

Information Pack 205- Meeting Customer Needs



INTRODUCTION

Meeting customer expectations plays a major role in experience. The gap between expected and actual value that customers get is key to customer loyalty. It also influences propensity to spend and brand perception.

Creating experiences that generate more value than competitor offerings helps to create unforgettable memories. But, to meet customer expectations, businesses must first understand what their customers expect.

Customer relation(ship) is a special bond created between buyers and a brand as a result of numerous marketing, sales, and customer service processes.

Customer relationship management methods will vary depending on the type of customer and business sector. But total reliance on technology cannot build the most effective relationships. Technology can provide and collate valuable information. But to see results, you must analyse this data, integrate knowledge, and offer good customer service skills.

Organisations today find themselves operating in an environment that is quick changing. The process of analysing the implications of these changes and modifying the way that the organisation reacts to them is known as business strategy.

'Strategy is the direction and scope of an organisation over the long term, which achieves advantage in a changing environment through its configuration of resources and competences'

(Johnson et al, 2009)

This information pack will assist you in analysing customer needs and expectations. This in turn will allow you to reflect upon the customer journey and review different ways to collect and interpret customer feedback.

GUIDANCE

This document is prepared to break the unit material down into bite size chunks. You will see the learning outcomes above treated in their own sections. Therein you will encounter the following structures:

Purpose

Explains *why* you need to study the current section of material. Quite often learners are put off by material which does not initially seem to be relevant to a topic or profession. Once you understand the importance of new learning or theory you will embrace the concepts more readily.

Theory

Conveys new material to you in a straightforward fashion. To support the treatments in this section you are strongly advised to follow the given hyperlinks, which may be useful documents or applications on the web.

Example

The examples/worked examples are presented in a knowledge-building order. Make sure you follow them all through. If you are feeling confident then you might like to treat an example as a question, in which case cover it up and have a go yourself. Many of the examples given resemble assignment questions which will come your way, so follow them through diligently.

Question

Questions should not be avoided if you are determined to learn. Please do take the time to tackle each of the given questions, in the order in which they are presented. The order is important, as further knowledge and confidence is built upon previous knowledge and confidence. As an Online Learner it is important that the answers to questions are immediately available to you. Contact your Unit Tutor if you need help.

Challenge

You can really cement your new knowledge by undertaking the challenges. A challenge could be to download software and perform an exercise. An alternative challenge might involve a practical activity or other form of research.

Video

Videos on the web can be very useful supplements to your distance learning efforts. Wherever an online video(s) will help you then it will be hyperlinked at the appropriate point.

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SAMPLE

The customer journey is the complete sum of experiences that customers go through when interacting with your company and brand. Instead of looking at just a part of a transaction or experience, the customer journey documents the full experience of being a customer.

The Importance of a Customer Journey Map

Using a customer journey map to analyse user behaviour helps an organisation understand how their customers travel through the entire sales process and how they feel during their time there.

This approach provides two major benefits:

- It allows decision-makers to stay focused on customers.
- It helps make each step of the buying experience easier for potential leads.

You can have the best marketing team, but if your customers are not happy, you won't get anywhere.

The best way to explain the process of mapping the customer journey is to look at it like a pinnable graphic that everyone on the team should have on their walls.

How to Map Out a Customer Journey Step-by-step

The most important aspect of creating a compelling user journey map is to look at the process from the customer's perspective. You will need two types of research to accomplish this goal:

Analytical research

Using your website's analytics will tell you exactly where the customers are, how much time they spend with you, and when they leave. There are tools you can use to track user-generated content and place the data into an easy-to-interpret stream of information.

Anecdotal research

Acquiring this data is tricky. How do you find out what the customer is thinking? Social media is useful for gauging how customers feel or think. When someone is satisfied or upset about his or her experience with a company, they could feel compelled to notify you on Facebook or Twitter.

Asking customers to fill out surveys about their experience can also help you collect anecdotal research. Additionally, having tools to measure customer behaviour is a must for accurate planning.

Step 1: Remember the Customer is #1, Always

Putting yourself in your customer's shoes and doing all your planning around that motto will take you a long way. **The customer is the reason you exist.**

Many times, executives forget this important detail and focus on marketing, SEO, social media, and branding. Yes, these are all critical aspects of running a business, but you cannot forget about your customers and how they interact with your brand.

Are they satisfied with the experience? Is your website easy to navigate and does it have all the information a customer wants?

Step 2: Identify Customer Touch Points

Every time a customer comes into contact with your brand whether it's before (an ad), during (visit to a store or website), or after (positive or negative feedback, return experience, newsletters) you have a chance to increase your sales.

These interactions are known as touch points.

With this information, you can identify obstacles that appear in the customer's journey. A seamless sales process where the customer is in and out in no time is just as important as offering high-quality products or services. Having satisfied customers translates into brand loyalty.

Step 3: Create a Graphic

This graph should not be too complicated, but it must include both analytical and anecdotal research data. It will highlight when customers stop interacting or when they get frustrated, so your team can adjust its strategy.

There are countless options in any given transaction, so it's impossible to anticipate every possible scenario. But understanding where the blips are is crucial. A graph is handy to understanding customer behaviour, fixing the problems, and identifying successes as well. Using emojis (sad, angry, neutral, happy, or excited) is helpful to quickly visualize the customer's state of mind at any time.

Example

Example 1: Fantastic User Experience (UX)