteous.

Credibility is essential to be preferred and recommended. The Oxford English Dictionary describes credibility as the quality of being convincing and that which can be believed in. It is always a good idea to be recognized as a professional through accreditation. Accreditation means that you are officially recognized, generally accepted or believed, certified as being of a prescribed quality. If your business sells products your credibility will be based on the perception of your brand, on the brands of the products you provide and on your guarantee, warranty and exchange policy. If your business sells services, it is a good idea to display certifications of accreditation, statements of quality assurance and referrals.

"The people who represent your business need to be professional not only in technical terms but also in the manner in which they treat customers"



PROFESSIONALISM CHECKLIST

- ✓ ARE MY STAFF ACCREDITED AND QUALIFIED FOR THE JOB THEY DO?
- ✓ DO MY STAFF LOOK AND ACT PROFESSIONALLY AT ALL TIMES WITH CUSTOMERS? (DRESS CODE & BEHAVIOR)
- ✓ DO MY BUSINESS PREMISES PROJECT A PROFESSIONAL IMAGE? (CLEAN & STYLISH)
- ✓ DO ALL DELIVERY CHANNELS PROVIDE THE SAME CONSISTENCY IN PROFESSIONALISM?
- ✓ DO THE PEOPLE THAT WORK IN THE COMPANY DISPLAY PRIDE IN THE WORK THEY DO? (BRAND ADVOCATES)
- ✓ DO THE PEOPLE IN MY BUSINESS GO OUT OF THEIR WAY FOR CUSTOMERS? (EXTRA MILE)
- ✓ DO MY STAFF HAVE ALL THE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS FOR THEIR ROLE? (TRAINING)
- ✓ DO I HIRE THE RIGHT PEOPLE FOR THE JOB?
- ✓ DO I TRAIN AND COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY FOR THE JOB? (CONTINUOUS LEARNING)
- ✓ DO MY STAFF WANT TO GIVE OUTSTANDING SERVICE? (REWARD & MOTIVATION)

& Location Accessibility PROMOTION

"Put yourself in your customer's shoes and see how easy it is to find your business and navigate your business premises, website and call centre"



ACCESSIBILITY CHECKLIST

- ✓ HOW EASY IS IT TO FIND MY BUSINESS?
- ✓ IS MY BUSINESS EASY TO FIND ON TELEPHONE DIRECTORIES, INTERNET WEBSITES AND POPULAR COMMUNITIES?
- ✓ IS MY BUSINESS THE PREFERRED AND RECOMMENDED PRODUCT OR SERVICE ON POPULAR SEARCH WEBSITES AND MAGAZINES?
- ✓ ARE MY DELIVERY CHANNELS EASY TO FIND AND NAVIGATE THROUGH?
- ✓ ONCE ENTERING MY BUSINESS PREMISES OR WEBSITE, HOW EASY IS IT TO FIND PRODUCTS, SERVICES AND INFORMATION?
- ✓ DOES MY ADVERTISING AND BRAND PROMOTION SEND OUT THE RIGHT MESSAGE?
- ✓ IS IT EASY TO READ MY PRINT ADS WHETHER THEY ARE ON A BILLBOARD OR A MAGAZINE?
- ✓ IS MY PROMOTION COMPELLING?
- ✓ DOES MY PROMOTION MAKE AN EMOTIONAL IMPACT ON CUSTOMERS?
- ✓ DOES MY PROMOTION REALLY MAKE PEOPLE WANT TO GO AND PURCHASE MY VALUE?

Where your business and delivery channels are physically and virtually located can make the difference between success and failure. The Oxford English Dictionary describes accessibility as being able to be reached or used. Have you ever put yourself in your customers' shoes and wondered, "Is it easy to find my business and navigate through it"? It is true that there are a number of retail businesses who get the principle of accessibility and make finding products relatively easy to find on their shelves. Many service businesses would benefit greatly from looking at how successful retail companies design and develop their customer experience.

The message in this section is this: put yourself in your customer's shoes and consider how easy it is to find your business, navigate your business premises, website, call centre IVR, shop premises etc... All these experiences would either contribute to or retract from the overall impression that customers will have of your business. Please do not make it a complicated process to navigate your website. If your business is located, farther than your competitors you have to make sure that the products or services you provide are truly compelling, remarkable, and valuable for people to want to visit you. Unless you are preferred and recommended already, that is, through brand promotion etc... You are just another name or number to customers and there is no reason for them to want to come and visit you. It is true, you should design your customer experience to be remarkable, reliable and valuable but remember the following lesson "people are lazy" not necessarily in all cases but in many cases this is true, so whatever you do make sure it's easy to find your businesses and that you are close enough to the action to get some action of your own.

Seth Godin says that "ideas that spread, win" I wholeheartedly agree. In order to spread your ideas, products, and services make sure that your promotions are remarkable and that they stand out. Make sure that your message is bold, easy to read and clear. Make sure that your value is clearly stated in your promotions and clearly distinguished from that of your competitors. Remember, there are tons of promotions out there in every shape and form and you have to answer one question: why will people look at and act upon YOUR promotion, billboard, TV advert, website marketing and pamphlet?

Efficiency & EFFECTIVENESS

Does your business take longer to do what can be done faster? Do your processes take customers through snakes and ladders and irritating treasure hunts? Simply put, do you make things more complicated than they need to be (both for customers and for your business)? The answer (unfortunately) is yes. Many businesses have very long and complicated processes. As was stated earlier in this journal, customers want you (the business) to make things easier for them and not make them wait for no reason. Ironically, how many businesses do just that?

The Oxford English Dictionary describes efficiency as the process of producing results with little waste of effort. The Flip Dictionary describes efficiency as being able, skilful, competent, productive, economic, and expert. Do you waste your customers' time and effort? Can your forms and procedures take less time? Do your systems take a long time to process requests? Are your communications and promotions complicated and confusing? Do the people who represent your business act professionally? Are they skilled and trained to provide the customer experience that you wish to provide? Because many businesses do not define their total customer experience, they do not seem to understand how their long and complicated processes, procedures, and interventions negatively influence their customer experience and turn people off.

The Flip Dictionary describes effectiveness as being able, productive, competent, and capable. Can your business do what it is meant to do well (better than your competitors) such that customers are compelled to return to you and tell all their friends to do so as well? Think about it. The whole point of this journal is to teach to start looking at your competitiveness comparatively. In today's world, there are many competing businesses in the same or similar industries. If your business continues to make it complicated and uncomfortable to do business with you, customers will simply look elsewhere for alternatives. So the message is simple: Make yourself a pleasure to do business with. Make ALL your interactions and transactions smooth and efficient. Make sure that you get back to customers quickly if you miss their call. Make sure that you do not make customers wait unnecessarily at queues, call centres, website loading times, and delivery of your product and service. Be efficient and effective and you will see how customers start (and continue) to prefer and recommend you.

"Because many businesses do not define their total customer experience they do not seem to understand how their long and complicated processes turn customers off"



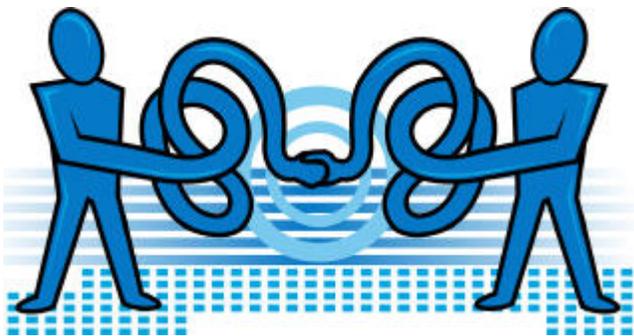
EFFICIENCY & EFFECTIVENESS CHECKLIST

- ✓ DO YOU MAKE CUSTOMERS WAIT UNNECESSARILY IN LONG QUEUES?
- ✓ DO YOUR CALL CENTRES MAKE IT SIMPLER OR MORE COMPLICATED TO FIND INFORMATION?
- ✓ DO YOU GENERALLY WASTE CUSTOMERS TIME AND DO YOU KNOW IF YOU ARE DOING IT?
- ✓ DO YOUR STAFF GET BACK TO CUSTOMERS PROMPTLY AND QUICKLY AFTER PROMISING TO DO SO?
- ✓ DO YOUR WEBSITES TAKE AN EXCEEDINGLY LONG TIME TO LOAD INFORMATION AND DISPLAY THE CORRECT INFORMATION?
- ✓ ARE YOUR FORMS LONG, COMPLICATED AND A FRUSTRATION TO COMPLETE?
- ✓ DO YOUR INTERNAL SYSTEMS TAKE A LONG TIME TO PROCESS REQUESTS AND ORDERS?
- ✓ DO YOUR STAFF MEMBERS TREAT CUSTOMERS IN AN EFFECTIVE MANNER?
- ✓ DO YOUR PROMOTIONS CLEARLY INDICATE TO CUSTOMERS THE VALUE AND WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE ABOUT IT?

& Flexibility

CHOICE

"In today's over branded world with literally hundreds of businesses competing for head and heart space it is important to make space for flexibility and choice"



FLEXIBILITY & CHOICE CHECKLIST

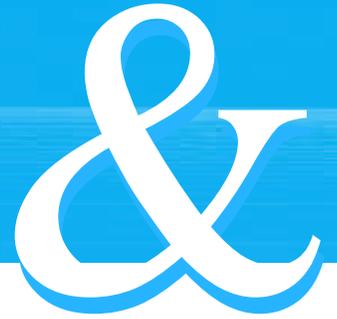
- ✓ DO YOU OFFER A VARIETY OF PRODUCTS AND SERVICES?
- ✓ DO YOU OFFER TO ORDER PRODUCTS NOT ON THE CATALOGUE ON BEHALF OF YOUR CUSTOMERS?
- ✓ ARE YOU TOO STRICT WHEN IT COMES TO EXCHANGING ITEMS ON THE MENU?
- ✓ ARE YOU FLEXIBLE ENOUGH SO THAT CUSTOMERS (WITHIN REASON) MAKE YOUR KITCHEN THEIR OWN?
- ✓ DO YOU ALLOW CUSTOMERS TO CHOOSE WHAT THEY WANT TO PAY FOR IF THAT SUITS THEM?
- ✓ DO YOU ALLOW FOR CUSTOMERS TO CREATE THEIR OWN PRODUCT, SERVICE AND PRICE COMBINATIONS?
- ✓ DO YOUR STAFF MAKE CUSTOMERS FEEL COMFORTABLE THAT THEY ARE WELCOME TO CHOOSE SOMETHING ELSE AND CREATE THEIR OWN COMBINATIONS?
- ✓ ARE THE CHOICES YOU OFFER COMPARATIVELY VALUABLE TO CUSTOMERS IN RELATION TO YOUR COMPETITORS?

I am one of 'those' customers as my wife calls it. When I visit a restaurant for example and I do not find the combination of orders that I like I usually ask if I can change one element for another. In almost every case I don't even mind paying extra if I just swap one thing for another especially if they do not fall into the same price category. So what is wrong with this mentality? Absolutely nothing (as far as I am concerned). I think that in today's over branded world with literally hundreds (if not thousands) of businesses, competing for head and heart space it is important to make space for flexibility and choice. Believe me, if you will not be flexible, customers will simply find an alternative without a moment's notice and leave you.

The Oxford English Dictionary describes Flexibility as being able to bend easily without breaking, being adaptable, and able to be changed to suit circumstances. This definition has never been more relevant. If your business can not be flexible (within reason of course) to your customers needs, situation, lifestyle, religious & social affiliations, taste, preferences, location and desires than don't expect to become preferred and recommended in this age of competitiveness. Many small to medium businesses have to be flexible to remain competitive because their competition is so overwhelming. The message here is simple: design your customer experience to include variations and options. If you are a restaurant, allow customers to create their own combinations. If you are a bank, provide for monthly once off bundle fees and allow customers to build their own bundles. If you a service business offer a free delivery or quotation. The more flexible you can be (as long as it still makes business sense to you) the better.

The Oxford English Dictionary describes Choice as variety from which to choose. Does your business offer variety? If not that is ok assuming you are competing based on remarkability. However if you are selling a variety of products/services, you will need to answer the question of why should customers visit you if they can get more variety of options at your competitors. I see so many smaller businesses fail because they don't seem to understand that because they have less variety in their store comparatively they are actually only able to compete in terms of price, service (relationship) or uniqueness. Be very clear, on what basis your business considers itself competitive.

Caring Fair



GENUINE

Do you consider yourself a caring business? Do you know why it is important to show fairness? What does it mean to be genuine? The reason I focus on this section is because it is so often overlooked by businesses. Yet it is one of the most fundamental skills of a preferred and recommended business. You can have the most high quality products and services and the most intelligent people working for and with you. But, if you give customers the impression that you simply do not care OR that you are a fake, you will lose their trust and if they can help it, they will not return to you.

Why do businesses stop caring (if they ever did before)? Because they either become arrogant (due to having grown so large) or stupid (due to not understanding what customers really want and what turns people off). Businesses that are large, franchised and multi-regional and national still can not afford to not care for customers. Why? Because there are so many businesses out there (in every shape and form) that can literally overnight become the new sensation and customers will simply leave you. This may not be such a threat to organizations who have become monopolies. However, just consider how the Internet is making national and international business available at customers doorstep. What are the implications for your business? Can you really afford to treat customers superficially, unfairly and with disregard?

The Oxford English Dictionary describes caring as serious attention and thought, caution to avoid damage or loss, protection, feel concern or interest, feel affection or liking and be cautious. I always like the analogy that CARE stands for Customers Are the Reason we Exist. Always remember to treat customers with care, understanding, fairness and always be genuine. The Oxford English Dictionary describes genuine as really what it is said to be, authentic or real. Be genuine with customers and they will appreciate it because it is an indication that you are treating their needs, wants and expectations as if they are your own. The Oxford English Dictionary describes fairness as reasonable treatment or behavior and satisfactory. Pay attention to the way you treat customers. A classic example of violating fairness is not attending to customers in an orderly manner (first come first serve) or treating certain customers with favoritism while mistreating others.

"CARE stands for Customers Are the Reason we Exist. Always remember to treat customers with care, understanding, fairness and always be genuine"

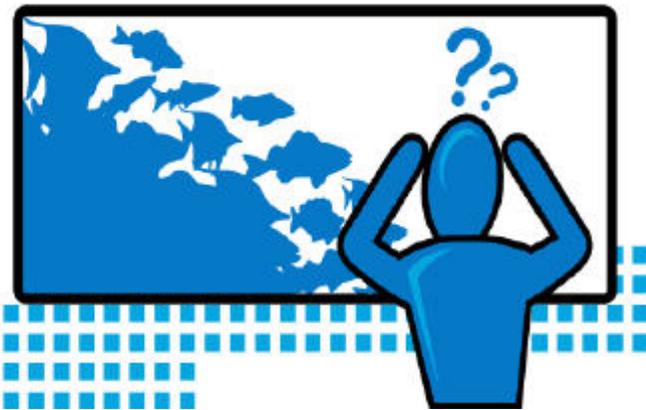


CARING CHECKLIST

- ✓ ARE YOUR STAFF MEMBERS RESPECTFUL?
- ✓ ARE YOUR STAFF MEMBERS PROFESSIONAL IN THE MANNER THEY TREAT CUSTOMERS?
- ✓ ARE YOUR STAFF MEMBERS GENUINE IN THE MANNER THEY TREAT CUSTOMERS?
- ✓ DO YOUR STAFF MEMBERS TREAT CUSTOMERS WITH RESPECT OR DISREGARD?
- ✓ DO YOUR STAFF MEMBERS TREAT CUSTOMERS IN A FAIR MANNER?
- ✓ DOES YOUR BUSINESS OPERATE ON A FIRST COME FIRST SERVE BASIS?
- ✓ DO YOU OPENLY TREAT SOME CUSTOMERS WITH MORE CARING THAN OTHERS?
- ✓ DOES YOUR TRAINING TEACH STAFF AND MANAGEMENT TO BE GENUINE WITH CUSTOMERS AND ADDRESS THEIR NEEDS, WANTS AND EXPECTATIONS AS THEY WOULD OF A FAMILY MEMBER OR CLOSE FRIEND?
- ✓ DO YOU TREAT YOUR STAFF MEMBERS WITH THE SAME RESPECT, DIGNITY AND FAIRNESS AS YOU WOULD LIKE THEM TO SHOW YOUR CUSTOMERS?
- ✓ DOES YOUR MISSION ENCOURAGE CARING?

& Free Prize MEMBERSHIP

"It is easy to attract and retain customers
all you need to do is increase the
pleasure and decrease the pain of
doing business with you"



FREE PRIZE & MEMBERSHIP CHECKLIST

- ✓ HAVE YOU CONSIDERED HOW YOU SHOULD REWARD YOUR CUSTOMERS?
- ✓ HAVE YOU IDENTIFIED A COST EFFECTIVE 'FREE GIFT'?
- ✓ HAVE YOU WONDERED WHAT WOULD MAKE CUSTOMERS WANT TO JOIN YOU AND RETURN TO DO BUSINESS OVER AND OVER?
- ✓ LOOKING AT YOUR INDUSTRY, WHAT IDEAS CAN YOU GET FOR FREE GIFTS THAT WOULD APPEAL TO YOUR CUSTOMERS?
- ✓ LOOK AT YOUR CUSTOMER COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS FEEDBACK AND SEE WHAT IDEAS YOU CAN GENERATE
- ✓ LOOK AT YOUR ENTIRE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AND CONSIDER WHAT TYPE OF PRIZES CUSTOMERS WOULD LOVE
- ✓ WHEN CREATING A MEMBERSHIP MAKE SURE IT IS NOT A COMPLICATED PROCESS THAT WOULD TURN CUSTOMERS OFF
- ✓ CREATE ALLIANCES WITH OTHER BUSINESSES TO ENRICH YOUR MEMBERSHIP VALUE AND CREATE BUSINESS FOR BOTH YOUR RESPECTIVE BUSINESSES

All people want to be part of a winning team. All people want to be rewarded. A famous business consultant once noted that it is easy to understand customers, all you need to do is increase the pleasure and decrease the pain of doing business with you. The free gift and membership concept (and all related reward initiatives) aim to do just that. Rewards (that is meaningful rewards) will keep customers coming back to your business again and again if your primary value is meeting and exceeding their expectations.

Seth Godin wrote a book called *Free Prize Inside*. There (among other things) he describes how companies can become more remarkable by doing the extra bit and rewarding customers with 'the free prize' which doesn't even have to be expensive at all. A few simple examples of free prizes include: the small present included in select cereal box brands, free parking for 1 hour vouchers, gift vouchers for having spend over a certain amount of money and the free lollipop at the dentist after the treatment. Though simple they may sound, the free prize is a powerful concept that will definitely put you in a top of mind space with customers. So how can you reward customers? There are infinite possibilities all you have to do is exercise your imagination. For example, some coffee shops bring you a free chocolate or biscuit when you order a hot beverage. I have noted some restaurants bring you a shot of alcohol when you sit down at the table on arrival. Dentists and doctors (and other medical professionals) can give sweets, hot and cold drinks and even give away samples of goodies (which don't even have to be paid for because they will be promoting other brands).

Some companies offer a more formal approach to rewarding customers. Memberships and membership cards are a great idea to attract and retain customers. However your membership rewards would fair well to do the following: make sure your rewards are really seen as valuable by your customers (update all the time), make sure that it is easy to claim the rewards and this is not an irritating process. Make sure that the reward process is efficient and effective - I recall a time that I received a reward voucher late in the mail that had already expired, you can imagine my satisfaction (!) The message is clear reward your customers more and they will want to do more business.

Relationship & FOLLOW THRU

One of the interesting things about a business relationship is that it can still be very personal. Just because you are operating a business does not mean that you should treat customers poorly. The Oxford English Dictionary describes a relationship as the state of being connected, associated and an emotional association between two people. What many businesses don't get is that in many (many!) cases, people are not these emotion-less creatures that are just looking to fulfil a need purely on a functional level. People want to have a positive experience in every interaction they have with your business. From the way they are greeted and acknowledged, to the way they are listened to, to the way the product gets delivered to the way they feel about themselves using your product or service. This is what leads to becoming preferred and recommended.

That is why in today's day and age it's all about building mutually valuable long term relationships. It has been my observation that many businesses either don't get this concept or simply choose to ignore it (at their own peril). This is so unnecessary because building relationships with customers can be so rewarding for both your customers and your staff. And, it costs you virtually no money. Ok so what are the criteria that make up good relationships? Open and honest communication, quality, consistency, reliability and trustworthiness, free gift and appreciation, sincerity and decency, excitement and thrill, apologizing when doing wrong and learning from mistakes. Interestingly, you will notice that many of the factors that have been listed above are key headings in this journal. This is because the whole point of becoming preferred and recommended is building lasting and mutually valuable relationships.

I suggest that any business that learns to build effective relationships with customers (even if they are not that intimate) will achieve success because customers will feel valued and will want to continue to do business with you. Many businesses tend to forget to follow thru. This means that when the sale is made that isn't the end. Contacting the customer to ensure satisfaction, sending a free gift, inviting the customer to give feedback, keeping in touch and building and enhancing the relationship will go a long way for future business.

"What many businesses don't get is that in many cases, people are not these emotionless creatures that are just looking to fulfil a need purely on a functional level"



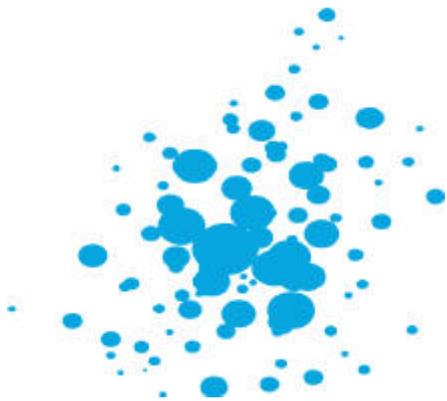
RELATIONSHIP CHECKLIST

- ✓ DO YOU KNOW WHAT KIND OF RELATIONSHIP YOUR CUSTOMERS EXPECT OF YOU?
- ✓ DO YOU WANT TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH YOUR CUSTOMERS?
- ✓ DO YOU PLAN THE MANNER YOU ARE GOING TO BUILD YOUR CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS BY EXAMINING ALL THE AREAS OF YOUR CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE?
- ✓ DO YOU KNOW WHICH AREAS YOU NEED TO IMPROVE UPON IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP SKILLS?
- ✓ DO YOUR STAFF UNDERSTAND HOW TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH CUSTOMERS?
- ✓ DO YOUR STAFF ACTIVELY TURN CUSTOMERS OFF BY VIOLATING RELATIONSHIP PRINCIPLES?
- ✓ ARE YOU CONSISTENT THROUGHOUT YOUR CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE?
- ✓ DOES YOUR BUSINESS HAVE INTEGRITY?
- ✓ DOES YOUR BUSINESS HAVE AN OPEN LINE OF COMMUNICATION?
- ✓ DO CUSTOMERS LOVE YOU?

& Innovation

REMARKABILITY

"Anything that makes customers want to say 'wow, cool or how amazing' is considered the remarkability factor."



INNOVATION & REMARKABILITY CHECKLIST

- ✓ DO YOU ACTIVELY GO OUT OF YOUR WAY TO MAKE YOURSELF STAND OUT FROM THE REST OF THE COMPETITION?
- ✓ DOES INNOVATION AND REMARKABILITY FEATURE IN YOUR ORGANIZATIONS MISSION AND VALUES STATEMENTS?
- ✓ ARE YOUR STAFF ENCOURAGED TO CONTRIBUTE IDEAS FOR IMPROVEMENT AND INNOVATION?
- ✓ DO YOU HAVE TEAMS ACROSS YOUR ORGANIZATION THAT SOLELY FOCUS ON INNOVATION AND CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE IMPROVEMENT AND DELIGHT?
- ✓ DO YOU ENCOURAGE ACTIVE COLLABORATION WITHIN AND ACROSS YOUR BUSINESS TO GET PEOPLE TO WORK TOGETHER?
- ✓ DO YOU HAVE A FOCUS ON HOW YOUR COMPETITORS AND NEW ENTRANTS INTO THE MARKET ARE INNOVATING?
- ✓ DO YOU ACTIVELY LOOK AT MARKET TRENDS AND BUILD POSSIBLE FUTURE SCENARIOS?
- ✓ DO YOU HAVE STRATEGIES IN PLACE THAT WOULD HELP YOU BECOME MORE REMARKABLE?

Innovation is often misrepresented and over complicated in research, books and articles. It is really not that complicated to define and I have discovered a perfectly simple and concise definition. In their brilliant book *Innovation Training* Ruth Ann Hattori and Joyce Wycoff describe Innovation as 'People implementing new ideas that create value'. I would only add that the value needs to be commercial from a business perspective. Innovation can occur in products and services, processes and business models. Different areas and business units have different functions but innovation methodology can be applied to any area that looks to not only continuously improve but also identify new realms of possibility and value.

Why is innovation mentioned here in this journal? Because it is a key competency of the creative age, as Tom Peters refers to it. Because there are so many businesses out there doing so many similar if not the same things it has become astronomically important to identify ways to differentiate yourself - in other words to be remarkable. The Oxford English Dictionary describes remarkable as worth noticing, unusual and exciting. Because we are living in an over branded world the only way to be noticed nowadays is to become remarkable. In his books, Seth Godin often refers to remarkability as the new core skill for businesses. His book *Purple Cow* is the epitome of this analogy.

So what should your businesses be doing to become remarkable? The answer is the active pursuit of remarkability. Innovation (especially in business) is the never ending journey of uncovering and growing value. Practically this means that you need to look at your current customer experience and identify areas where you can revolutionize the industry and stand out. This could be with your product offering, your packaging, the manner in which you sell, the way you approach customer, your location look and feel, the rituals you undertake to entertain customers or the free gift. Anything that makes customers want to say 'wow, cool or how amazing' is considered the remarkability factor. So the message here is simple: go out of your way to stand out from the crowd in a way that is valuable to customers and you will become preferred and recommended, to do this you need to make innovation, collaboration and creativity part of your organization.

CEXINO

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE INNOVATION

About CEXINO

CEXINO CONSULTING OFFERS A WIDE RANGE OF PRODUCTS AND SERVICES IN THE FIELDS OF:

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PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CONTACT **CEXINO** CONSULTING TO HELP YOU IMPROVE YOUR CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE INNOVATION.

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Born in Israel in 1980. Immigrated to South Africa in 1989. Studied at Rand Afrikaans University and graduated with Honors in Information Science with majors in Strategic Management, Knowledge Management, Information Management, Web and Intranet Management. Worked at First National Bank as an Innovation, Customer Experience, Strategy, Project and Change Manager and subsequently moved to Absa Barclays Bank where I worked in the fields of Business Intelligence and Innovation Management. During my experiences I attended many seminars, workshops and courses in the fields of innovation, creativity, coaching, leadership, facilitation, strategy, communications and project management. I am a qualified personal and life coach and love to work with people and help them solve problems and overcome challenges.