

Unit 2 Business Assignment – Customer Services

Customer services are an essential key to any successful business, without them a company would perish and fail within a year. Consumers of products have extremely high expectations of the companies they purchase from and if this is not supplied in the exact way they want it then the customer will most likely go to another business that will give them great customer service. Most customers nowadays expect

- ☞ Friendly service
- ☞ Helpful staff
- ☞ Aesthetically pleasing establishments
- ☞ Facilities to suit their needs
- ☞ Regular customers will expect to be remembered for their loyalty
- ☞ Easy and pleasant service if the customer is not satisfied

Banks are a great example of different types of customer service. They use diverse methods of attracting and retaining their existing and new clients. The banks that I think possess the potential of this quality are ;

Nationwide – This bank has put its time and effort into higher interest rates to attract new business and free withdrawals from cash machines abroad.

Natwest – Insist that they have stopped routing all their calls abroad to call centres and that now all calls are directed straight through to the branch.

HSBC – Following customer complaints about queues in branches at busy times, it now has its own radio station playing music and providing current announcements to distract waiting customers

Barclays – Rather than black pens, chained to the counter, you will now find free blue pens with logos like “Take me, I’m yours’. Signs are more informal. ‘Reception’ has become ‘I’d love to help’ and ‘Please queue here’ is ‘This way to the counter’.

I have chosen to complete my assignment based upon the bank Nationwide as it has put lots of money into new advertising and promotional offers.

Customer Service – A Definition

Most Organisations today recognise the importance of their customers. They try to understand what customers need and want so that they can try to provide the goods and services to match these requirements. For many businesses this means putting the customers first through the range of goods and services on offer, through the prices charged, and through the customer care and service offered. For many businesses this means they must give their staff extensive training. Staff will need to be aware of customer needs. They will need a great deal of knowledge about the products sold by their organisation. They will also need to develop personal skills to deal with the variety of problems and situations likely to arise when dealing with customers.

The type of information required by customers and clients can vary a lot. An astute member of staff will realise that it is impossible to know the answer to every question immediately, but it is the way a query is dealt with that is important. A friendly smile, a promise to find out quickly and keeping that promise is more important than a correct answer without these.

Today's consumers seem to have ever higher expectations from the goods and services they buy. They also expect customer service and care to match the quality of the products being purchased. Typical expectations are listed and described below.

1. Providing an appropriate range of goods and services. Most people expect a wide choice when they are buying virtually any type of product.
2. Providing good value products. This evidently links together with the first point but brings in the necessity of quality and price. Most goods are available in a range of quality levels. The price of a product is likely to reflect its quality. Generally speaking, the higher the price the better the quality. Customers will take this into account when purchasing a product and will expect the value of an item to reflect the price paid and the level of quality built into the product.
3. Dealing with consumer issues, problems and queries quickly and without much fuss. Customers become very frustrated if problems and general enquiries are not dealt with quickly. If customers feel their questions are at least being dealt with, they are more likely to regard the business in a more positive light.
4. Providing clear and honest information. This can be applied to information about the features of a product, its price, its delivery,

and the aftercare available once the product is bought and taken home. Customers are more likely to buy from a company in future if they feel that they have been given the full picture.

5. Having good and clear communication systems. This obviously links with points 3 and 4, but is also important in its own right. Businesses need to provide clear systems whether it is the way telephone calls are received, letters are dealt with or face to face enquiries are handled. Any faults can lead to a customer's opinion of the business being lowered, and a bad reputation can be the result if this is passed on by word of mouth.

Needs and expectations of bank customers

Different customers have different needs and expectations from their bank. There are two different types of customers;

Internal customers

These are people who work within the business such as;

Colleagues in each department

Supervisors

Managers

Etc.

External Customers

These are people who are not from the company all other consumers such as;

Other Businesses

A business that sells to another business

Businesses/consumers/private individuals

Consumers

Public – Private individuals with no inside contact to the company

People of different ages

People of different nationalities or cultures

Special Customers e.g. language diversities or disabilities

First time buyers

Existing Customers

Nationwide

Nationwide have spent millions of pounds invested in advertising and promotional schemes to attract new customers. They claim that their interest rates will not rocket after a year and that they keep loans, mortgages and interest rates simple. They put forward the message that their bank is unique in this way and that other banks tend to ficklely change their promotional attractions too early.

Customers are attracted by this promotion as most people today do not have time to worry about how safe their money is and whether their bank can be trusted not to let their rates increase rapidly.

Bank customers visit their bank for different reasons such as to;

- Deposit money
- Withdraw money
- Enquire about mortgages/loans
- Ask about their interest rates
- Open a new account such as a current account
- File a complaint

Their expectations for these requests will be extremely high. They will expect queue times to be short, quick, friendly and helpful service, problems dealt with quickly, advice and information on new offers or information about taking out loans.

For online banking the expectations and need will be entirely different. All customers will expect their money to be secure, their systems to be easy and quick to use, help and support for technical malfunctions and lots of information on the website about financial backing and other money issues.

External Customers

For external customers, the expectations will be almost the same as stated above with a few additions.

For disabilities – A hearing loop or wide isles for wheelchairs or ramps instead of steps will be naturally expected.

Fair treatment for different ages

First time buyers will need sound advice about their accounts.

Existing customers may expect perks and special treatment for their loyalty.

Internal Customers

Internal customers *will have different expectations. Such as;*

Extra protection and security for their money as they will have a whole lot more than most private individuals.

For larger amounts of money internal customers may wish to receive update upon their interest rates and how much it is increasing per year. This will help the branch to keep their customers satisfied and happy.

If all of this is included in a branch then it should be extremely successful with very satisfied customers. Complaints should be to a minimum and recommendations will result in new customers as well as keeping their existing clients.

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