

Leading through Client Service



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Key qualities that define the organization

Business stance and philosophy; the key success factors and tradeoffs made

Values and assumptions about people and their work practices

Assumptions held about customers

| | | |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------|
| CONNOISSEUR | 1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7 | POPULIST |
| JUGGLER | 1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7 | BOSS |
| PROFESSIONAL | 1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7 | ATTRACTOR |

From: Annamaria Garden "Reading the Mind of the Organisation"

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The Evolution of Customer Relationships
(Harvard Business Review, Jan-Feb 2000)

The Harvard Business Review article suggested that the view of customers has changed from being seen as passive buyers with a focus on consumerism to one of equal partners with organisations co-creating products and services.

The aim is not merely to build relationships but to involve customers as **co-developers** of the organisational outputs. Hence the need for active dialogue and multilevel access. This is what the Cluetrain Manifesto suggests.

Cluetrain Manifesto

A powerful global conversation has begun. Through the Internet people are discovering and inventing new ways to share relevant knowledge with blinding speed. As a direct result, markets are getting smarter - and getting smarter faster than most companies.

These markets are conversations. Their members communicate in language that is natural, open, honest, direct, funny and often shocking. Whether explaining or complaining, joking or serious, the human voice is unmistakably genuine. It can't be faked.

Most corporations, on the other hand, only know how to talk in the soothing, humourless monotone of the mission statement, marketing brochure, and your-call-is-important-to-us busy signal. Same old tone, same old lies. No wonder networked markets have no respect for companies unable or unwilling to speak as they do.

But learning to speak in a human voice is not some trick, nor will corporations convince us they are human with lip service about "listening to customers." They will only sound human when they empower real human beings to speak on their behalf.

While many such people already work for companies today, most companies ignore their ability to deliver genuine knowledge, opting instead to crank out sterile happy talk that insults the intelligence of markets literally too smart to buy it. But there are no secrets. Companies need to lighten up, and get a sense of humour as their markets are often laughing at them.

However, employees are getting hyper linked even as markets are. Companies need to listen carefully to both. Mostly, they need to get out of the way so intra networked employees can converse directly with inter networked markets.

Corporate firewalls have kept smart employees in and smart markets out. It's going to cause real pain to tear those walls down. But the result will be a new kind of conversation. And it will be the most exciting conversation business has ever engaged in.

How can your organisation speak with a human voice ?

How the organisation converse with its customers ?

What drives Customer Satisfaction ?

There are five key dimensions that affect customer satisfaction. They are;

- Tangibles**) **Product or Service**
- Reliability**)
- Responsiveness**) ----- **PARTNERSHIP**
- Assurance**) **Relationship**
- Empathy**)

In more detail...

Tangibles: This covers technical expertise and the quality of the product or the competence of the service. Customers need to feel that the features of the product or service are what was promised. Focus is on the “what” - like buying something in a shop.

Reliability: Having got the product or service the customer will judge it on consistency. Is the quality maintained ? Can he or she rely on it or do they have to worry about whether the product or the service you offer will break down ? Can they believe what they were told (or sold) ? In other words trust is developed through credibility which comes from I get what I expect !

Responsiveness : The next stage moves from the product or service to the relationship between the customer and the organisation. The customer needs to feel that they are important to the organisation - that they are included and involved. This is demonstrated by the way they are treated in terms of responsiveness. i.e. Are you available to them immediately ? Do you give them top priority ?

Assurance: So when the customer feels that the organisation cares about them they will want to feel that information they get from you is absolutely trustworthy. i.e. you are looking after their interests This is obviously difficult ! You need to establish your “professionalism” in terms of the quality of the information and knowledge you have and also in the way you approach their business problems and appreciate their difficulties.

Empathy: The highest compliment you can get from a customer. Not only do they believe you care about them, you are on their side but finally you have a personal relationship with them. Some customers may not want this others will be delighted. You share their personal concerns ; their career aspirations and you understand the personal as well as business issues that they have. You are work friends and colleagues !

The Customer Interaction Cycle

Every meeting or phone call or other interaction with a customer needs to be seen as an opportunity to develop the relationship between:

The customer-----You as the business Representative
The company

You must think through the purpose of your meeting etc. Then set specific goals and intended benefits. These benefits should be seen in terms of the customer (what help you can give them), the company (how you can build on their positive view of the company) and also you. Follow the checklist..

Situation:

- What are the issues or problems leading up to this meeting (or phone call etc.) ?
- Who is involved ?
- How do they see the problem ?
- What do they want to happen ?

Goals/Benefits

- What would be the best outcome for the customer ?
- What would be the best outcome for you ?
- What would be the best outcome for the company ?

Strategy:

- How are you going to go about getting the best outcomes for everyone ?
- Who do you need to involve ?
- What do you need to do ?

Review:

- What happened ?
- What went well ?
- What could have been done differently ?
- What have you learnt ?

Customer Feedback

| | |
|--|--------------|
| Customer Company: | |
| Name of Contact: | Date: |
| Position: | |
| Does the customer feel that the organisation's representative: | |
| Keeps up to date on current trends/developments | |
| Customer Service Orientation | |
| Sets out clear action plans | |
| Keeps them updated on events | |
| Makes contact with relevant person when visiting | |
| Takes ownership of problems - Follows up and does what is promised | |
| Checks what involvement is wanted and then makes sure that happens | |
| Works effectively with staff | |
| Effectively briefs other employees visiting your site | |
| Understands priorities | |
| Understands the business | |
| Takes time to listen and acknowledges issues | |
| Asks relevant and appropriate questions | |
| Shows empathy | |
| Has a positive, confident demeanour | |
| Shows a genuine desire to help | |
| Comments | |

The World of Goods

Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood

Consumption has to be recognized as an integral part of the same social system that accounts for the drive to work, itself part of the social need to relate to other people, and to have mediating materials for relating to them. Mediating materials are food, drink, and hospitality of home to offer, flowers and clothes to signal shared rejoicing, or mourning dress to share sorrow. Goods, work, and consumption have been artificially abstracted out of the whole social scheme. The way the excision has been made damages the possibility of understanding these aspects of our life. To restore the unity would seem to be a start.

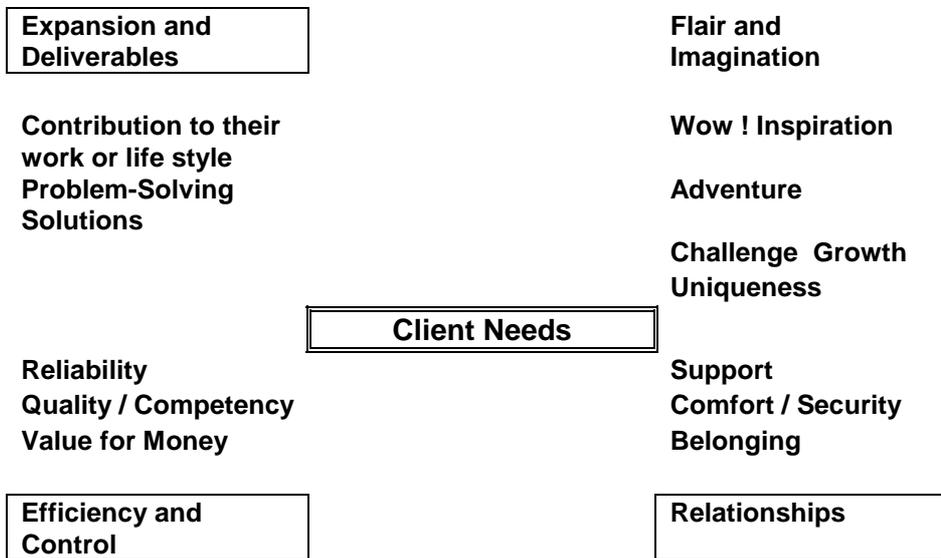
The first six chapters of this book develop the argument that goods are part of a live information system. The last part of the book tries to make use of this improved perspective by suggesting a different approach to social policy. Poverty, for lack of a better idea about goods, is conventionally treated either as an objective want of possessions or as a subjective feeling of envy and deprivation. But some are evidently poor yet not evidently conscious of being deprived. A tribesman with as many flocks and herds as he wants does not feel poor. He may lack electricity and air transport, but what of it? In the universe that he knows, if he has access to all the needful information and can disseminate his own views, he is not poor. **The rightful measure of poverty, on this argument, is not possessions, but social involvement. Before concentrating on whether the poor have enough to eat, we should, so this argument goes, worry about their links to the modern society. If their links into information are weak, sooner or later they will become so cut off that they are denied access to food and warmth. But we should be concerned long before that stage is reached. The first things to worry about are the lines of communication.**

The Buying Concept

*People buy for their reasons not yours
 People don't buy products; they buy what they
 think and feel the product will do for them*

The buying concept determines the buyer's views of the problem the product will solve or their vision of what it will do for them. Linked to this will be their buying criteria - the factors and standards they expect the product to have. Benefits are related to the customer concept - what it can do for them and are the key to success. Information should therefore focus on customers needs, feelings and solutions to their solutions. To buy something people have to have a need, money, desire and trust. Part of the trust comes from credibility of the company, product and the sales person. Credibility can be earned through delivering on promises, or transferred from a third party or previous reputation.

Buying Criteria



Why do people buy your product or service ?

Competition - Why do people buy yours rather than theirs ?

Who are the competitors for this sale?

What are their primary **strengths** and weaknesses?

What is the **price** differential and is price a major factor ?

What is the **availability** of the principal competitor's products?

What are their post-sale **service** capabilities?

How are they positioned with the customer?

Reading the Mind of the Organization

Connecting the Strategy with the Psychology of the Business
Annamaria Garden, 2000, Gower

In this framework, adapted from Will Schutz, all organisations need to fulfil three core areas of experience. They need to project themselves to establish that they exist and have presence, to effectively express their power and effectiveness, their competency and lastly to establish genuine engagement and relationships.. By using these critical areas, to understand the business, many decisions and activities will work more smoothly. It allows you to figure out the emotional change required in the organisation, for example that fits with the strategy for business success can be developed. A number of guidelines, checklists and questionnaires to prompt us into understanding the different ways that organisations can meet these three needs and how well they are functioning in these areas are used. Immediately you can see how and why some organisations work well and others don't.

With this understanding, the "essence" of the organisation and its uniqueness can be developed. Work needs to be designed to fulfil business and individual feeling needs at the same time for success. Again some key principles are the idea of territory, of immediacy and of taking responsibility for effects not just for what is done.

There is an excellent chapter on helping organisations move forward in their own way, of developing their own unique organisational voice. What people in the organisation will want to know about consultants will differ depending on what is most important to that organisation. For some they will need to be able to identify with them, with others they need to know if they are competent, and will test them in debate and, finally other organisations focus on whether the consultants are "real" and fully engaged or just putting in an appearance ? People can quickly take the measure of those who do not fulfil these criteria and whether they will fit in with that unique organisation.

One of the most compelling chapters is on marketing the organisation, of understanding what different customers want and how the organisation can communicate with them most effectively. There is some superb analysis of company statements and advertisements including an ad from the Union Bank of Switzerland Private Banking and how this conveys a **complete set of emotional meanings to customers** - something that is rarely done..

To sum up: the book emphasises the positive side of organisations - that each is special and unique. To understand their essence we have to be open to what is really happening. We have to understand how they establish presence, are effective and how they engage people. Then, and only then, can we begin to develop meaningful connections between the strategic objectives of organisations and the psychology of the organisation. This can then be linked to marketing and the way the organisation communicates with its customers. If we get this right then we can help the organisation live and thrive; get it wrong and the organisation will die, both business wise and emotionally.

FULFILLING EMPLOYEES FEELING NEEDS



Job Design Features

Job Territory

Having clear territory or job space that is yours; a sense of private boundaries, so that you have first rights over what goes on in that territory and others have to respect those boundaries

Feel included, belonging; avoid rejection or being overwhelmed

Significance, recognition, existence

Immediate responsibility

Real responsibility which has the component of immediacy, the responsibility stays with the person and it can be shifted only as an exception, not an expectation.

Feel competent, in control and powerful

Able to achieve

Taking into Account the effects of what you do

Being aware of the long term effects and the impact on others and the organisation

Feel appreciated, trusted and valued for self

TO MEET CUSTOMERS FEELING NEEDS

To be seen as significant and valued

To be seen as competent and respected

To be liked and valued as an individual in their own right

Customer Profile - The Miracle Worker

Work in threes. One of you assume the role of a typical customer of the organisation (you decide what they would be like). The second person play a member of the organisation dealing with the customer. The third person is observer and feedback giver. Take 15 - 20 minutes to roleplay any customer interaction. Customer focus on your **feelings** about the organisation. Exaggerate them. Organisational representative focus on dealing with the customer; their feelings and their views about the organisation. At the end you are a Miracle Worker - you can wave a wand and instantly give the customer all that they want. What would that be ?

- A: Customer - giving feelings about the organisation they are customers of
- B: Organisational representative and miracle worker
- C: Observer and Feedback Giver

After role play the discussion focus on:

A: How well were you dealt with as a customer ? What were you feelings about the organisation? How did you feel about the solutions ?

B: How well do you feel you dealt with the customer ? What were your feelings aboutt he customer and their issues ? What were your views about the organisational solutions for customer service ?

C: As an observer what were your views about the customer interaction ? About the organisational solutions ?

**What are the Feeling Needs in the organisation ?
Feeling that they belong and are significant ?
Are respected and trusted for their competence ?
Are valued and appreciated for themselves ?**

How well are they being met ?

How appropriate are they to meeting the feeling needs of the customers

**What are the Feeling Needs of the Customer ?
Feeling that they belong and are significant ?
Are respected and trusted for their competence ?
Are valued and appreciated for themselves ?**

How well are they being met ?

Organisational Strategies to meet the Customer Feeling Needs ?