

Great Customer Service

Front-line leaders are expected to coach their agents on delivering great customer service, but it is such a broad term they struggle to explain what it means. Please continue reading to find some advice on how to make it clear and specific and to be able to coach to it effectively.

Most 21st century organizations have realized that in this new world of open market commerce, it's becoming increasingly difficult to compete on product and price alone. In fact, you only need to look as far as the mobile phone industry to see many shining examples of providers offering similar products for similar prices. Companies who are leading in their industry will quickly tell you that delivering an exceptional customer experience is the key differentiating factor in acquiring and retaining loyal customers.

Three specific needs

It starts by getting your leadership team clear, and then aligned on what constitutes an exceptional customer experience. In my research, when I asked actual customers to describe their ideal customer experience, three specific needs consistently came up.

Customers wanted:

1. Solutions and/or accurate answers to their inquiries/concerns. They were interested in both immediate solutions and potential future solutions.
2. Their provider to be EASY to do business with.
3. To hang up the phone with a feeling of "WOW...that was a pleasant and valuable use of my time!

So, you are probably wondering now "How does this information help you?" To help you get in alignment, focus the conversation on how your company will deliver on each of these three customer needs. Articulate those needs in what I call a "Customer Experience Blueprint". This is not a call flow, but a series of logical steps within an interaction that allows your agents to sound natural and not scripted. It also ensures that these three basic customer needs are satisfied in this blueprint. Once there is alignment, discuss this blueprint with your agents as this clarity is a powerful driver for change. Your agents now have specific techniques and steps to WOW your customers.

The big picture

Before you start coaching to specifics, start with the big picture. In keeping with the coaching methodology ASK versus TELL, use open-ended coaching questions that a leader

can ask their agents to help them self-discover how to deliver that exceptional customer experience that will keep customers loyal. I'll offer a few so you can get the flavour.

1. "Customer Solutions"
 - a. What prompted the customer to call us?
 - b. What was the customer's reaction to our solution?

2. "Ease of Doing Business"
 - a. What makes it easy to do business with our company?
 - b. What was working against us during the call?

3. "Exceptional Customer Service"
 - a. When do Customers go "WOW!!!"? Before, during or after they hang up the phone?
 - b. What ONE thing could we focus on that might help the next customer go "WOW!!!"?

I hope I could provide some clarity for what customer service means and how to translate the theory of "delivering an exceptional customer experience" into practical coaching techniques. Anytime you can illustrate a clear vision for what you'd like your customer experience to be AND provide specific coaching that relates to that vision, you're well on your way to happy and loyal customers!



Afshan Kinder

[Connect with me on LinkedIn!](#)