

The Welch Report

## **There is More Than One Type of Customer Service**

What does the often used, but rarely understood, term "customer service" mean to you?

Most people think of customer service as the service given to external customers, customers who buy the products and services of the company.

To many people, it refers to the quality of service they give to the customer or they receive from the companies and people they conduct business with.

Most people talk about customer service and make wonderful promises and claims about how good the customer service they offer is.

But the reality of it is that excellence in the area of customer service is about as rare as free trade is in North Korea.

Excellence in customer service means much more than just selling a product or delivering a service with a smile.

Excellence in customer service means consistently, day in and day out, customer after customer, delivering a quality product or service in a manner that, at least, meets, and hopefully exceeds, your customer's expectations each and every time.

This is really not a very complex process. However, it is one that is rarely seen in any business today. An attitude of apathy, inconsistency, and complacency is more the norm.

**To most of you the term "customer service" means little as you think it only refers to those in the customer service department or those who deal directly with the external customer.**

**Simply put, you think it is not your responsibility. You are wrong.**

**Very wrong!**

Yes, excellence in external customer service is important, vitally important. But there is another form of customer service that you must work at improving. I am speaking of internal customer service.

Each of your co-workers and employees is an internal customer. Each department is an internal customer to the other.

Unless you are able to provide top flight internal customer service, your company will never be able to provide the best external customer service possible. They will never be able to maximize productivity, improve quality, and increase profitability.

Excellence in both areas must be the goal. Any other goal will be very costly. Very costly indeed.

**Internal customer service deals with an attitude of assistance among all.** It deals with each employee, no matter how high up or how low down the corporate ladder, making sure they have not made an error or assumption that is being passed on to the next person or department.

It deals with asking and not assuming. It deals with you and each of your co-workers doing all that you can to facilitate the overall objectives of the company and not just your individual objectives.

Internal customer service deals with reducing errors in all departments. It deals with clear and effective communication. It means thinking about how you can make the job of others easier, not how to make your own job easier.

**It means going the extra step and striving for excellence in everything you do.**

It means functioning as a team and not just talking about it. It means treating others as you would like to be treated.

**It means always striving to exceed the expectations of your co-workers and of other departments.**

Internal customer service deals with a commitment, a commitment to doing the best job that can be done the first time. It deals with being careful and not careless. It must start with the initial customer contact and continue through to the delivery of your product or service.

The attitude of "it is not my job" or "let someone else worry about that" has no place in a company driven to provide outstanding customer service.

**It should have no place in your company or your life.**

To achieve excellence in the area of internal customer service your mind-set has got to be "How can I help you?", "How can I make your job easier?", "How can I make the job of the next person in the process easier?".

If everyone thinks like this, each of you will be looking out for each other.

Notice I said your mind-set and you. Not someone else, but you. You must think this way. You can't wait for someone else to think this way and act this way towards you. You must start thinking and acting this way.

You must think "How can I do my job so well and so far above what is expected that I can make your job easier?".

If you are thinking this way and acting this way while all other employees are doing the same thing, how much better do you think your company will be?

How much more effective do you think you will be? How much do you think your product, process, performance, and service will improve? How much more enjoyable do you think your job will be?

**Think of the cycle of goodwill you will be creating. The cycle of helpfulness. The cycle of looking out for each other, of correcting each other's mistakes and oversights. The atmosphere of teamwork. The sense of comradery.**

You will be amazed at the positive feelings you will generate and receive working in this manner, with this mind-set.

Your sense of job satisfaction will increase dramatically, as will the sense of job satisfaction of those around you.

Think of how much better your external service would be. Think of how much wasted time would be recovered and reallocated to more productive and profitable efforts.

Poor internal customer service costs your organization or company money in hundreds of different ways.

From quality problems to operational delays and redundancies, poor internal customer service costs money and lowers productivity. It will also cause serious morale problems and severely hinder your company's or organization's ability to provide exceptional external customer service.

It limits the company's ability to be competitive and, let me also point out that -if it is bad for the company, it is bad for you.

If it costs the company money it hinders the company's ability to pay you more, to provide better working conditions, to upgrade in numerous ways, and to provide better benefits.

**Think of excellence in internal service as a critical piece of the puzzle. The puzzle that makes a mediocre employee great and turns a bad company into a good company and a good company into a great company.**

**It cannot be accomplished without you!**

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