

# **NO NONSENSE ADVICE**

**17**

**CUSTOMER SERVICE 101**

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# PROLOGUE:

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Customer Service is often seen as the holy grail of customer attraction and retention. The word-of-mouth 'traffic' a great service creates, is legendary : and in all earnest : there really isn't a better selling proposition than the ardent support of a customer base who swears by your product and service.

Great Service goes beyond the proverbial 'service with a smile' : it is an organizational undertaking, and not the domain of the CS team/department. Great Service also requires a structured and consistent approach : rather than 'fixing problems' when they happen. As with all things relating to great organizations : it should be by 'design' not by 'chance.'

Great Service is about great mindsets and people - but it is equally about well thought through policies, procedures and processes. Superbly trained teams without policy frameworks and structures that support them are clearly sub-optimal : as it is true of the reverse : superb processes and policy support, with badly trained staff.

GREAT customer service isn't easy, which is why its a rarity rather than the norm...

So, DECIDE whether you want your customers to truly rave about you OR whether you want to take a chance with bad service and 'see what happens' !

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# Chapter 1

## What is Customer Service ?

## I. WHO is a customer ?

Well that's obvious isn't it? Anyone who pays for your products or services is your customer. But think again ; what about those who wanted to buy but didn't, or are planning to buy later? Are they customers too? For sales they certainly are; but for service, 'technically' you need to be a customer first. After all, how can you 'serve' a 'potential customer'?

However, remember this. Your 'service' is not only seen by your current customer; it is seen by your 'potential customer' too. As such, making sure you 'serve' with the right mindset as well as with the perspective that 'everyone' is your customer, enables 'potential customers' to find it easier to make the decision to buy from you, as they are assured of being 'taken care of' as a customer. This is possibly the biggest 'advantage' of great service - it generates good will not only amongst existing customers, but also future customers !

## II. Are customers ALWAYS right ?

Customers are not always right of, course : but remember this simple rule; no customers - no business !

Having said that, it is important to understand that this does NOT mean that an organization should take the stand that you must 'always agree' with the customer; and also, expect employees to take 'abuse' from customers. It IS important to ensure you make this distinction : being respectful and 'taking shit' are two very different things...

Customers are not always right : in fact, at times, they are downright WRONG. So, when 'dealing' with customers, remember the 3 golden rules :

- Be TRUTHFUL : never lie - ever. Always tell the truth : no matter how painful the truth may be
- Be TACTFUL : being truthful does NOT have to mean being blunt. Be tactful : understand the situation, the context, and of course, the customer himself.
- BE HELPFUL : and this is the pivot : always, always be willing to help. This makes all the difference in the world.

### III. Good Service is not an excuse for a bad product

There is a lot of BS about how GREAT Customer Service can overcome the issues any bad product has. This kind of attitude ruins organizations. You need to commit to making GREAT products : not making shitty products and expecting GREAT SERVICE to save your sorry ass. So, make no mistake : a bad product is just that; a bad product; and if you are worth the paper your letterhead is printed on, you will not expect anyone to sell a bad product.

Having said that, you CAN and WILL have momentary lapses in things; and THIS is when Service CAN and SHOULD save the day. For example, your restaurant is famous for its seafood, but one day you run short; and a customer walks in with the specific intent of having your world famous 'Seafood Platter' - THIS is where the right service really makes the difference...

Remember though, a GREAT product should not be an excuse for CRAP service either. Oftentimes, a great product sets the mindset that 'you ought to buy it - and be happy with it' which needs to be guarded against !

One without the other is honestly counterproductive.



#### **IV. The MINDSET you need to have to SERVE**

The key is this : service is a MINDSET. There is a certain humility and genuineness that is required to honestly SERVE. Don't have this? Never get into Customer Service. It honestly ISN'T for everyone : so, think carefully about taking on a career in it.

- Be WILLING to serve
- Be willing to genuinely CARE
- Be willing to GO OUT OF YOUR WAY
- Be willing to INCONVENIENCE yourself to sort the customer out
- Be wiling to 'FIND A WAY' other than throwing the policy book at a customer

#### **V. PROACTIVE vs reactive service**

Great service requires a proactive mindset rather than a reactive mindset :

- Think two steps ahead, and look at what customers are looking for, and give advice and tips to overcome possible issues
- Talk to customers to find out if 'all is ok' rather than waiting for a complaint
  - Look at patterns of complaints : fix the 'root causes'
- Gain insights from what others are doing - not necessarily in your own industry but anywhere : and see how best you can incorporate those practices into your own service delivery standards

## VI. Customer Service is NOT FREE

NEVER be tempted to throw in 'freebies' in order to pacify customers.

This may result in a short term 'delight' but create a long term 'expectation' you cannot sustain. For example, in a hotel, if you throw in a free bottle of wine every time someone complains about something, you may create a rather unrealistic expectation - as would a free 'fruit basket' which is seen as a 'standard' : and the next time it is NOT given, it may lead to much dissatisfaction !

Remember, service is a part of the organizational offering and is NOT FREE. IF customer service is truly value-adding, customers need to be WILLING to pay a premium for it. Otherwise, it honestly affects the bottom line.

GREAT Service that actually bleeds the company dry is a sure way of having a much-loved company that goes bankrupt...

# Chapter 2

## Understanding Customers

## **I. Appreciating the customer segments**

‘One size does not fit all’ when it comes to customer service. Even though you may be selling a specific product or service that could cater to the needs of many people across so many social strata, customers from different social strata expect different service standards. For example, let us consider two people from different social classes or backgrounds who visit a roadside boutique; would you think that these two will have the same level of satisfaction about the service offered, even though both may have probably got the same level of service?

Therefore, you need to be mindful about the different profiles / types of customers that you will come across, as these customers will have varying needs, as well as varying levels of impact on your organization.

## **II. High Net Worth Customers**

This term is used to define customers whose wealth exceeds a certain threshold. Usually, these customers are very demanding and look for a personalized service. They will always compare your service against that of similar organizations / industries. High Net Worth customers are usually well connected, and they will talk about your service experience in their social circle, whether it is either exceptionally good or bad.

Therefore, they become a prime source of your word-of-mouth advertising. Also, if you are unable to keep up to your word, and your service is below the satisfactory level, they could become your worst nightmare as well.

## **III. HNCs of the ‘future’**

It is imperative to understand a customer’s future value or lifetime value when servicing customers. For example, High Net Worth customers are not always born being High Net Worth; there is a great portion of customers who become High Net Worth over time. Therefore, if you are serving your customer by only looking at the product or service they have bought now, and not considering future potential, you are about to lose that customer soon.

You should have systems to identify a customer's full potential and a systematic way of updating customer information to ensure that your database is up-to-date. Further, it is vital to have mechanisms to identify 'Future High Net Worth' customers, so that you start personalizing your service to them from now onward. Certain value propositions that banks have, are prime examples for this. Banks generally have very specific programs for their High Net Worth customers and usual savings, deposit, loan propositions for mass market. They will also have another proposition targeted at aspiring High Net Worth customers with more benefits than their usual savings, deposit, loan proposition. These are their propositions for Professionals, Salaried Account holders, etc.

#### **IV. Some MYTHS about what customers want**

Is knowing this even important, you may ask? Well, it is, extremely. We all work within our own frames of references that define our approach and attitudes to situations. Most often than not, we may find ourselves caught in confusion over why what we say and do simply don't seem to work. Here are some common myths that could be the culprit.

##### **a) Building a relationship will help in every way**

At the cost of repeating again, having good people in the frontlines without the backing of well laid out and supportive policies, systems and procedures, is not the way to go. Customers will either only visit while their "friend or contact" remains in the organisation or until a critical event that compromises any stickiness a friend or contact could hold. This would also partly play a role in the known fact that customers move when key employees move.

##### **b) They expect to be connected always**

Its possibly logic that drives many of us to think that the more we stay in touch the better. Customers want more from the time they engage and less of stalking!

c) An immediate solution always, the company should have all the answers

The urge to solve customer issues reigns so high in our minds that we have hardwired answers ready to blurt out. This can be quite counterproductive, possibly similar to the feeling you get when messaging and chat box. That frustrating feeling of not being able to get your point across just gets under your skin.

d) Best price

Customers may walk in with price in mind, but it's not all they want. (As a "tip", it's best not to mention that they are indeed buying cheap). Even when selling a commoditized product or service, there is room for value to be delivered.

e) They don't know what they want (we do!)

Not all, but most people, think that customers do not know what they want. The chicken and Egg story holds true. Whilst some believe that demand drives supply, others also believe that supply drives demand. The key, possibly, is to know that both scenarios could co-exist and organizations should be able to navigate through this; Be it in new product development, process improvements, and other product or service management decisions.

## **V. Some basics about what ALL customers ACTUALLY want**

a) Meaningful moments

As humans we tend to believe that we are logical but contrary to this, most often, we act irrationally. Here is a snippet from history that proves this; Professor Richard Thaler from the University of Chicago was presented with a Nobel Prize in Economics for his work including his book "Nudge" (2008) that proves humans are predictably irrational and can make bad decisions that go against good solid information. Best yet, his research was into behavioral finance. One would think we take those decisions seriously.

At the outset customers don't want pomp and pageantry, they just need to be given the "feeling" that you mean well and have given them enough attention. This is easier said than done for us, since we get bombarded by work, get monitored by the number of problems we have solved, or simply be dealing with issues of our own. Nevertheless, taking the right amount of time and giving the right focus could help shrink the overall time taken with customers and have a high probability of getting a positive review/ feedback.

#### b) Access when it is needed most

When the phone rings, pick-it-up! This is just a simple way of saying I'm accessible and present. All of us don't like to hear bad news, that's just the way we are made up. However, once we wear the hat of a customer service person we should realize that it's our job to give good news out though most of it starts bad. Make it easy for customers to reach out to you though phone, email, messaging app and whatnot. There's just nothing to replace the comforting feeling of a customer who knows they can expect the other side of the call to be picked up when needed.

#### c) Genuineness, empathy and problem-solving skills

Don't rush. We all have the urge to get it over with! After all, who wants to keep going around in circles, right? Wrong! Every customer with a problem has been running through what happened? Why did it happen? How did it happen? To ultimately conclude what did the company do wrong? Know this. Take it as a given that customers have a story to tell and you need to first let them vent it out, but make sure to pay genuine, serious attention and note down all the points that are important when you have to respond.

It is extremely important to have great problem-solving skills. There's a science to it, like everything else, and it can be learned. Of course, you will also need to practice the soft art of empathizing, talking and presenting. This would include, but not limit to, problem identification and definition, compartmentalizing or isolating specifics, pacing and timeline management, planning for corrective action and more.

#### d) Value transfer (functional/ emotional)

When you're faced with a difficult situation or just handling a curious customer who just walked in, remember that they are looking for one of two things. Either they place importance on the value they get for themselves (value to me – functional) or they want to show the value they can express of themselves (value of me – emotional) No matter if you're selling and sorting out, quickly identify this difference and use the right vocabulary to bring relevance to the conversation and guide it effectively. Money is a tool or a measurement, what we buy or transfer is value.

#### e) Opportunity for feedback

Depending on the culture you deal with, feedback; positive, negative or both will take precedence. Albeit that we, as customer service people, need to provide customers the opportunity to express this in the simplest way possible. It's an easier way to find closure and end the conversation, and helps take the relationship into the next step.

#### f) An organisation that listens

Have you ever had that feeling that it's easier to talk to and approach some people whilst you veer away from others? The same applies to organizations. When customers know you give importance to listening, they willingly talk to you. This has a serious impact on many avenues, including business process and systems improvement, new product development, co-development opportunities and more. Moreover, customers don't expect you to have all the answers, but they do expect you to have sound knowledge of the subject. It's fine to be a little vulnerable, it only makes you human. Hence, keep conversations real, welcoming and safe.



## VI. Looking at it from a customer's perspective: but looking at it from an organizational perspective as well...

### a) Understanding the two camps at battle

Is it fair?! Does one win or lose? Does it have to be this way? Life is a negotiation at every step of way, and you need to get this in your head. Its not an endgame and no one seriously expects it to be, although they might come out and say it. We all know that any demand is finally negotiated so don't sweat it out. It's easy to take the customer's point of view OR the organization's, depending on your personality. This is the problem. You need to realize that the two sides are equally important and that it's your role to be the glue in between. Taking the side of the company may portray you as being protective of the company – but you lose customers, while being a crusader for customers would be seen as being an activist, but hurt the company.

### b) Getting onto one page

One possible way that works is to get both camps onto one page based on common values. Anyone would want to be at a better place, and it's your role to give this comfort and assurance that you'll get there together.

### c) Working together

Once you have arrived together at the path to a solution, it's all about working together. Both will understand that they can get what they want in an amicable and mutually rewarding way. It's important to manage expectation here, too, with realistic timelines for delivery and continuous updates to show that the path has not gone cold.

# Chapter 3

## Serving Customers

## I. Top 12 skills to acquire to serve customers

- **Patience** – you must have patience to listen to your customer and to understand the real issue. You may jump to improper conclusions, if you are not patient enough to listen to your customer.
- **Active Listening** – to be able to get into the core of the matter / complaint, you need to be able to listen actively. Often, the key customer concern is buried within an exaggerated complaint made by a customer. If you are not able to understand the real concern, you would act on things which the customer really does not value which will be a waste of efforts / time.
- **Empathy and ability to read customers** – all customers are right in their own perspective and they come to you because they have an issue. Empathy will help you in passing the first hurdle of getting the customer to calm down, when it comes to handling difficult customers.
- **Adaptability** – things will not always go as planned and every customer will have their own complaint that they want to raise with you. You need to be able to adapt to different situations based on customers complaint / service inquiry.
- **Communication**
  - o **Ability to use positive language** – you are at the forefront with the customer and you do not always have the luxury of delighting customers by providing what they want. Sometimes you will have to say ‘NO’ to them, sometimes you will have to tell them that the time taken to attend to them will be much more than they expect, the product warranty will not cover certain situations, etc. Therefore, you need to be able to communicate these unpleasant messages using positive language in a way that the customer does not get upset. For example, product warranty doesn’t cover mishandling by the customer – you can probably say that ‘we have a comprehensive warranty of one year for the entire device. Of course, this is excluding any mishandling of the device as it is excluded by the manufacturer on any product that you purchase’.

o Persuasive speaking – your ability to persuade the customer to reflect upon the service satisfaction levels and the business performance of the organization. For example, if you are a front office customer service person, when a customer comes to buy an old version of a product or with a complaint, if you are able to persuade them to purchase the newest version of the product, it increases sales while increasing customer satisfaction rating.

- Self-control – you will face different types of customers with varying types of needs. Certain customers may even use aggressive / abusive language when they initially raise their complaint. You need to be able to maintain self-control and to calm the customer down, so that you can help them.

- Taking responsibility – you are the face of the organization which the customer sees. So, for them, it does not matter what internal processes you have and who is responsible for the delay / error. You will have to take responsibility on behalf of your organization in front of the customer, without making excuses.

- Knowledge of product / service – this is a key skill you must master as you should not look like a dummy figure in front of the customer, if they want more information about your product service.

- Acting skills – personally, it may be a bad day for you and hence you may be in a bad mood when you turn up for work. But it does not matter when you are in front of a customer, attending to their queries. You need to be able to maintain a happy face and a service mindset when serving the customers.

- Time management skills – you cannot end up attending to a customer for the entire day. The resources your organization has are limited, and there will be an ample number of customers who are queuing up to raise their query with you. Therefore, you need to be able to manage your time when serving customer so that they don't feel that you haven't spent enough time with them, but you don't end up your entire day with them either.

- Problem solving skills – whether you are facing customers to make a sale, to attend to their queries or to attend to their complaints, they will always come to you with a need / issue which requires a solution. Therefore, you need to be able to provide solutions to them as and when required.
- Business acumen – as the face of the organization, you are tasked with providing solutions to the customer. Whether it may be a free gift that you provide to console a customer or a service commitment saying that ‘it will not happen again’, you need to be thorough about how your organization operates and the cost structure of it. Otherwise, you will end up giving freebies which your organization really cannot afford or promises which your organization can’t keep.

## II. Dealing with ‘irate’ customers

Being a customer service personnel, you are bound to get irate customers to deal with. It is vital that you,

- Remain calm
- Listen actively
- Paraphrase what customer said (to ensure that you have understood what the real issue is)
  - Empathize
  - Thank them for raising this issue
  - Explain to them, the next steps that you will be taking
- Obtain customer's agreement on the next steps and timeline

Also, always remember to be sincere even though it is very difficult at moments like this. And remember, they have an issue with our organization / product or service and not with you personally.

### **III. Dealing with VIP customers**

These are your customers who demand the most personalized service at the highest priority level. This is what they have been used to, during their lifetime. You must remember that these customers have a significant impact on your organization (and probably on you as well), if they aren't handled carefully. Therefore, provide them with your best possible service by being within the framework set by your organization.

This does not mean that you overpromise just to make them happy.

Further, get help from your superiors when needed in servicing VIP customers. Your superiors will have more experience in handling them and to be honest, sometimes the designation also plays a role in servicing these customers.

### **IV. Dealing with customers that complain only on social media**

These are attention seeking customers. They want the entire world to know how bad your product / service experience is. They prefer to deal only through social media as most of the time their real need is about seeking attention.

Having said that, these customers will also have a real issue or a really bad experience with your organization, which drives their current behavior. You must reply them on your social media acknowledging their complaint and asking for contact details to get in touch with them. Never try to provide them with a solution on social media itself as it is very difficult to understand what the real concern is, only through a conversation on social media. When you get their contact details, contact the customer, and attend to their complaint in the best possible way you could. You can close the loop on social media conversation by keeping a note after satisfying the customer off-line.

### **V. Dealing with 'unfair' customers**

Sometimes you will come across customers whom you feel are 'unfair' customers. Always remember that they are right in their own perspective and there must be something which drives their behavior. You must try your best to understand the root cause of their behavior.

Then you will be able to attend to them like a normal customer you meet on a day to day basis.

## VI. The customers who don't complain (who simply churn)

There is a saying that 'Customers don't complain'. This means that customers do not make an effort to complain but they simply churn.

After all, why should they try to correct your product / service / processes, etc. by making a complain! What is in it for them? What guarantee would they have that you will receive their complaint with a positive mindset?

When a customer churns due to bad service, it is your loss as service personnel, and the organization is also losing out. We must have processes in place to identify these customers who would not complain but simply churn. These processes vary from asking a simple question at the end of service delivery like 'have I been able to address your concern satisfactorily' to having a holistically mapped out customer journey at organizational level.

## VII. NEVER take the 'nice' customers for granted

This has a link to customers who are not complaining as well. You must not de-prioritize (or take for granted) a certain customer just because they are nice and easy to handle with. These nice customers may be your regulars who contribute a lot to you in terms of sales. And probably they have been with you through tough times as well. The moment you take them for granted, they will feel it and they become dissatisfied. Your loss is relatively bigger here as it is much more difficult to gain a customer who is nice as well as a regular.

## VIII. Winning back customers who have already churned

Even though they have stopped coming to you, these are people who have been your customers in the past. This means that they have had a reason to be with you and then they have churned. Understand what has made them churn from you and provide them with a reason to come back to you.

Understanding the reasons for churning could be done through analysis of their past behavior and reaching out to them. The reason you provide them to come back to you could be a reward for coming back, addressing their reasons for churning, etc.

## IX. The biggest mistakes in Customer Service : and how to overcome them

- Not listening to your customers – Active listening is a skill that needs to be mastered by a service personnel. Often, customer service personnel provide customers with a scripted answer which may not be relevant to the issue the customer is raising. This happens as the service personnel is not actively listening to the customer. Training service personnel on Active Listening and having mechanisms to periodically rate them will minimize this.

- Not being proactive with your customers – you should not wait until a customer reaches out to you with a problem. Based on the industry you are in, there should be routine checks with the customer to understand what support they need. This way, you will support them in resolving an issue rather than trying to rectify it. Proper CRM mechanisms can help in being proactive with customers.

- Taking time to get back to them – every customer wants quick responses. Sometimes, they appreciate the quick turnaround even if the response is not favorable to them. Delaying on getting back to a customer will create more dissatisfaction even if the answer you provide is favorable to the customer. Having well defined service standards and periodic review of the service personnel can help manage this.

- Not being available for your customers – every customer wants to be valued and for you to be there when they reach out to you. A customer service personnel not being available to address a customer concern will further agitate the dissatisfied customer who is reaching out to make a complaint. Organizations should have processes in place to ensure that a service personnel is “being” there when customers reach out. Service personnel who are available at banks and hotels to greet customers and direct them, are a prime example for this.

- Not keeping up to your promises – customers will hold you accountable for your promises and they expect you to do the same. Overpromising or not keeping to your promises will create more dissatisfaction among customers and it will adversely impact you and the organization. Having well-defined service standards, periodic and ad-hoc reviews of service personnel will help in reducing this.



## Chapter 4

# Going beyond 'everyday' Service

## **I. Getting the entire organisation involved: and 'bought into' customer service**

The question that needs answering is whether customer service is seen as a result of product and service delivery (reactive) or whether its is seen as looking after the delivery and making sure you check-up at the end whether all is well (assurance). Obviously, we're pinning our bet on the latter to be more productive.

To get this done is a larger topic. However, in summary this ideal is the culmination of continually improved policies, procedures and systems, creating a culture of a service mind-set, engaging customers and creating an experience, and more importantly enriching employees who are creators of value in the business and instilling the inspirational leadership needed.

But why invest so much in customer service when you already have, on your product/ service? Because managing meaningful moments is where the magical journey begins and evolves with a customer...It's what creates velocity in growing your businesses.

## **II. Policies, Procedures and Processes**

Let's talk about what it would mean to have none of the above or be bad at it. Ever put something in your mouth that tasted sugary sweet to begin with but left a bad aftertaste? To be brutally honest that's the feeling customers get when they deal with you. The sugar can be your communication or the first meeting that is stage-managed to be perfect, but all fails when customers need or want to deal with you at a deeper level. God forbid, they come armed with a complaint. So, the case is obvious. Create a habit to capture, record events and periodically review by appointing a team and ensures seamless connections throughout the business.

### III. Creating a 'culture' of a Service Mindset

Culture is a concoction of a myriad of elements put together, but it largely stems from leadership and what it places importance on. Therefore, you'd need to look at how leaders communicate within the organisation, what is rewarded and recognized, what stories are celebrated, and more.

Moreover, culture is fluid and evolves over time and is influenced easily by external pressures, new recruits, and bad experiences. One needs to create enough insulation mechanism to prevent any deterioration, through reminders and behavioral skills training.

### IV. Training for Customer Service

We're sure you've heard of the story of sharpening the axe, so let's not get bored with it one more time, shall we? As mentioned above, training for customer service needs to be viewed as a continuous activity for the following reasons.

#### a) Complacency and monotony

As time passes by, at a personal level, our brains find quick fixes and shortcuts when faced with any issues. Even as elementary as the way we answer the phone become a reflex. As service professionals we manage meaningful moments that need to be fresh, "straight out of the oven" hot to make those meeting us feel welcome. Anything else and we could well aggravate any matter well beyond what it should be.

#### b) Review and revitalize

From an organization's perspective, businesses need to have their ear to the ground and energize its troops since being ready to serve is paramount. To do this you need to,

- i) Learn, know and execute what needs improving
- ii) Remind, energize and perform to make meaningful moments

Energy is "the" most important criteria when it comes to serving customers and training helps unlearn and recalibrate.

### c) Peer based learning

In customer service not all training is one-way or externally provided. Since service delivery is a team effort, peer-based learning is a good way to help bridge performance gaps and build a robust and resilient response team. This can be done regularly in a controlled environment as well. Once in practice, individuals will automatically start sharing since it will become part of the culture.

## V. Creating 'Tacit' knowledge for the organisation

As mentioned earlier most of what customer service is about is assurance and the ability for businesses to be more aware and responsive. A large amount of such capability stems from the ability to harvest information from the frontlines where value is created. We say value is created in the frontlines deliberately, since that's where the work of the business comes alive at a single point and value is transferred. Given its importance it's also an oasis of rich information and a source for primary research that otherwise could cost millions to acquire. You'll be amazed at how much information customers will be willing to share if you also ask the RIGHT way!

Has your company been able to capture such rich information and farm it out to the relevant people in the company to act? What is the policy, system and process in place for that? How is it monitored? How is it rewarded and recognized?

## VI. Creating a CRM process and system

The key question here is not what this is, we are sure you know that. What's more important is its purpose and why we need it. A CRM is not a way to stalk your customers, it's not a chasing mechanism nor a pretty way to organize their information. Rather it is a method to identify your customer groups and have continuous discussions around,

- a) How did they find us?
- b) Why do they buy from/ come to us?
- c) How do they interact with us?
- d) What other aspects of them do we not consider? Other similar or related products and services they need, behavioral traits and more for predictive analytics.
- e) Their circles of influence? What impact do they have on the rest of the clientele and externally?
- f) What are the challenges they face with us?
- g) How are we solving those challenges?
- h) Are we serving any customers who we should not be? Who should we be serving more? (This is an important question to answer)

Being truly honest to ourselves, all this will translate into more business, as much as knowing our customer in detail will, if we do it for the right reasons. In terms of customer care, having a good CRM system goes a long way. Supporting this fact is also the point above that stresses the need to be more aware.

# EPILOGUE

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Experiences shape us!

It makes us who we are, determines the way we learn, determines what we like and what we dislike. Experiences make us loyal to or cause us to shun something. Experiences modify our behavior and as humans we constantly seek for positive and uplifting experiences which satisfy and bring joy. It is a subliminal craving we yearn to fulfill.

“Good” Customer Service is always an experience which builds positive connotations to a product or service and is possibly why many organizations place emphasis on teams providing ‘Customer Service’.

Customer Service can span various industries, encompass various tasks at different points, but the common factor is creating a user-friendly positive experience to the consumer or customer.

For those who provide customer service it’s all about “mindset”. To elaborate further, a positive mindset, of actually helping along a fellow human. You really need to have this mindset to serve and assist. While many will have processes that stipulate the framework you are to operate within, customer service is all about going the extra mile to delight.

In a day and age where everything is being digitized, the rare instance where a human interaction can offer that “Personal Touch” becomes everything, so make every interaction count. This is the deciding factor of losing or keeping a customer. Often a serious complaint can be resolved by a good dose of genuine empathy and an honest attempt at resolution.

Note, that not all customers CAN be satisfied no matter how flexible you are and how far you are willing to bend backwards. A dissatisfied customer can often be your greatest source of learning.

Finally, customer service is not limited to just a department or a particular job function. It requires a buy-in from everyone, and the effort of the entire organization.

To show value, create an experience and delight customers, you need the ability to be an empath who can think on their feet. It’s not always how much you know, but often it’s how much you care that matters.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



### VIDUSHA NATHAVITHARANA

Vidusha is currently the Destiny Architect at High5 Consultancy and Training and also the organization's founder member. His areas of expertise lies with strategy facilitation, HR strategy development and Leadership Training. He has conducted assignments in 15 countries regionally and consulted for the World Bank, the UN as well as some of the top corporates in Sri Lanka and the Region. He is also a member of the board of directors for Chrysalis, a social enterprise working to empower women and youth by fostering inclusive growth in Sri Lanka and elsewhere.



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Tatum started her career in the banking sector, working both Locally and Internationally, culminating as a Corporate Relationship Manager. Her 18 year career includes exposure in the areas of Sales and Marketing, Content Creation, Creative Writing, HR, Event Management & Social Media Management, covering industries such as Hospitality, Telco, Recruitment and Education.