Go The Extra Mile
Building a Service-Oriented Business Culture

Melinda Alison
Regional President
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“In business, you get what you want by giving other people what they want.”

– Alice MacDougall, Coffeehouse Proprietor

Source: More Loyal Customers: 21 Real World Lessons to Keep Your Customers Coming Back, Kevin Stirtz
Overview

• The importance of customer service and corporate culture
• Creating service “superstars”
• Hiring the service-oriented people
• Measuring customer satisfaction
• Customer service in the digital age
What Do These Companies Have in Common?

1. Amazon
2. Trader Joe’s
3. Netflix
4. Apple
5. FedEx
6. Publix
7. Southwest Airlines
8. UPS
9. Nordstrom
10. Marriott

Source: Top 10: Customer Service Hall of Fame, MSN Money, May 18, 2010
The Importance of Customer Service

- Personalized service allows small businesses to compete with larger organizations
- Even for large firms, it’s important to offer a personal approach to customer service
- Providing value-added customer care can help you win new customers
- Consider your company’s approach to customer service with every hiring decision and for every role – as well as when implementing training and rewards programs
“When a customer presents a stressful situation, this is the moment of truth, and you want your employees’ eyes to light up.”

– Eric Gregg, Managing Partner, Inavero

Source: Eric Gregg, Managing Partner, Inavero
Tips for Creating Loyalty

- Surprise your customers
- Save the day
- Focus on the long term
- Take a personal approach
- Make a commitment
“If *internal* customers are not satisfied, it is likely that *external* customers will not be satisfied either.”

– William M. Pride, O.C. Ferrell

Why a Positive Corporate Culture Is Important

- Corporate culture is a big factor in employee satisfaction
  - Higher employee morale and motivation
  - Lower turnover
  - Your firm is viewed internally and externally as an employer of choice
  - Improved customer service

- Play up the strengths of your company’s culture
Case Study: Zappos
“WOW” with Service

- Unique corporate personality that embraces diversity and individuality
- Core values state they are not satisfied with average service
- Philosophy is to “WOW” with service and experience – not monetary compensation or discounts

Source: zappos.com
“Customer service is not a department, it’s an attitude.”

– Anonymous
Knowledgeable Staff Key to Customer Service

“When thinking about a company’s customer service, which one of the following features is most important to you?”

Data source: Zogby International 2010 customer service survey of 3,012 randomly chosen respondents
Creating Customer Service Superstars

• Nurture the traits of your current employees to help them realize their full potential:
  – Empathy
  – Long-term perspective
  – Openness to feedback
  – Responsiveness
  – Customer appreciation
  – Solutions-driven

• Teach employees to treat each customer as a unique individual
Ideas for Training at Every Level

• Role-play

• Help them engage in positive dialogue

• Take a 360-degree approach

• Start with the outcome

• Empower problem-solving
More Ideas for Training at Every Level

• Create a Service “Hall of Fame”
• Reward great service
• Provide necessary tools
• Set the bar
• Foster internal service
Case Study: Disney University
Training in Legendary Customer Service

- Disney Institute opened in 1986 to provide training opportunities for businesses worldwide
- Quality service is integral to every organization
- Comprehensive training
  - Attention to detail
  - Service is second nature
- Improvement in one area will result in overall improvement

Source: disneyinstitute.com
Training Exercise
Ordinary vs. “Extra Mile” Service

• “That’s not my department.”
• “I’m not authorized to give you a refund.”
• “I’ll have to put you on hold.”
• “We’ll need more time for that.”
• Other examples?
Hiring Service-Oriented People

All employees – whether internally or externally facing – should be service-minded.
The hiring process will offer opportunities to identify candidates with the greatest potential.
When reviewing resumes, look for:
- Quantifiable results
- Action-oriented words
- Previous service roles

Does the job seeker have good listening skills?

Is the applicant engaged in the process?

Does the candidate follow instructions?
Making the Most of the Interview

• Follow up on the candidate’s resume
• Ask questions that will help you gauge:
  – Sensitivity to other’s needs
  – Willingness to resolve issues quickly
  – Ability to put others’ priorities first
  – Calm demeanor
  – Maturity to recognize mistakes
• Observe the applicant’s interactions with others
• Look for a thank-you note
Customer-Focused Interview Questions

• “How did you handle a customer or client who was difficult to please?”

• “In jobs where you’ve had customer service responsibilities, what did and didn’t you like about these roles?”

• “What do you think constitutes excellent customer service?”

• “What is your greatest accomplishment on the job?”
“Fundamentally, customer service is a talent and personality trait. As such, we hire people who are inherently good at connecting with and helping others. That way, it’s ingrained in our day-to-day culture.”

– Kent Lewis, Founder, Anvil Media, Inc.

Source: Kent Lewis, Founder, Anvil Media, Inc.
Case Study: Anvil Media
Creating a Customer Service Mind-set

- Look for candidates who are good communicators; focus on both verbal and written skills
- Offer rewards for superior customer service
- Focus on customer service has increased client retention and referrals

Source: Kent Lewis, Founder, Anvil Media, Inc.
Measuring Customer Satisfaction

- Talking to clients
- Surveys
- Focus groups
- Customer turnover/retention rates
- Social media
“If you make customers unhappy in the physical world, they might each tell six friends. If you make customers unhappy on the Internet, they can each tell 6,000 friends.”

– Jeff Bezos, Founder and CEO, Amazon.com

Source: “Who's Writing the Book on Web Business?” fastcompany.com
Customer Service in the Digital Age

- All posts, blogs, message boards and social networking sites are public, visible, searchable and permanent – and ultimately affect your company's reputation
- Ask your employees to act as ambassadors of the company
- Consider staffing for the social media function
Free Monitoring Tools

• TweetDeck
• Google Alerts
• BoardReader
Key Take-aways

- Be aware of your corporate culture and reputation
- Hire and train employees carefully and with a service mind-set
- Monitor your customer satisfaction and loyalty
“There are no traffic jams along the extra mile.”

– Roger Staubach
Businessman and Heisman Trophy Winner

Source: Turn Your Customer On: 23 Ways to Motivate Employees and Make Customers Love You,
Kevin Billingsley and Brooke Billingsley
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