

It's More Than Good Service

Building a loyal customer base requires more than good service.

A 2013 survey of 2,074 adults found that 70% of them would buy from a store that charged more if they had a positive prior experience with that store. Even though price might be lower somewhere else, positive experience trumps a lower price. Is your customer experience positive enough to trump price?

Customer experience is bigger than service, price, or quality. It is all that and then some. It is the total encounter with your customer. Defining experience in big, broad terms provides you with more opportunities to create value. This includes price, quality, service, logistics, ease-of-doing-business, management attitude, sales force accessibility, knowledgeable staff, policies, procedures, inventory levels, technical support, customization, etc.

Your customer experience is a multi-faceted strategy of customer satisfaction and competitive differentiation. As you examine every facet of your diamond-like experience, does each create value for the customer and for your company? As you follow the customer's experience from pre-contact to post-sale, make sure every facet sparkles. By doing this you create a positive experience.

A positive prior experience with your company is the necessary antecedent for competitive differentiation. Differentiation is a function of this experience. You are different because you deliver a better experience for the customer. U.S. companies spend three times more money developing products than they do developing people. Product alone does not satisfy customers. Service alone does not satisfy customers. Price alone does not satisfy customers. It is the total experience with your company that brings customers back.

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