

IN A THRIVING BUSINESS, CUSTOMERS ARE NOT OPTIONAL!

Modern consumers have grown up in a world of technology and innovation. They intuitively know how to define as well as expect exceptional customer service. In a thriving business, keeping customers is not optional, it's a requirement for businesses to survive.

At Amazon, Jeff Bezos stated in his 2016 letter to shareholders:

"There are many ways to center a business. You can be competitor-focused, you can be product-focused, you can be technology-focused, you can be business model-focused, and there are more. There are many advantages to a customer-centric approach, but here's the big one: customers are always beautifully, wonderfully dissatisfied, even when they report being happy and business is great. Even when they don't yet know it, customers want something better, and your desire to delight customers will drive you to invent on their behalf. No customer ever asked Amazon to create the Prime Membership Program, but it sure turns out they wanted it, and I could give you many such examples. A customer-obsessed culture best creates the conditions where all of that can happen."

As our understanding of the makeup of humans increases, so does our ability to create opportunities to improve our performance and create high-value for everyone we come in contact with every day. It's called disrupting the normal way of doing things, or in Jeff Bezos' words, "If you wanna do more of something, make the friction less. If you wanna do less of something, make the friction more."

Amazon stays faithful to their principles and core values but includes a willingness to try a lot of things and make many mistakes. Jeff Bezos included both in Amazon's corporate values. His number-one core value is to be fanatical about customer service.

AT SQI WE PREACH AWESOME CUSTOMER SERVICE

I have such a passion for taking any company and introducing them to the power of delivering awesome customer service. It's the focus of every one of my books. I have been passionate about it for 37 years and continue to preach on the subject. It is my guide to delivering exemplary service to every person that walks through your doors resulting in overall corporate success in terms of customer retention, new sales (via word of mouth), market share, financial vitality, and positive reputation in your community.

When a company makes the momentous discovery that customers are really "people", and when they give customer service at least as much power and influence over decisions as they give financial considerations, then they are well on the road to achieving a competitive

advantage and even market dominance.

- Repeat customers spend 33% more than new customers
- Referrals among repeat customers are 107% greater.

Just ask some of the top companies what they are passionate about:

- **Amazon**—has a set of practices that helps them manage customer experiences in a proactive way.
- **Home Depot** – is passionate about the customer experience.
- **Costco** – is committed to low costs, high wages and an excellent customer experience.

GET OUT FROM BEHIND YOUR COMPUTER

Know where your target market is hanging out and go where they are. The perfect example is from Metro Bank's CEO Vernon Hill, who stated, "There are customers, and there are fans. Customers are those people who come in, who bank with us, and who are almost indifferent to us. We are perfectly happy having customers, but our goal is to convert them to fans."

Fans are customers who embrace your model and culture, become part of your community, and convert their friends to new customers of your brand.

The dimension that fans add is that willingness when somebody is whining about their bank or some banking tactic, to say, "Oh, go to Metro, that's my bank!" Or when they see one of us away from the bank wearing a red Metro "M" pin, they walk up and say, "You work for Metro Bank?" And they quickly add, "That's my bank. I love that bank."

MARKETING BRINGS A CUSTOMER IN: CUSTOMER SERVICE KEEPS THEM COMING BACK

Your customer services marketing strategy must focus on delivering processes, experiences, and intangibles to customers rather than physical goods and transactions.

Integrate a focus on the customer throughout your firm and across all functions.

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