

# ICXI -POST newsbriefing

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## Introduction From The President

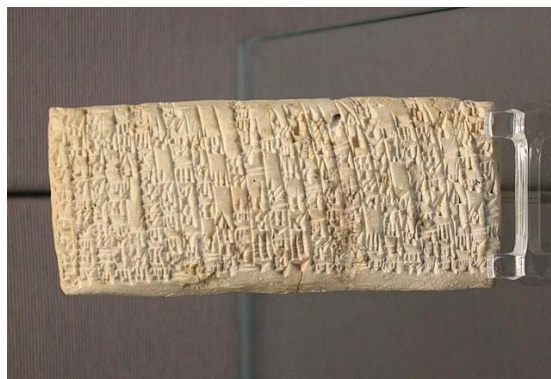
Customer Service or Customer Experience as it is currently known has existed as a part of the customer-supplier relationship for at least 3750 years or more. The earliest known example of customer service is a clay tablet complaint dating back to around 1750 BC. It's considered the "Oldest

The Complaint: A customer named Nanni wrote to a merchant named Ea-nasir complaining about the quality of copper ingots he received. Nanni claimed the copper was not of the promised quality and accused Ea-nasir of treating his customer poorly. In those times every exchange of goods and services remained face to face. That meant customer service was tailored to each individual as until relatively recently a merchant knew all his customers and therefore had a personal interest in taking care of them.

- 1. Early Trade and Barter (Prehistory - Ancient Times):** In the earliest forms of trade and commerce, customer service was likely informal but present. Sellers would interact directly with buyers, negotiating terms and ensuring satisfaction to maintain a good reputation and encourage repeat business.
- 2. Marketplaces (Ancient Times - Middle Ages):** In ancient civilizations like Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece, and Rome, marketplaces played a significant role in commerce. Sellers in these markets likely engaged in rudimentary forms of customer service, such as offering product advice, handling complaints, and even providing after-sales support.
- 3. Medieval Guilds (Middle Ages):** Guilds, associations of craftsmen or merchants, emerged during the Middle Ages. These guilds often regulated trade practices and standards, which included guidelines for customer interactions and dispute resolution.
- 4. Shops and Early Retail (17th - 19th Century):** With the rise of shops and early retail establishments, customer service became more structured. Storekeepers would assist customers in selecting products, provide recommendations, and offer personalized service. Hence the term shop assistant.

5. **Industrial Revolution (18th - 19th Century):** The Industrial Revolution brought about significant changes in manufacturing and commerce. With the mass production of goods, businesses began to focus more on efficiency and scale. While customer service remained important, it may have been less personalized during this period.
6. **Mail Order (19th Century):** while a primitive kind of early mail order it was the mid-19th century that saw the expansion of railroads roads and postal services, which laid the foundation for the growth of mail-order businesses.
7. **Department Stores (19th Century):** The development of department stores in the 19th century marked a shift towards more formalized customer service practices. Department stores offered a wide range of products under one roof and employed staff to assist customers with their purchases.
8. **Telephone Era (Late 19th - 20th Century):** The invention and widespread adoption of the telephone revolutionized customer service. Businesses could now communicate with customers over long distances, allowing for better support and resolving issues remotely.
9. **Post-World War II Era (Mid-20th Century):** As consumerism grew in the post-war era, businesses began to place more emphasis on customer satisfaction and loyalty. This period saw the emergence of customer feedback mechanisms, such as surveys and suggestion boxes, to gather insights and improve service quality.
10. **Digital Age (Late 20th Century - Present):** The advent of the internet and digital technologies transformed customer service yet again. Businesses now utilize multiple channels, including email, social media, live chat, and self-service portals, to interact with customers. This era also saw the rise of customer relationship management (CRM) systems to manage customer interactions more effectively.

It is interesting that poor old Nanni did not have access to the telephone or the internet to make his complaint and had to use a clay tablet but considering the response performance of some major organisations it may be an idea worth considering today!

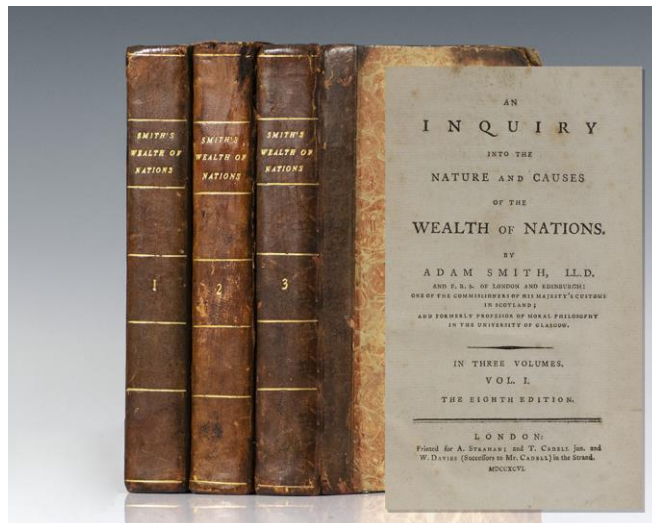


## So when did Customer service become a competitive Issue?

The history of commerce stretches back 150,000 years. And as long as there have been customers, there has been customer service. Even as professional merchants began to flourish about 3,000 years ago, every exchange of goods and services remained face to face. That meant customer service was tailored to each individual. Until relatively recently a merchant knew all his customers and therefore had a personal interest in taking care of them.

### Moving Target

While customer service has always been important, it wasn't always a central focus for competition. Perhaps Adam Smith in his work on *The Wealth of Nations* and the idea of competition coming at the time it awakened the world to the idea that industrial level supply of goods meant that competition meant that the need for managing customer choice was something to be taken seriously



In the 20th Century as markets became more saturated, companies started focusing more on customer satisfaction. This was driven by factors like: Ever Increasing competition where more choices for consumers meant companies needed to stand out.

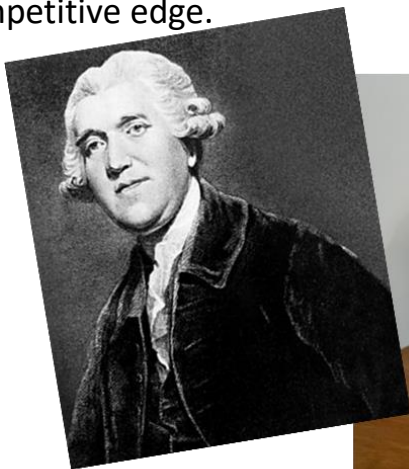
Next was the rise of consumerism as consumers became more aware of their rights often now protected by legislation the demand for better service became an inevitable consequence aided by technological advancements in telephony and later, the internet, providing new avenues for customer service and customer feedback which at the time was still a two-way sharing between buyer and supplier.

In the late 20th/Early 21st Century and the arrival of social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook customers gained a powerful voice to share positive and negative experiences in a way which is beyond the control of the supplier and therefore carries the potential to significantly impact reputation and brand image. **Word of Mouth** moved in one step to **Word of Media**.

The focus for the organisation needed to move from Customer Satisfaction Management to Customer Experience Management. Successful organisations now realise that customer experience management involves not only the whole customer journey with their brand but the overall level of satisfaction delivered may significantly impact brand loyalty and advocacy. Therefore, while customer service has always held some importance, it became a truly competitive issue in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. The reason why this became important is that as the relationship changed from one where suppliers knew their customers personally and the value of that relationship to one where organisational staff have no idea who customers are and even less idea of the value of the relationship, against a background driven by increased competition, consumer awareness, and technological advancements that amplified customer voices. The shortcomings are not just at the sharp end, it is probably true to consider that less than 1% of major corporations in the western world have a single board member that really understands customer experience management in the current economic climate.

### **Its More the Giving Them Their Money Back if They are Not Happy**

Money back may have been at the cutting edge in the past. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century Josiah Wedgwood famous British pottery owner is reputed to have offered customers their money back if not satisfied. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century 1868 Watkins Liniment, a door-to-door salesman, was first to offer a money-back guarantee offering clients a full refund on his home-cooked remedies if they weren't satisfied with the product. In the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Marks and Spencer a famous British clothing chain built their reputation on a no quibble exchange for full refund policy, which incidentally was introduced for reasons of economy in that they had calculated that it was less costly to refund than to argue the case but for many years became their key competitive edge.



## So What is Customer Experience Management.

Firstly and above all it is a leadership issue. Back in the days when the local grocer had a boy on a bike delivering the groceries the boy would be told which customers he needed to take the most care with and would quickly come to understand the consequences of not looking after the best customers. It is doubtful if the CEO of any of today's banks has ever spoken to a clerk about upsetting any customer, best or otherwise. Organisational behaviour and performance, particularly in large corporations implies a major disconnect between leaders and customers.

It is incumbent upon the leaders of organisations to develop, communicate and implement the policy that establishes its customer experience aims and strategic intent, establishes the operational parameters and allocates the necessary resources to so do. An example of such a policy framework is Customer Service Week in the USA.

Customer Service Week was established and designated by the U.S. Congress in 1992. In the proclamation President George H.W. Bush signed, he said, *"The most successful businesses are those that display a strong commitment to customer satisfaction,"* and, *"A business will do a better job of providing high-quality goods and services by listening to its employees and by empowering them with opportunities to make a difference."*

*Suggestions include* showing appreciation to the customer service professionals in several ways.

- Establish an employee rewards program and reward your team with incentives

- Take the time to express gratitude and offer praise for a job well done

- Publicly acknowledge employees' contributions and copy key executives

Improving customer service skills by offering:

- Tuition reimbursement for professional development courses or seminars

- Online courses or instructor-led workshops

- Books or other reference materials

This event is now observed each October in all 50 states and 60 countries worldwide

<https://www.roberthalf.com/us/en/insights/management-tips/make-the-most-of-customer-service-week>

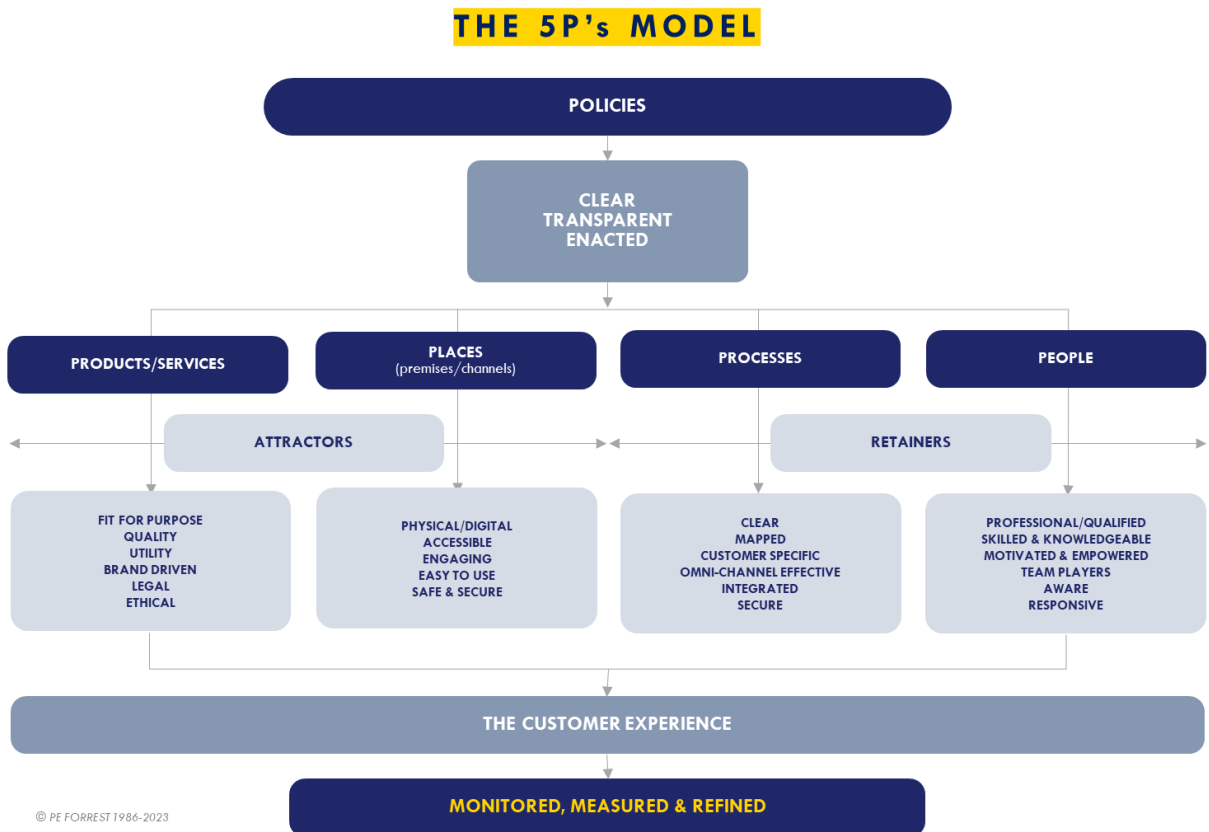
# Customer Service Week

October 7 - 11, 2024

Customer Service Week provides a focus for one week in the year, managing the customer experience and service needs to be active 24/7-365 and it is the responsibility of organisational leaders and managers to ensure the necessary framework and operational environment required is in place.

## So if the Leaders Look after the Policy What Should be Included in its Scope?

There are four key elements which the Policy should address. These can be illustrated in the 5P's Model. Of these elements the one that is still the most critical in spite of vast array of technology available to organisations to manage their customer interfaces, is People. As stated, there is still a need for savvy leadership to specify and implement policy and for quality staff to deliver it in a way that is mutually beneficial to customers, the organisation and its stakeholders.



Leaders are people too! If the history of customer service is to continue on its present positive trajectory it is vital that organisational leaders, particularly in major organisations invest not only in the skills, knowledge and motivation of their people but also in themselves. Effective customer experience and service management is a complex subject involving the integrated performance management of all the above elements, to lead it without fully understanding the relative importance of each of the elements to the organisation's customers will likely make the task more difficult.

## **So What about the People?**

His article of February 2024 *Good CX Cannot Exist Without Good Staffing* Daniel Todaro states

*The recent Centre for Retail Research figures showed that around 120,000 retail jobs were lost last year. While some job losses could not be avoided as behemoths of the UK's high street collapsed, other retailers are reducing staff numbers to cut overhead costs and align with reduced footfall. But what does this mean for customer experience? And how could that impact retailers' ambitions?*

*The truth is that cutting staff overheads requires a careful balance to maintain good experience for the customer, whatever sector(s) you're working in. If you have too many staff members, then revenue will struggle to cover operational costs, which is devastating in a sector with increasingly tight margins. At the same time, with too few staff you will struggle to deliver against expectations, in terms of customer experience, sales volumes or both.*

*There are issues for companies either way, but having too few staff could be catastrophic for businesses that are already precariously close to the edge. From managing staff morale and turnover, to making big-ticket sales and generating loyalty, there's a lot to consider. Furthermore, the human interaction that physical retail offers is one its principal USPs over the online shopping experience.*

### **Burnout and lose out**

*In a global survey by McKinsey, an average of one in four employees were experiencing signs of burnout, resulting in cynicism, exhaustion, and emotional distance. Understaffing, resulting in overwork and poor working conditions, can often be a significant factor in burnout, often affecting multiple team members who are left to pick up the slack.*

*Not only can undervalued and demotivated staff have the obvious impact on customer service, long-term understaffing is likely to lead to higher turnover, and the resulting loss of knowledge and skills that can help drive sales and deliver a more engaging customer experience. It is not just the experience (and its impact on sales) to consider though.*

### **A little encouragement goes a long way**

*When it comes to considered purchases, consumers are unlikely to part with a sizeable proportion of their monthly budget on products and services based merely on a snap impulsive decision. When it comes to 'big-ticket' items or other considered purchases, particularly in the retail sector, our own research reveals that around one in five (18%) of consumers will head to a physical store to seek expert advice. But what happens when they get to the store, and the experience isn't quite what they had hoped based on a lack of service, attentiveness, knowledge or customer journey.*

*Of course, staffing is always about balance, whatever sector you work in, but having too few staff or poorly trained team members could result in lost sales, your customer heading to a competitor or worse, not buying into a brand at all based upon their experience.*

*When we're talking about products like TVs, white goods, sofas etc. developing the customer journey is essential to secure sales. In the current climate, making cuts is inevitable but if you are reducing staff levels to the point where you can no longer fulfil customer needs, your customers may just stop shopping with you all together.*

## **(Product/Service) Innovation only increases staffing needs**

*Looking at some of the products coming out of CES – LG’s transparent OLED TV, virtual reality headsets and microwaves in handbags – and thinking about our general societal shift towards smart devices and products, the need for knowledgeable staff will be essential for providing a good customer experience, and ultimately developing new and existing categories through sales.*

*Products are becoming more complex every year, and there is more choice. For many consumers, the wide array of brands, products and features can be overwhelming, and that is where customer experience becomes even more important. While they will research products online, many people like to head into a physical store to see the products in person and get some guidance, support as well as reassurance before making a considered purchasing decision.*

**Skill Development.** *Investment in training is essential to develop the customer journey and brand experience, which enhances staff retention due to personal development and job satisfaction. In many cases, brands are taking things into their own hands, as they have done for many years, by installing trained staff into stores to ensure that their products are well-explained to customers seeking help, owning the customer journey.*

### **Work smarter, as well as leaner**

*The brands and retailers that get it right and enable customers to get the support they need – whether that is in-person or online – will ultimately win out. Once consumers feel an affinity with a particular store or brand, they will return if they receive consistency and service that they enjoy and can trust.*

[Good CX cannot exist without good staffing - Customer Experience Magazine \(cxm.co.uk\)](http://cxm.co.uk)

## **So Will CX Skill Development Pay Back its Investment?**

*In her article last month *From sales to success: The revenue impact of customer experience training* Jan Jackson reports*

*While the onus of generating revenue historically fell on sales teams, customer success teams also play a pivotal role in this process. Sales teams are tasked with initiating conversations and building relationships with potential customers to close the deal while customer success and experience teams work to ensure new and existing customers see the value in their product and see opportunities to grow and scale. Together, these teams can build customer relationships that keep customers growing with the organisation.*

*It should come as no surprise that providing excellent customer experience has been proven to generate (and save) a lot of revenue, in fact, improving the customer experience can **increase sales revenue by 2-7% and profitability by 1-2%**. Still, despite this fact, customer teams are often overlooked during revenue planning.*

[From sales to success: The revenue impact of customer experience training - Customer Experience Magazine \(cxm.co.uk\)](http://cxm.co.uk)



## So What are the Skills to Invest In?

Starting with leaders and managers then perhaps a university accredited MSc qualification or a management a leadership programme will provide the skills, breadth of knowledge and subject matter insights to enable improved performance from planning through to execution.

Courses like The MSc Customer Experience and Service Management Courses from Abertay University and Al Maktoum College of Higher Education in Scotland or the Post Graduate Diploma (DIP) Course offered by the University of Pretoria in South Africa



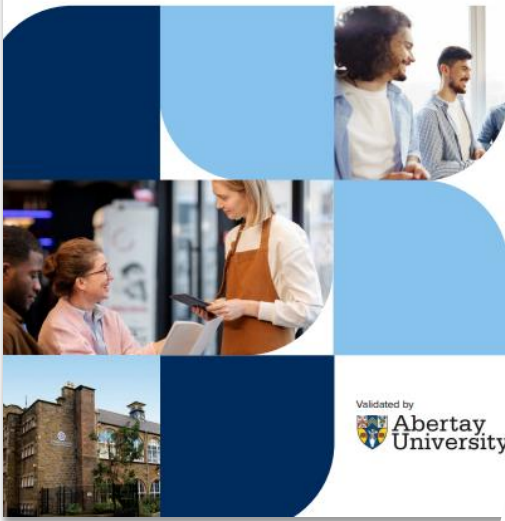
Al-Maktoum College  
of Higher Education



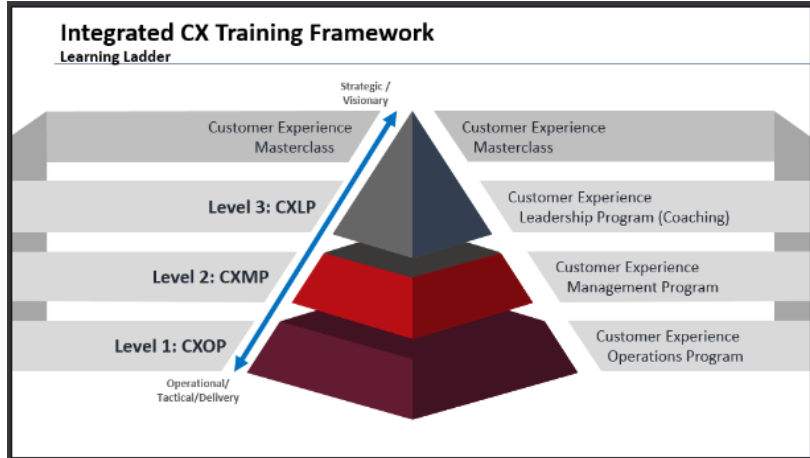
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### About ALM College



At ALM College, we champion an education that surpasses conventional limits, aiming for the full development of our students. Our MSc in Customer Experience Management is designed for real-world impact, blending theory with practical skills.

Known for global excellence and innovation, our education extends beyond traditional lectures, incorporating industry insights and best practices through strategic partnerships.

This approach prepares students to excel in the evolving field of customer experience.

Choosing ALM College sets you on a path to leadership, arming graduates with the expertise to tackle global business challenges.

Our MSc is a mark of our dedication to educational excellence, opening doors to significant career advancements.

Join ALM College to step into a world of leadership in customer experience, ready to make a lasting impact in the business world.

[almcollege.ac.uk](http://almcollege.ac.uk)



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### International Customer Experience Institute



Founded in London in 2007, the International Customer Experience Institute (ICXI) has propelled numerous global organisations towards excellence with its CX Standards Frameworks, achieving certification through the British Standards Institution (BSI).

These standards, rooted in robust implementation models, have evolved alongside customer needs, aiming for top-tier customer experiences.

Supported by nearly 20 accredited Implementation Partners worldwide, ICXI's solutions underline the universal importance of service quality in organisational success.

Historically, the management of these success-driving factors has become increasingly significant. ICXI's contribution has been pivotal in enhancing organisational performance.

Now, it introduces a crucial innovation: an internationally recognised academic qualification designed to empower graduates with the ability to lead organisational performance into the future.

[icxi.com](http://icxi.com)



## **And For the Staff?**

The 5P's model provides the parameters for the performance of people. It proposes they should be

1. Professional and Qualified
2. Skilled and Knowledgeable
3. Motivated and Empowered
4. Team Players
5. Aware
6. Responsive

## **1. Professional and Qualified**

In almost every country there are organisations offering professional skills training and qualifications in CX delivery. Both parts of this heading are important to the individual. Firstly the individual feels more valued and secure in their role knowing that their organisation is investing in their professional development. Secondly the qualification gives the individual not only a sense of pride in their achievement, but greater confidence when performing their CX duties. There is a great deal of evidence that one qualification becomes motivation to further professional development

Bain and Company in their article *What is CX Training - and Why Does it Matter?* By Evan Brennan –Johnson explain

### ***Why is CX training important?***

*Exceptional CX doesn't happen naturally. It must be taught and routinely exercised for companies to earn and keep customer love. Companies also need supportive cultures and policies to empower employees to act in the best interest of CX. And that's the point: The purpose of CX training is to embed customer-centric behaviors into daily interactions and behind-the-scenes processes. Through training, companies set the standards for behavior and decision-making. Certified customer experience professional training ensures everyone is working toward a consistent level of CX. To do that, employees need to know what's expected of them. They also need knowledge, skills and tools to create positive interactions with customers. Certified customer experience professional training establishes best practices and strategies to put customers first and create events that make customers more likely to return and recommend your business to family and friends. When employees have a shared understanding of CX, they can consistently provide remarkable experiences—and stand out from the competition. That's where CX training begins.*

### ***How do you develop a CX training program?***

*CX training should improve the end-to-end customer journey, enhance customers satisfaction and drive loyalty and retention. To start an effective CX training program: Endorse it. Start mobilizing C-level sponsors to role model customer-centric behaviors and drive adoption. Ideally, senior managers and leaders should complete the training themselves, so customer centricity becomes embedded into higher-level strategies.<sup>10</sup> Executives set the tone and can reinforce new behaviors and encourage participation.*

*Establish learning objectives and measurements. Begin by linking foundational CX skills to strategic priorities. What do employees need to know or do differently to bring a brand promise to life? Or deliver a new strategy?*

*Likewise, determine how you plan to track and measure training. What business outcomes or behavior changes do you expect to see after an employee completes training? How will you evaluate learners' understanding and application of the concepts?*

*Among other metrics, you can also track compliance/completion, learner experience and engagement. Like sponsorship, measurements and assessments signal that CX training is important.*

**Focus on routines and processes.** *Effective training needs clear and direct on-the-job applications, so each lesson should be actionable. It should include practical skills that can be applied right away, even as you build more sophisticated capabilities.*

*Link everyday behaviors, processes, and routines to the bigger-picture strategy. Every employee should understand how CX—and their individual actions—support the company's overall mission and strategy.*

**Make it interactive.** *Add gamification or rewards systems to make training more engaging for participants. Allow employees to earn points or badges or keep a leader board to make the experience more enjoyable.*

**Incentivize participation.** *Reward the behaviors you want to see. Recognize employees who complete the program through ceremonies, rewards, newsletters, or other public recognition. Share training success stories or incorporate employees in the CX curriculum as exemplars.*

*If you invest in employees and meet their learning needs, they will invest in the work. Training is a direct investment that can positively impact customers and CX.*

**Know your audience.** *Tailor the training approach and communication based on roles, progress, and outcomes. Some employees may need prerequisite knowledge on CX or company tools, while others will come to class ready for a deep dive. Meet employees where they are, so the training is relevant and actionable in their daily jobs.*

**Establish a knowledge hub.** *CX training can unify teams and the company overall. Create a place for learners to revisit key elements, especially as they receive new CX feedback and as the company grows and evolves. A shared knowledge base supports more consistent experiences for customers. Over time, it builds a common vocabulary and mindset, and CX becomes part of the culture.*

**Reinforce learning materials.** *Find ways to continue the learning process, beyond the classroom. Team leads and managers can review CX training content during huddles, using real-life examples to coach employees. Teams can also discuss challenging situations (“teachable moments”) and brainstorm new, creative solutions. Their experiences become new case studies.*

**Repeat.** *CX training is not a one-and-done event. The content should change constantly to address customer feedback and other market developments. Regularly review learner feedback and update trainings to stay relevant.*

[What is CX Training - and Why Does it Matter? \(nps.com\)](https://nps.com/what-is-cx-training-and-why-does-it-matter)

## 2. Skilled and Knowledgeable

These attributes vary widely and are in many ways unique to every organisation particularly where product/service knowledge and process skills are concerned. What is particularly important in terms of product/service knowledge in the internet age is that customers have online access to both an organisation's product/service specifications and to those of its competition, therefore the details and comparative benefits knowledge may become more crucial. Knowledge base support systems may be helpful but only if staff have a high level of competence in their use.

*Product/Service knowledge becomes even more crucial in the internet age for a few key reasons:*

**Empowered Customers:** *The internet has given customers vast resources for researching products before buying. They can easily compare features, prices, and reviews from a multitude of sources. This means a salesperson (or even a website) with shallow product knowledge will quickly lose credibility with an informed customer.*

**Shift from Transactional to Consultative Selling:** *In the past, sales/service people might rely on high-pressure tactics or simply product availability to close deals. Today, customers expect a more consultative approach. A salesperson with a deep understanding of the product's strengths, weaknesses, and how it compares to competitors can tailor their pitch to the specific needs of the customer, fostering trust and leading to a more successful sale*

**Rise of Self-Service:** *With the explosion of e-commerce, many customers are now comfortable researching and purchasing products online without ever interacting with a salesperson. This puts the onus on the product descriptions, FAQs, and online tutorials to be clear, concise, and informative. Strong product knowledge is necessary to create these resources and ensure customers can make informed decisions.*

**Improved Customer Experience:** *Whether it's a sales/service person addressing a customer's concern or a well-designed FAQ section anticipating customer questions, product knowledge is key to providing a smooth customer experience. When customers feel like their questions are being answered accurately and their needs are understood, they are more likely to be satisfied and become loyal brand advocates.*

*In short, the internet age empowers customers and demands a higher level of service. Product/service knowledge equips organisations to navigate this new landscape and foster stronger customer relationships.*

*With multichannel options available to the customer service process knowledge across the whole organisation. Customers expect that the outcome of an enquiry made through one channel will be available in every other and staff may need to understand how to access such data when handling a customer query. This is particularly important for organisations who may deal with complex services the delivery of which involves multiple channels.*

### **3. Motivated and Empowered**

Research indicates that except when dealing with financial services and utilities organisations most customers have the perception that the supplying organisation values, to a greater or lesser degree, their custom and it is on the back of that perception that their service expectation is based. It is therefore important that an interface with a real person, and to a growing degree, digital people should be motivated to respond in the appropriate manner.

Tue Søttrup of Dixa explains in his paper *Effective Tips To Motivate Your Customer Service Team*

*For most businesses, the customer service teams are the frontline in establishing brand loyalty. The level of customer service they deliver has a direct impact on the overall experience you customers will have, which oftentimes determines whether your customer will keep coming back or forget your brand forever. Therefore, it's important to keep customer service teams motivated so they can consistently deliver positive experiences to your customers.*

*Your responsibility as manager is to find ways to boost your customer service team's morale and keep them engaged in their work. But how does one accomplish this? Especially in an industry that is predisposed to high turnover and monotonous work?*

#### **Three drivers of motivation**

*A good place to start is by reviewing the three drivers of intrinsic motivation at work by Daniel Pink, which reveals what motivates individuals internally. Pink's research states that once the basic financial needs of the employee are met, people are much more motivated by intrinsic elements. Therefore, focusing on intrinsic motivators will help keep employees more engaged long-term.*

*Pink identifies three drivers of intrinsic motivation, which are: autonomy, mastery and purpose. As manager, you can tap into these three drivers to motivate your customer service team and strengthen their engagement with their work long-term.*

#### **Autonomy**

*One of the reasons why it can be difficult to keep agents engaged is because they are often given very little freedom of how they can execute their tasks and responsibilities. Although guidelines are necessary to keep a contact center running smoothly, giving your agents the tools to make more complex decisions without escalating them to the supervisor every time can give them a stronger sense of autonomy and control over their work. One way to do this is to give agents a limit of credit to use as a last resort when handling more complex customer issues. Doing so empowers agents to problem solve on their own, making them feel more valued and respected as an employee.*

## **Mastery**

*As humans, we naturally want to get better at the things we spend time doing. It gives us satisfaction and a sense of achievement. In a contact centers, a lot of the work agents do can be repetitive, therefore, it can be difficult for agents to feel they are improving or growing. In addition to combating the inevitable repetitive work of a customer service agent, because agents use the same tools everyday – having slow or inefficient tools can become quite frustrating for an agent too.*

*As manager, providing your agents with frequent (monthly or bi-monthly) training session to expand their knowledge and skills can help them accomplish a stronger sense of mastery. Making sure agents know how to use new systems or newly released features can provide them with the opportunity to keep learning and become more effective as an agent.*

*Lastly, make sure your team has the tools necessary to execute their job and perform to the best of their ability. Having a slow computer or poor customer service software can be extremely demotivating for an agent, especially in an industry where seconds matter for performance stats. Giving them powerful tools can make their jobs easier and will likely translate into improved performance and customer service.*

## **Purpose**

*Pink's research reveals that people ultimately want to do things that matter and in the service of something "larger than ones self." Customer service agents actually do make a difference in the lives of customers every day by helping resolve customer issues, making their lives easier.*

*Remind your customer service team that the work they are doing contributes to the overall success of the company. Have team members share positive customer stories regularly at team meetings. Doing so can help show them how valuable they are to the organization, giving them a stronger sense of purpose.*

*A motivated team leads to consistent customer service*

*Ultimately, finding ways to keep your team engaged and motivated will result in a lower churn rate and better performance. Since there are aspects of being a customer service agent that make it difficult to stay motivated, finding ways to motivate agents from within is extremely valuable. Some of these drivers will work better for certain individuals than others, so take note on what each team member reacts the best to.*

*Motivating your customer service team is a critical part in providing a consistently positive customer experience*

<https://www.dixa.com/blog/effective-tips-to-motivate-your-customer-service-team-long-term>

The missing piece to this article may be recognition. Formal and informal recognition of a job well done is an extremely valuable and effective motivational tool. It may be as small as a thankyou and a pat on the back from a manager or supervisor to be being thanked in the presence of their peers or a more formal more widely communicated recognition award. It is not always about more money

## 4. Team Players

This point starts with the view that every organisation is one team and while, as in a sports team, each may have a different role they will only be as effective as they can be when every member of the team performs their role to the best of their ability. In spite of the work done over many decades to eliminate silo mentality it still exists in many organisations and can be enormously damaging to the experience of their customers. This is essentially an issue resulting from the myopia or ignorance of leadership and management and it can seriously inhibit the ability of employees to resolve customer issues. In this context therefore teamwork extends beyond the team that may interface with customers to all the other organisational teams they need to work with to deliver a satisfactory customer experience. The key to this is that it is likely that many of such engagements may be not routine and ad hoc and therefore require flexible empowerment on the part of all involved. In order to facilitate such a situation it is vital that teams at all levels should be involved in developing the solutions on how this can effectively work.



Harvard Business School Online put the case in their insight by Lauren Landry  
**WHY MANAGERS SHOULD INVOLVE THEIR TEAM IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS**

### **THE ROLE OF A TEAM IN DECISION-MAKING**

*One way to increase your likelihood of success is to include your team in the process. Research shows that diversity leads to better decision-making. By bringing people into the conversation with different disciplinary and cultural backgrounds, you can enhance creativity and gain a fresh perspective on the task or problem at hand.*

*“Map out the technical, political, and cultural underpinnings of the decision that needs to be made and then build your group accordingly,” says Harvard Business School Professor Len Schlesinger, who’s featured in the online course Management Essentials. “You’re looking for a broad array of experience. You want some newcomers who are going to provide a different point of view, as well as people who have profound knowledge and deep experience with the problem.”*

Some managers might shy away from integrating their team into the process to avoid additional complexity or a potential clash of opinions. Yet the ideas that could come out of that dialogue are often far more valuable and critical to business success. Here's a closer look at how successful team

**1. Overcoming Consensus** Managers often defer to consensus, or the majority of opinion, to avoid conflict and foster group harmony. But Schlesinger argues that it's not always the right choice. "Consensus is likely to lead to a lower evaluation of the problem and a less creative solution," Schlesinger says. "You need to be willing to engineer in conflict, which is often perceived as uncomfortable, but is essential to uncovering some of the hidden assumptions and data that leads people to make less-informed decisions." Schlesinger suggests one approach of establishing a process of devil's advocacy and encouraging individuals to poke holes in arguments and problem framing. As a result, your team will likely conduct a more in-depth critical evaluation, which could lead to a greater number of alternative solutions. "Managers often get to convergence too quickly, which is one of the most negative byproducts of the consensus-oriented model and why it's only appropriate for the most simplistic decisions," Schlesinger says. "Unless you're intentional about trying to overcome consensus, you're going to be stuck with it and then get a group together who's going to manifest a decision-making process that's essentially no better than what you would come up with by yourself." As a team leader, it's critical to encourage diverse thoughts and opinions around the table to discover more innovative solutions.

**2. Increasing Employee Engagement.** By involving your team members in the decision-making process, you show that you trust and value their opinion, which is a key element of building employee engagement. According to analytics and advisory firm Gallup, highly engaged employees produce substantially better outcomes, are more likely to stay at their organization, and experience less burn-out. They can't reach that level, though, unless they feel invested in their work, are given opportunities to develop their strengths, and understand how their role contributes to the company's overall success. Every decision you're asked to make is a moment for you to empower others on your team by leveraging their strengths, experiences, and expertise.

**3. Enabling Collaboration and Communication** According to a Queens University of Charlotte study, nearly 75 percent of employers rate teamwork and collaboration as "very important," yet 39 percent of employees say their organization doesn't collaborate enough. In a separate study, 86 percent of respondents attributed workplace failures to a lack of collaboration or ineffective communication. By involving others in the decision-making process, you create an opportunity for colleagues to share ideas, learn from each other, and work toward a common goal. In turn, you foster collaboration and help break down organizational silos. You might even surface overlapping initiatives within the company.



#### **4. Surfacing Your Own Blind Spots**

*Self-awareness is a vital management skill, and has proven to be what sets high performers apart in the workplace. It's a core tenet of emotional intelligence and describes your ability to understand your strengths, weaknesses, and managerial tendencies. While you might think you know your blind spots, research suggests otherwise. According to organizational psychologist Tasha Eurich, 95 percent of people think they're self-aware, but only 10 to 15 percent actually are. Meaning, if you're making every decision by yourself, there's likely cultural, informational, or technical data you're missing. Involving your team in the decision-making process can help surface your blind spots.*

**5. Getting Buy-In from the People Who Need to Implement.** *The people you include in the decision-making process should be those who need to implement the agreed-upon solution. "Getting to the 'right answer' without anybody who is supporting it or having to execute it is just a recipe for failure," Schlesinger says. If, upfront, you assembled a team with an array of skills, experience levels, and backgrounds, established clear goals, and explored all viable solutions, you should reach a stage where you're ready to not only make a decision but execute. "In the general manager's job, the quality of the decision is only one part of the equation," Schlesinger says. "All of this is oriented toward trying to make sure that once a decision is made, you have the right groupings and support to implement."*

#### *Example Why Internal Service Excellence Training for all Is Important*

*While direct customer-facing roles are crucial in the customer service industry, the backbone of an exceptional CX also lies with back-office teams. When support teams understand their part in the service delivered to customers, and have strong communication and service skills, you create a powerful ripple effect that reaches your customers. For example, what if an insurance admin team member, who doesn't speak directly to customers, is feeling demotivated, and doesn't fully understand the part they play in the end service delivery? Then, their negativity and lack of understanding affects their work. This leads to delays, errors, and frustrated customers waiting for updated policy documents. A month later, the insurance claims assessor receives a call from a disgruntled customer who wants to submit a claim but notices an error on the policy which delays the claim. The customer isn't happy, and the claims assessor has a difficult conversation to manage. The claims team member has difficulty contacting the admin team member and is promised a call back, which doesn't happen. Specific timescales are therefore not provided to the customer as the claims team member is unclear how long it will take to rectify the error. It is clear in this scenario that service to the customer has been affected because of gaps in the internal service. This sends a clear message to all teams – that they are all an important piece of the service excellence jigsaw puzzle.<sup>17</sup> Have you ever tried to complete a jigsaw only to discover a piece missing?*

## WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF DECISION-MAKING?

*There are several important decisions leaders must make on a daily basis to maintain their organization's success. As a manager, it's important to find ways to involve your team in this critical decision-making process in some capacity, whether strategic, tactical, or operational.*

*Strategic decision-making: Decisions that have a significant or long-term impact on the organization, such as department restructuring or acquiring a new client. Being transparent about bigger-picture decisions and long-term organizational goals is one way to show your team they have a say in the company's future.*

*Tactical decision-making: Topics of discussion that focus on the immediate steps your organization needs to take to achieve long-term goals, like hiring a new team member or intern. Since these are smaller actions that likely affect the team's daily routine, their input is invaluable.*

*Operational decision-making: Decisions that involve the team's high-volume, daily operational tasks. Team involvement is crucial because it encourages valuable ideas and possible solutions to make systems or processes run smoothly. Teams are likely to perform well when they're involved in the day-to-day efficiency of the organization.*

## IMPROVING THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

*Involving your team in the decision-making process can benefit your entire organization. The quality of the decisions made will improve because you'll have the right mix of skills and expertise at the table, but you'll also have the people in place who are prepared, and in sync on what, to implement.*



<https://www.slideteam.net/3d-team-joining-jigsaw-puzzles-business-ppt-graphics-icons-powerpoint.html>

For interesting insights on Team Performance look up Johan Cronje-Integro Learning  
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/johancronjeintegro/>

## 5. Aware

Every customer is different and every customer experience is different if ever there was an example of “*One Size Does Not Fit Anyone*” then it is customer experience and service management. Awareness is a key factor that operates at a number of levels. At an organisational level an awareness of customers needs and expectation is a strategic foundation stone. At a customer segment group level it applies to the emotional motivation of that group and how the experience can address the segments emotional needs. At an individual level the customers needs may be entirely circumstantial and require awareness on a one to one level. The primary aspect of awareness is that it identifies what is IMPORTANT to the customer and this is the key to developing a level of PERFORMANCE that delivers an upper quartile customer experience

### Strategic Awareness

At a strategic level Jim Gitney in his paper *Customer Knowledge and Awareness: Level 1 Business Hierarchy of Needs* proposes that awareness is a foundation block in an organisations hierarchy of needs.

### Customer Knowledge and Awareness

*Knowing the customers in your served markets and being aware of their needs is critically important to your business strategy. This knowledge is what leads you to your approach to products, systems, services, staffing, and pricing. Who could have guessed that the buying profiles of customers would change so dramatically in recent years? Markets shut down, online buying is up more than 50% for consumers and up more than 80% for buyers in Business-to-Business markets. The customer landscape has forever changed and today, customer knowledge and awareness are more important than ever. We need to admit to ourselves that major disruptions in the marketplace are happening more frequently, causing customer needs to change quickly. Staying on top of that is critical to continued success. So, what do your customers want today and in the future?*

*While it should be obvious that customers want the best possible value for the goods and services they buy from you they also have other needs. In our work with the market-facing teams of our clients, we ask them: What else does the customer want? They want suppliers who know their markets and demographics and are proactively creating products, systems, and service solutions to help them be more successful and to achieve their own MIG and strategies. This applies to every industry we have encountered.*

*Remember the Shopify vision statement:*

*“To make commerce better for everyone, so businesses can focus on what they do best – building and selling their products”*

*Market Facing teams need to ask themselves how they can apply this logic to their customers’ needs and whether they have people in their organization who understand their customer demographics (we’ll discuss this in more detail in the Talent Optimization section). I spoke about knowing your customer’s strategic objectives. This is extremely important and worthy of more discussion.*

Marketing and salespeople will tell you they understand their customers and markets. They draw assumptions from sales performance, but often their knowledge of the strategic needs of the customer is subjective and not objective. Every customer has strategic priorities. They may relate to cost, market share, or a specific demographic. They will have measurable performance targets they must meet. But, when dealing with buyers, do you know the strategic needs and Most Important Goal for their organization? Some buyers will know it, and some will not. Sales executives will need to dig a bit to find out the customer's full set of needs. Understanding the needs of every customer provides actionable and measurable information. If a customer wants to double sales, your portfolio of products and services will be different than if their MIG is to increase profitability, or appeal to a different demographic. When working with clients, we use a checklist to determine customer needs and use it when making plans for how to service a customer. It is a simple survey that can be done by any stakeholder or completed after a meeting with the customer to discuss their strategic needs.



After reading this section, you should be asking yourself the following questions:

1. Do we satisfy our customer's needs?
2. Do we understand their Most Important Goal?
3. How do we incorporate them into what we do?
4. How do we engage stakeholders to find out our customer needs?
5. Do we carefully consider internal and external customer needs?

## Emotional Awareness

In their special report in the Harvard Business review

*The New Science of Customer Emotions - A better way to drive growth and profitability* by  
- Scott Magids, Alan Zorfas, and Daniel Leemon state that

*When a company connects with customers' emotions, the payoff can be huge. Yet building such connections is often more guesswork than science. To remedy that problem, the authors have created a lexicon of nearly 300 "emotional motivators" and, using big data analytics, have linked them to specific profitable behaviors. They describe how firms can identify and leverage the particular motivators that will maximize their competitive advantage and growth. The process can be divided into three phases. First, companies should inventory their existing market research and customer insight data, looking for qualitative descriptions of what motivates their customers—desires for freedom, security, success, and so on. Further research can add to their understanding of those motivators. Second, companies should analyze their best customers to learn which of the motivators just identified are specific or more important to the high-value group. They should then find the two or three of these key motivators that have a strong association with their brand. This provides a guide to the emotions they need to connect with in order to grow their most valuable customer segment. Third, companies need to make the organization's commitment to emotional connection a key lever for growth—not just in the marketing department but across every function in the firm.*

*Consider these examples: After a major bank introduced a credit card for Millennials that was designed to inspire emotional connection, use among the segment increased by 70% and new account growth rose by 40%. Within a year of launching products and messaging to maximize emotional connection, a leading household cleaner turned market share losses into double-digit growth. And when a nationwide apparel retailer reoriented its merchandising and customer experience to its most emotionally connected customer segments, same-store sales growth accelerated more than threefold. Given the enormous opportunity to create new value, companies should pursue emotional connections as a science—and a strategy. But for most, building these connections is more guesswork than science. At the end of the day they have little idea what really works and whether their efforts have produced the desired results.*

*Our research across hundreds of brands in dozens of categories shows that it's possible to rigorously measure and strategically target the feelings that drive customers' behavior. We call them "emotional motivators." They provide a better gauge of customers' future value to a firm than any other metric, including brand awareness and customer satisfaction, and can be an important new source of growth and profitability.*

*At the most basic level, any company can begin a structured process of learning about its customers' emotional motivators and conducting experiments to leverage them, later scaling up from there. At the other end of the spectrum, firms can invest in deep research and big data analytics or engage consultancies with specific expertise. Companies in financial services, retail, health care, and technology are now using a detailed understanding of emotional connection to attract and retain the most valuable customers.*

## High-Impact Motivators

Hundreds of “emotional motivators” drive consumer behavior. Below are 10 that significantly affect customer value across all categories studied.

I am inspired by a desire to:	Brands can leverage this motivator by helping customers:
Stand out from the crowd	Project a unique social identity; be seen as special
Have confidence in the future	Perceive the future as better than the past; have a positive mental picture of what's to come
Enjoy a sense of well-being	Feel that life measures up to expectations and that balance has been achieved; seek a stress-free state without conflicts or threats
Feel a sense of freedom	Act independently, without obligations or restrictions
Feel a sense of thrill	Experience visceral, overwhelming pleasure and excitement; participate in exciting, fun events
Feel a sense of belonging	Have an affiliation with people they relate to or aspire to be like; feel part of a group
Protect the environment	Sustain the belief that the environment is sacred; take action to improve their surroundings
Be the person I want to be	Fulfill a desire for ongoing self-improvement; live up to their ideal self-image
Feel secure	Believe that what they have today will be there tomorrow; pursue goals and dreams without worry
Succeed in life	Feel that they lead meaningful lives; find worth that goes beyond financial or socioeconomic measures

SOURCE SCOTT MAGIDS, ALAN ZORFAS, AND DANIEL LEMON

FROM “THE NEW SCIENCE OF CUSTOMER EMOTIONS,” NOVEMBER 2015

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## Getting Started

*Identifying and leveraging customers' emotional motivators can be broken into three phases.*

**First**, inventory your existing market research and customer insight data. You will probably find qualitative descriptions of your customers' motivating emotions, such as what aspects of life they value most (family, community, freedom, security) and what they aspire to day-to-day and in the future. From there, pursue research to add detail to your understanding of those emotions. Define a set of emotional motivators to probe—the list in the exhibit “High-Impact Motivators” will provide ideas, as will your qualitative research. Online surveys can help you quantify the relevance of individual motivators. Are your customers more driven by life in the moment or by future goals? Do they place greater value on social acceptance or on individuality? Don't assume you know what motivates customers just because you know who they are. Young parents may be motivated by a desire to provide security for their families—or by an urge to escape and have some fun (you will probably find both types in your customer base). And don't undermine your understanding of customers' emotions by focusing on how people feel about your brand or how they say it makes them feel. You need to understand their underlying motivations separate from your brand.

**Second**, analyze your best customers—those who buy and advocate the most, are the least price-sensitive, and are the most loyal. To do this, identify those who are highly satisfied with your brand—whatever the degree of their emotional connection—and divide them into quartiles according to annual purchases, advocacy, and so on. Examine the top quartile to see how the characteristics and behavior of your best customers differ from those of people in the other quartiles. Look at demographics, whether people buy in person or online, how much they buy from your competitors, and where they get their information about your brand (traditional media, social networks, and so on). Compare the emotional motivators of your best customers with the ones you've researched for your overall customer base and see which are specific or more important to the high-value group. Find the two or three of these key motivators that have a strong association with your brand. They will serve as an initial guide to the emotions you need to connect with in order to grow the most valuable customer segment of your business and to the marketing strategies and customer experience tactics that will provide the greatest connection opportunities.

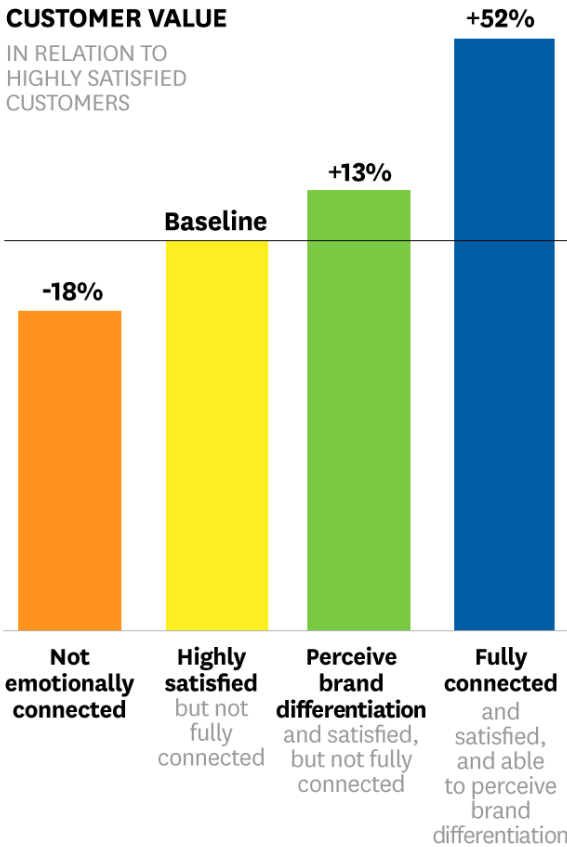
**Third**, make the organization's commitment to emotional connection a key lever for growth. Use the language of emotional connection when you talk about your customers—not just in the marketing department but across the firm. In our experience, successful strategies based on emotional connection require buy-in from the top and must be embraced across functions. For example, if people in product development are working on a version that's easier to use, they shouldn't just ask whether customers will be satisfied with it; they should learn which emotional motivators it resonates with and how it will strengthen emotional connections.

## The Value of Emotional Connection

As customers' relationships with a brand deepen, they move along the pathway toward full emotional connection. Although they become more valuable at each step, there's a dramatic increase at the final one: Across a sample of nine categories, fully connected customers are 52% more valuable, on average, than those who are just highly satisfied.

### CUSTOMER VALUE

IN RELATION TO HIGHLY SATISFIED CUSTOMERS



The increased value of fully connected customers relative to highly satisfied ones varies by category. Here are the values for the nine categories sampled.

Household cleaner purchases <b>+103%</b>	Tablet app purchases <b>+82%</b>	Credit card swipes <b>+68%</b>
Online retailer purchases <b>+52%</b>	Hotel room stays <b>+41%</b>	Discount store visits <b>+37%</b>
Consumer-banking products <b>+35%</b>	Fast-food visits <b>+27%</b>	Casino-gaming spending <b>+23%</b>

**SOURCE** SCOTT MAGIDS, ALAN ZORFAS, AND DANIEL LEEMON

**FROM** "THE NEW SCIENCE OF CUSTOMER EMOTIONS," NOVEMBER 2015

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[The New Science of Customer Emotions \(hbr.org\)](http://hbr.org)



## Responsive

Delivering an upper quartile customer experience in many cases can be achieved with what may be described as an expected quality professional performance but there are instances where circumstance may require a different or more flexible approach.

Understanding organisational responsiveness is a major factor in the management of short or long term change in customer needs and for the effective management of unforeseen issues.

In their paper *Responsiveness: The Power of Responsiveness in Delivering Superior Customer Experiences* Faster Capital state

### *1. Understanding the Importance of Responsiveness in Customer Experiences*

*In today's fast-paced world, where customers have a plethora of options at their fingertips, businesses need to prioritize responsiveness to deliver superior customer experiences. Responsiveness refers to the ability of a business to promptly and effectively address customer inquiries, concerns, and feedback. It encompasses various aspects such as timely responses, active listening, and proactive problem-solving. In this section, we will delve deeper into why responsiveness is crucial for businesses, explore examples of companies that have excelled in this area, and provide practical tips for enhancing responsiveness in customer experiences.*

### *2. Importance of Responsiveness*

*Being responsive to customer needs is paramount for several reasons. Firstly, it builds trust and loyalty. When customers feel that their concerns are being heard and addressed promptly, they are more likely to develop a positive perception of the brand and become repeat customers. Additionally, responsiveness enhances customer satisfaction and leads to positive word-of-mouth recommendations, which can significantly impact a company's reputation and growth. On the other hand, failing to be responsive can result in frustrated customers who may seek alternatives and share negative experiences with others.*

### *3. Examples of Responsive Companies*

*Several companies have set a benchmark for responsiveness, showcasing its power in delivering exceptional customer experiences. One such example is Zappos, an online shoe and clothing retailer. Zappos is renowned for its outstanding customer service, with representatives available 24/7 to assist customers. Their commitment to responsiveness is evident in their average call handling time of less than a minute and their willingness to go above and beyond to satisfy customer needs.*

*Another company that prioritizes responsiveness is Amazon. With its efficient customer service team and advanced logistics capabilities, Amazon ensures that customer queries and concerns are promptly addressed. They have implemented features like live chat support and automated tracking updates, enabling customers to have real-time information and assistance whenever needed.*

#### 4. Tips for Enhancing Responsiveness

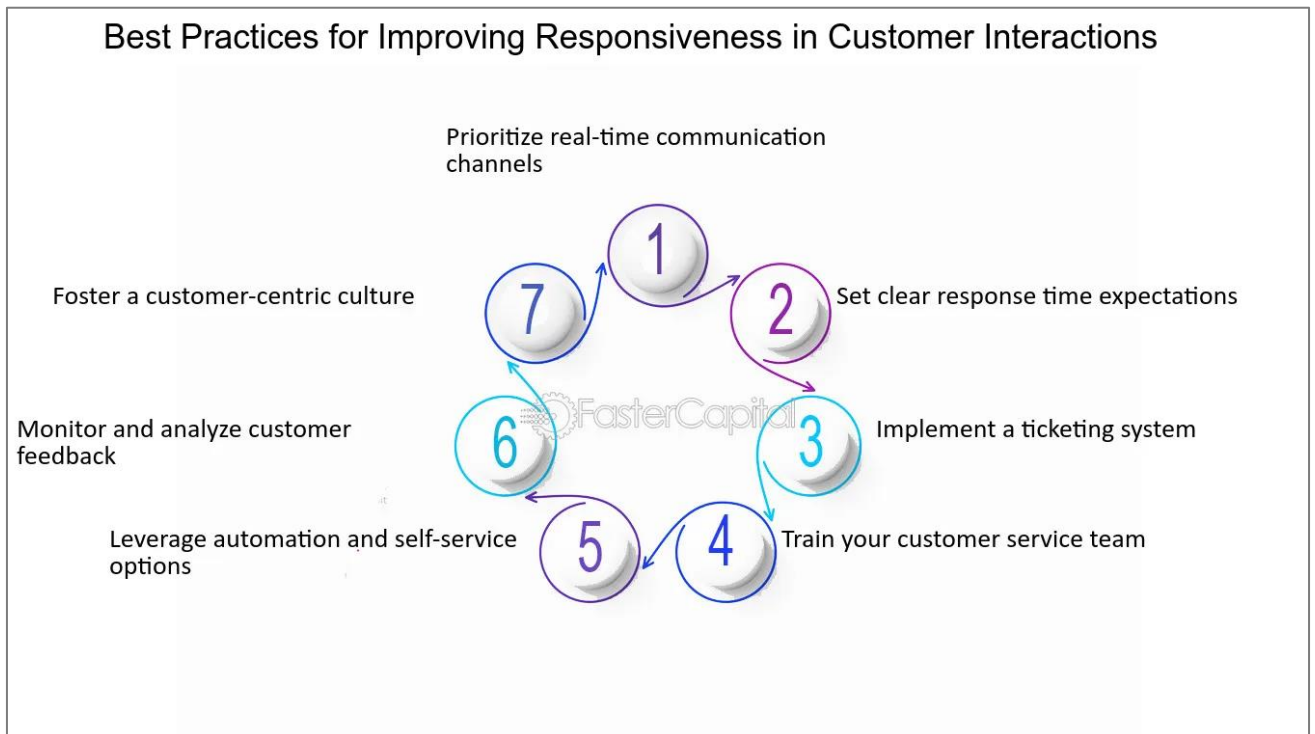
To improve responsiveness in customer experiences, businesses can consider implementing the following tips:

A) *Set clear response time expectations:* Clearly communicate to customers the expected timeframe for responses, whether it's through email, social media, or phone. This helps manage customer expectations and demonstrates the company's commitment to timely communication.

B) *Utilize automation and self-service options:* Implementing chatbots, FAQs, and self-service portals can help address common customer queries and concerns instantly. This allows businesses to handle a larger volume of inquiries efficiently while freeing up resources for more complex issues.

C) *Actively listen to customers:* Truly understanding customer needs requires active listening. Train customer service representatives to attentively listen to customer concerns, ask relevant questions, and provide personalized solutions. This attentiveness fosters a sense of empathy and reassurance.

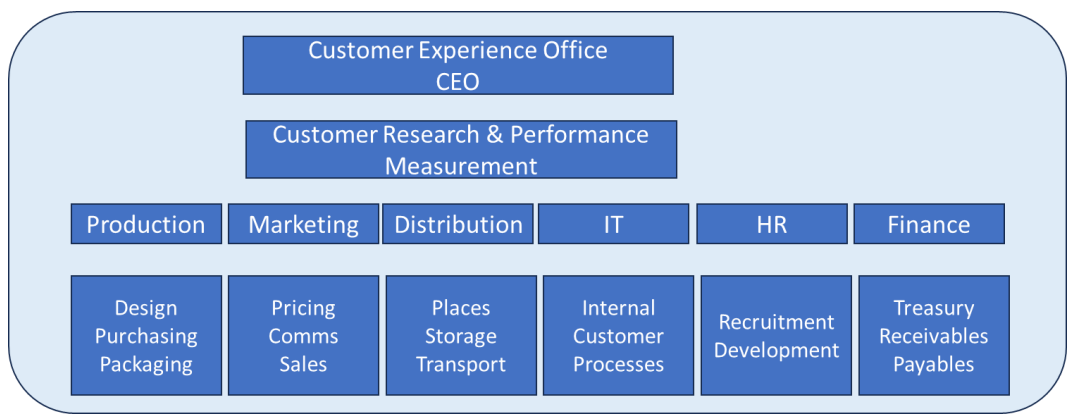
D) *Continuously monitor feedback channels:* Regularly monitor and analyze customer feedback from various channels, such as social media, surveys, and online reviews. This enables businesses to identify areas for improvement and promptly address any issues raised by customers.



<https://fastercapital.com/content/Responsiveness--The-Power-of-Responsiveness-in-Delivering-Superior-Customer-Experiences.html>

# The Last Word

This Newsletter has looked back at the history of customer service and looked a little into the roles of Policy and People in customer experience and service management. Future Newsletters will focus on the other elements of the 5P's Model. It is hoped that this will begin to illustrate that behind each of the simple words in each of the elements of the 5P's Model lies a substantial field of organisational performance criteria constantly being researched and developed. These factors need to be understood and concurrently managed if an upper quartile experience is to be consistently delivered in an operational environment which, due to technological advance and changing customer needs is in a continuing state of evolution. Customer experience and service management has moved from being a peripheral nice-to-have function to a core requirement of organisational performance management. What could that make the organisation of tomorrow be like??



## Recommended Reading

- <https://sparkletraining.com.au/2022/03/03/the-history-of-customer-service-and-how-it-can-help-your-team/>
- [Good CX cannot exist without good staffing - Customer Experience Magazine \(cxm.co.uk\)](https://cxm.co.uk/good-cx-cannot-exist-without-good-staffing)
- [From sales to success: The revenue impact of customer experience training - Customer Experience Magazine \(cxm.co.uk\)](https://cxm.co.uk/from-sales-to-success-the-revenue-impact-of-customer-experience-training)
- [What is CX Training - and Why Does it Matter? \(npsx.com\)](https://npsx.com/what-is-cx-training-and-why-does-it-matter)
- <https://www.dixa.com/blog/effective-tips-to-motivate-your-customer-service-team-long-term>
- <https://online.hbs.edu/blog/post/team-decision-making>
- <https://fastercapital.com/content/Responsiveness--The-Power-of-Responsiveness-in-Delivering-Superior-Customer-Experiences.html>
- <https://hbr.org/2015/11/the-new-science-of-customer-emotions>
- <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/customer-knowledge-awareness-level-1-business-hierarchy-jim-gitney-a3rfc/>
- <https://fastercapital.com/content/Responsiveness--The-Power-of-Responsiveness-in-Delivering-Superior-Customer-Experiences.html>

