



Janice Orchard, a partner in Thomson Orchard Partnership, is an experienced marketer with 30 years in one of the major management consultancies and working independently. She has experience of market research, market planning, customer surveys (over 100 completed), and customer service training projects. She has also been involved in many business strategy development and change management assignments. Her clients are drawn from a wide range of manufacturing and service industries, and the public sector.

In a previous paper, Raising Organisational Performance, we suggested that the key drivers of organisational performance are Leadership, Customer Focus, Employee Engagement and Innovation, and gave a brief introduction to each of these four topics. Throughout our strategic development work with organisations of all sizes, we focus on these four drivers.

In an ever more competitive business environment, it is vitally important that companies deliver perfect service to their customers. Customers are the life blood of any company – but it is amazing how many companies fail to cherish them and deliver what they need. Below are some notes on giving better service to your customers. Some of them may be obvious, but it is amazing how many companies lose track of what is actually happening out there. Above all, talk to your customers regularly, listen to what they have to say and act on it. Look after your customers and your customers will look after you.

## Customer focus is....

- Commitment of everyone in the organisation to its customers
- Alignment of all business processes to achieve the highest levels of customer satisfaction, loyalty and retention
- Real understanding of customers' needs and requirements
- Regular monitoring customer satisfaction, loyalty and retention; sharing results and actions with customers and employees
- Comprehensive knowledge of relevant markets and competitors
- Having the utmost respect for customers, even when things are difficult
- Being honest and straightforward in all dealings with customers.

## Benefits of customer focus...

- More sales, higher profitability
- Higher levels of customer engagement
- Loyal customers – more repeat business, lower customer churn
- More referrals
- Employees sharing the common purpose of satisfying customers
- More streamlined operations and procedures
- Less time spent on complaints and firefighting.

## The customer satisfaction continuum...

**Customer satisfaction** ▶ **Customer loyalty** ▶ **Customer retention**

...is not always a continuum! Some facts:

- 65% of satisfied customers are not necessarily loyal
- Cost of winning a new customer is 5-10 times that of retaining an existing customer
- 70% of engaged employees are customer focused
- On average people tell 1 person about good service, 12 about poor service ... beware social media! UA – guitar – YouTube 3.6m, 10% fall in share price; Ryanair – £60 boarding pass – Facebook 350,000

## Eroders of satisfaction:

- Lack of empathy
- Waiting for calls to be answered
- Lack of knowledge/skill in staff
- Overcharging/hidden costs
- Poor service
- Insincerity
- Being told lies

## Primary reasons for customer defection:

- Unfair charges
- Poor quality
- Rude/disinterested staff
- Unable to contact anyone to deal with problem
- Discounts for new customers but not for existing
- Inadequate returns/refunds policy
- Overseas call centres

## Measuring customer satisfaction...

Regular measurement of customer satisfaction gives realistic comparisons, both overall and for individual aspects.

## Typical actions to increase customer satisfaction..

- Be open and truthful, say what you will do and do it
- Train staff in customer service
- Care, sound as if you care – and smile
- Investigate complaints quickly – and feedback results
- Ensure you give the promised quality, delivery, lead times
- Managing Director speak to/visit customers
- Install systems to record all interactions with customers
- Have straightforward pricing structure with no hidden extras
- Always be polite and helpful. Say thank you
- Helpful, attractive website and literature
- Have a real person on complaints, technical support – NOT an answerphone



## Thomson Orchard Partnership

Experience, expertise, enthusiasm  
[www.topconsulting.co.uk](http://www.topconsulting.co.uk)

VFTT6

For more information or an informal discussion, please contact:

Ian Thomson Tel: 01937 849167  
Email: [ian@topconsulting.co.uk](mailto:ian@topconsulting.co.uk)

Janice Orchard Tel: 0161 439 5862  
Email: [janice@topconsulting.co.uk](mailto:janice@topconsulting.co.uk)