# CUSTOMER FOCUS IN NEW BUSINESS CULTURE

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**ABSTRACT**

Passion and commitment are the foundation stones of a customer focused business Customer focuses on the upcoming era of business that is considered to be one of the keys for rapid growth of business. Focusing on the customer can be only mean to Oriento all business processes to customer needs. The driving force of the company starts meeting those desires to the fullest possible extent in the most effective possible way. The definition sounds vague. What do 'fullest possible' and 'most effective possible' mean? This paper throws flood light on all activities, from the planning of a new product to its production, marketing, and after-sales care, should be built around the customer. Every department and every employee should share the same customer-focused vision. This can be aided by practicing good customer relationship management and maintaining a customer relations program.

**Keywords: -** Customer focus, passion, commitment

**INTRODUCTION**

Nowadays, customer is the king. These days without satisfying customer demands a business is like life without blood. Present business scenario turns around and focuses only on customer to accomplish its goals. It will be a landmark in coming future if a business lays emphasis on customer needs and demands. Every business concentrates on building their loyalty through satisfying their customers' needs and wants.

New business culture revolves around customers only because customers are the one who can accept their product and raise their sales volume and profits and customers are the one who can reject their product and thus can bring loss to their business. Real success, particularly in this highly competitive market, requires a true customer focus. 'Peter Drucker' wrote long ago that 'there is only one valid definition of business purpose to create a customer" Companies have tried to focus on customers all through the 1990s, often with little idea of what focus demands or even what customers want. Customer focus is a practical and inevitable transition. Customer Focus is about continually listening to the voice of customers, getting their input and feedback and using this information to make changes which they value changes to your products and services and how you do business.

Everyone in today's world says that they are customer-focused, that the customer is paramount. The facts say something else. It might be a tired cliché, but an old adage seems to apply: "Actions speak louder than words." The business graveyard is filled with companies that talked a lot about customers but ignored them in practice. Hundreds of businesses fail each year because

- They refuse to include the customer among their top priorities.
- They expend all their energy and resources fighting the competition rather than satisfying their customers.
- Still others meet the same fate because they mistake a marketing orientation for a customer focus. There is a difference. The former deals with markets and relies on market research, advertising, sales promotion and other methods to get products and services in front of customers in a form that will elicit the most favorable response.

These are important and necessary steps in the life cycle of a product or service, but they do not guarantee success. Businesses are increasingly adopting customer-focused business processes to gain competitive advantage. Especially prevalent in industries where product offerings and price no longer provide sufficient differentiation, this new focus offers a myriad of benefits. Customer experience is the battleground, and you can't win with a culture that doesn't truly embrace the concept. Customer focus is considered to be one of the keys

to business success. Achieving customer focus involves ensuring that the whole organization, and not just frontline service staff, puts its customers first. All activities, from the planning of a new product to its production, marketing, and after-sales care, should be built around the customer.

To achieve customer focus from manager's point of view the most important factor that is being considered is attitude as given below:

**ATTITUDE**

As a manager (especially if an entrepreneur), he take the risks and put in the long hours necessary to start your business and get it off the ground. He is a creator; and can take justifiable pride in what he has created. But a manager is also a multiplier and can achieve his business goals only through the efforts of your people. Nobody can do it alone and that too, not for long. Every growing business eventually reaches a breakpoint, a time when the delegation of responsibility and authority becomes mandatory. Unfortunately, some entrepreneurs either don't recognize this moment or, recognizing it, don't know how to handle it. As business expands, whether you are its owner or a manager, one becomes less involved at the point of sale and increasingly immersed in financial, competitive and product line concerns. If employees develop negative attitudes toward their jobs, the company or their customers, the cause is pure and simple that management isn't doing its job. Any attitude can be changed, and often the change can be made quite quickly. Psychologists tell us that people respond most strongly to those stimuli that are frequent and close at hand. Their response tends to be proportional to the intensity of the stimulus. Too often an employee's only strong stimulus is his manager. The more dictatorial the manager is the more imperfections will be mirrored in your employees. Over the long run, this is a prescription for failure. The first step, then, is one of leadership. Unless a boss is committed to customer satisfaction, it's unlikely his employees will be. If he consistently place other concerns (administrative, short-term financial, etc.) above customer-related considerations, his employees will do the same. Authoritarian managers think they know best in all cases. They rarely head customer-focused organizations! Their people are so concerned about pleasing their managers over the short term that they have little time for the customer. Employee attitudes, Effective managers who are committed to customer satisfaction encourage, rather than discourage, their employees. Successful managers realize that customer satisfaction is not possible without first achieving employee satisfaction. While managing a small business, you have a real advantage here because most, if not all, of your employees deal with customers regularly. The less contact employees have with real, live customers, the less important each customer becomes. Regardless of employee's job, customers who come in contact with an employee will see him as company's representative. Some more factors needs to be focused which will enlighten achievement of customer focus with the help of an employee.

Following are a few of the more important attributes of a customer-oriented employee:

**CONFIDENCE**

If salespersons lack confidence in themselves and their ability to do the job, it will be noticed, raising doubts about your company and what it offers. Confidence comes partly through knowledge and experience. It is also an attitude that can be nurtured and developed by managers who care about their employees' growth.

It is not enough that employees believe in the company and its products; they must exhibit that belief. Enthusiasm and conviction are contagious, and both will infect customers.

**HONESTY**

While short-changing the customer might produce an attractive immediate gain, over the long haul it's a strategy for suicide. To ensure that customers are satisfied over the long term, a business must consider their long-term needs. This sometimes means surrendering the immediate sale if your product or service falls short of what a customer needs or wants. That honesty is a virtue in short supply is a sad commentary, but one that can work for stability of business. It brings customers back again and again.

**EMPATHY**

"Nobody knows the trouble I've seen." The words of the old spiritual ring true in a lot of hearts. Rightly or wrongly, we tend to think that nobody else has shared our experiences. We want unique treatment and resent being fed canned solutions to our problems. But the customer who walks in the door is an individual, a unique human being. Once you see each customer in that light, it will be easy to treat each of them as unique, a person who has personal needs as well as product and service needs. Empathy does not necessarily mean agreement. It does mean understanding the customer and becoming aware of how each customer feels and why. Empathy

allows a business to see from customer's point of view and thus business tries to give their best.

**GOALS**

A positive attitude is important, but only if supported by customer-driven structures and policies. Well-defined goals are among the main factors to which consistently successful businesses attribute their success. Of course, you can't do goals; specific actions must be taken to achieve them. Your business goals mean little unless they are supported and reflected in company's policies, understood by employees and deep-seated in daily business activity. To emphasize the importance of my purpose here is not to concentrate on the negative by cataloging customer complaints; it is useful if only to generate some empathy to recognize what customers don't like. Some common examples:

- Discourtesy**:** "Did you hear the way that sales rep talked to me?"
- Broken promises**:** "That's not what they said when we bought it from them."
- Poor quality**:** "When you pay top dollar, you expect something that works as advertised."
- Ignored complaints**:** "Don't they ever talk to each other?"

These examples are very familiar with us also being a customer. We do face such issues every day. These are only a few of the reasons customers become disenchanted, but they suffice to make my point.

One thing is certain. If customers feel negative about your business, they won't generate many referrals, which are probably your best source of new customers. As a start, let's see what exactly is customer-focused. Simply stated, being customer-focused means believing in and operating under the precept that nobody is more important than the customer. It means, too, that this idea permeates the entire organization. Prolific author and management guru 'Peter Drucker' correctly stated,

**"The customer is the foundation of the business and keeps it in existence."**

In simple, terms, the customer is the guy with the dough who keeps us all in jobs. These are strong, unqualified words; and it would be difficult to find a manager who would openly disagree with them. Yet despite vigorous nods of assent, many managers violate this principle daily. When one sees this happen so regularly, it is easy to lapse into cynicism and define the successful business as that which makes fewer mistakes than its competition. This would, however, be unfair to the many companies, large and small, that have achieved success by paying attention to and acting on their customers' needs and wants. Our goal here is to help you join their ranks. What follows, then, is a prescription for developing a customer-focused organization by managing the customer. It isn't so much a style of management as a way of thinking, an approach consisting of several critical elements — attitude, goals, organization, knowledge, communication, teamwork, rewards and training. While each element must, out of necessity, be discussed separately, it is important to realize that they are interdependent. In the truly customer-focused organization, no one can stand alone.

Today's managers acknowledge the importance of customer focus for growing a business and competing. Yet the often costly customer efforts they have implemented have not led to the expected gains. The reason:

- A superficial understanding of what customer focus really means. Fortunately, a few organizations are going beyond thinking up new technologies, products and services and, through comprehensive organizational change, are achieving the deep customer focus that is nearly impossible to imitate. Deep customer focus is not about
- Buying customer-relationship-management software that tracks customers' purchases.
- It is not about designing sophisticated new products like mobile phones or iPods — or even about processes that allow a car to be built with customer-requested features.

It's about an attitude that gets deep inside a company into what it is, what it does and what it prides itself on. Since customer satisfaction is key to increased sales, premium margins, and company growth, it makes sense to instill a customer-focused culture throughout the company. Though many companies talk the talk, few are able to walk the talk. There are several reasons for this. A process to create a customer oriented culture requires a serious commitment from the top down, constancy of focus throughout the organization, and the daily involvement of almost every employee in the company. There still seems to be some reluctance in many companies to focus on the customer even though significant evidence indicates that such a strategy has financial rewards.

Our research hypothesis is that companies who score high in customer satisfaction will financially outperform companies with lower customer satisfaction. Every department and every

employee should share the same customer-focused vision. This can be aided by practicing good customer relationship management and maintaining a customer relations program. Most senior managers are not even acquainted with what a customer-focused culture even looks like, and are not ready to turn their own business culture inside out in order to cultivate such a focus. Marketing is used to:

- Identify the customer,
- To keep the customer
- To satisfy the customer.

Companies then shifted the focus from production to the customer in order to stay profitable. Consequently, ascertaining consumer demand is vital for a firm's future viability and even existence as a going concern. Many companies today have a customer focus (or market orientation). Any organization that chooses to implement a customer-focused strategy will at the very least should have:

- Build long-term revenue
- Win customer trust and forge long-term relationships
- Keep their customers when times are tough
- Attract new customers
- Differentiate themselves from their competition.
- Bring out the best in their employees
- Maximize operational performance
- Reduce operating expenses by eliminating the cost of poor service

Across the world, customers have become more demanding, more capricious, more promiscuous, and more volatile. In other words, it is giving the customers what they want in the way that they want it - is far more than its own reward.

**CEMENT YOUR CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS**

To build a healthy and growing business around customers, one needs to understand them, by direct contact with its customers. Don't send an annual survey to see if they're satisfied with company's products, contact center or delivery performance. Talk to them regularly at key points in your relationship with them when they've made a purchase, called company's contact center or canceled an order. If a business arms itself with the tools to better understand customers, a business will be better able to act in their best interests.

Talking to customers at regular intervals is not simply about monitoring progress; it is a core part of becoming a business that listens to its customers. If listening to customer is being ignored, one cannot possibly be focused on them. Listening is only the start. A business must act upon with customer's opinions and choices. Following up an interaction with a survey is a great start, but if customer tells that they had a poor experience, then something should be done about it. Create a process through which feedback can be shared with the right people in an organization and put things right.

**INVOLVE THE CREW**

A business cannot impose a change in culture by sending an email saying "We are now a customer-focused organization." Well, a trial is not harmless but the result will be eye-rolling and mockery, not a newly customer-focused culture. Employees possess great insight into your customer base and their treatment. Tap this knowledge base to better understand employee views. Don't limit outreach to customer-facing staff. A customer-focused culture is not just about providing better customer service at the front line; it is about infusing all your actions as a business with a sense of how the customer is affected by those actions (or lack of them).

Customer feedback is not always welcomed by employees, so get buy-in from them. Too often feedback is understood to be a euphemism for "complaints" and creates only fear and disengagement. When listening to the Voice of the Customer, one should not forget to include and share the positive feedback. While acting on negative feedback it may strengthen customer engagement, sharing and acting on positive feedback will strengthen employee engagement.

**REBUILD YOUR PROCESSES**

Evangelizing is just one step in developing a new corporate culture. To engage employees, you must make changes and demonstrate what you're doing. Where customers and employees are telling you that you could be doing something better, take action, and tell them you've taken action. By asking for feedback, you're setting up a level of expectation that you need to meet; otherwise the process is destined to fail. Corporate culture is a long-term consideration, and demonstrating that you're truly investing in change will help to drive further change and engage your employees in the process.

**SHARE RESPONSIBILITY AND CONSTRUCT A COMMON GOAL**

Involvement and engagement build and solidify corporate culture. When employees can identify and resolve failures, they contribute to that culture and help it to become entrenched. Just as

change must be demonstrated, so must employees be empowered to take action where necessary in order to be part of building the culture.

The customer must not be seen purely as the domain of the customer service team, so it is crucial to have buy-in from the top level of your business. Not only must executives take the issues seriously, but they must be seen to take it seriously. Some companies have sped the process along by tying financial rewards to the new customer-focused metrics, and having senior executives, as well as front line staff rewarded on the same numbers. Few things say ‘’commitment” like senior people pegging their success on the same figures as the rest of the business.

Certainly, we understand that if a business does not have the earnings, eventually it won’t have customers, but if it doesn’t have the customers, it will not have the earnings. In fact, though a business may have an outstanding product, an efficient production process, exceptional employees, and strong financial resources, but truth cannot be denied that a business is not a business it has a customer. To have a customer-focused culture, one must have a financial commitment to customer satisfaction.

**CONCLUSION**

In the end I would like to conclude that customer focused business is bound to produce better results rather than a non-focused customer business because a business has no future without its customers. Every product or service that is given by a business is only meant for its customers.

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