

Customer satisfaction is not enough. Delight your customers!



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Customer satisfaction is simply no longer enough to ensure business success. Customers want to feel important, engaged and valued. They don't want to be satisfied - they want to be delighted!



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Customer delight happens when a company gives a customer a positive and engaging experience that exceeds the customer's expectations. It results not only in a customer who feels satisfied with the product or service offering but also in one who is emotionally happy and content.

This in turn strengthens their willingness to repeat their purchases and to become loyal customers. But, most importantly, it generates the spread of positive word of mouth, which still remains the most powerful form of marketing.

So, what can businesses do to create a delightful experience?

Foster a supportive service culture

Firstly, the business needs to foster a service culture that will support the customer delight experience. The attitude of the customer needs to be positively influenced through each experience of and engagement with the company. All staff training should focus on aiming to exceed expectations with every contact point, providing something that is 'over and above' what is normally expected.

Employee wellness also becomes important when fostering a supportive service culture. Employees need to feel physically, mentally, and emotionally well. Only then can they exceed the customer's expectations. It is critical to appreciate employees' needs before a supportive service culture can be successfully created that will delight customers.

Develop customer-facing service staff skills and emotional intelligence

This can be achieved by, among other things, ensuring that staff are skilled, capable, and knowledgeable when engaging with customers. So staff need to be helped to develop their listening skills, understand the role of a professional body

posture and of personal space limits, grow their writing and speaking skills, enhance their product knowledge, appreciate the need for personal grooming, understand and use non-verbal cues, and be able to resolve conflict when it is needed.

Staff should also be trained in the importance of being present and of communicating in a friendly yet helpful and professional manner. They need to learn how to show that they understand what a customer requires, and to acknowledge the customer's concern and expectations. It is critical to train staff to listen to and really hear customers and to be patient and mature when dealing with customer enquiries or complaints.

Staff need to understand the importance of growing in their emotional intelligence, not just for themselves, but especially when dealing with customers. Managing one's own emotions as a service employee can help to defuse situations of high emotion and to win over customers who are upset.



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Focus on obtaining ongoing customer insights

Businesses need to develop systems to centralise customer complaints and questions that are received from different contact sources, and to review these regularly in order to identify typical concerns – but also, importantly, to identify how the business can aim to exceed customers' expectations and achieve customer delight.

Complaints and enquiries from call centres, staff engagements at store level, social media comments and discussions, web requests, email queries, product feedback – all of these sources of information need to be regularly consolidated and reviewed. The focus needs to be on the quality of the gathered data, how effectively analytical teams are used to interpret the data and ensuring that consumer research is regularly carried out.

Anticipate customer needs

What else can be done? This question is often asked by businesses that do not know what more they can do to delight their customers. Well, you can anticipate the needs of your customers. How you may ask? Every engagement that a business has with a customer – whether through a visit to the website, a purchase made, a request for support, or a tweet that a customer shares – says something about this customer.

Therefore, a business can use such information by collecting and analysing it to develop an improved understanding of the needs and wants of its customer base. Information can be obtained about the customers' channel preferences, about the products that they prefer to buy, and also about initiatives and actions that the business has implemented that their customer base liked (or did not like).

This is not only a way to gain important insights through informal market research, but also a way to obtain information that can help the business to anticipate customers' needs and develop responses that will exceed their expectations.

Show compassion

Remember: customers have emotions. So they want to be appreciated and to feel special when engaging with a business. Customers also want to be noticed: they want their voice to be heard – and, most important of all, they want to feel acknowledged and appreciated. That is why a compassionate approach to customers is vital to delivering a positive customer experience across all customer engagement channels.



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So how can a positive customer experience be translated into customer delight? Simply by delivering and maintaining high service levels at all times.

Respond promptly

Customer enquiries and complaints should be addressed quickly and efficiently, thus showing them that the business is serious about their needs and that it wants to be positive and proactive in helping them. Show openness to customer ideas, recommendations, and criticisms, because their contributions can help the business to improve the service experience.

Demonstrate honesty

In today's challenging business environment, where trustworthiness and honesty are not guaranteed deliverables, a truthful and trustworthy engagement can assist the business to delight the customer. This can contribute significantly to the customer's willingness to commit to and build a long-term relationship with the business, which can lead ultimately to loyalty and positive word-of-mouth.

Finally, remember that to delight a customer is not simply to deliver on what has been promised. It is about going that 'extra mile', and delivering over and above the expectations of the customer.

This may be achieved by investing in customer-facing staff training; by promoting the concepts that can help all the employees who engage with customers across different platforms to achieve customer delight; by looking after employees and their needs; and by putting the correct systems in place so that the business can consolidate all customer feedback, regularly review it to gain insight, and develop strategies to exceed expectation across all contact points.

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