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Know Thy Self... What Is It Like To Do Business With Your Company?

by Kathy Ellis, Business Lab Marketing Coach

What is it really like doing business with your company? How do your customers or prospects feel when they contact your organization? How are they treated by your sales, administrative, and/or reception staff? How close are your perceptions to the reality of your customers? Only four percent of dissatisfied customers take the time to complain. The other 96 percent just take their business elsewhere. In this article, you will receive some solid tips on how to know your company better, which will lead to more sales and happier customers.

Listing Your Own Expectations/Beliefs About Doing Business With Your Company: Start with each core activity: sales, accounting, distribution and customer service to identify what you feel are the strengths and weaknesses in each area.

Tip From The Business Lab: Create a "typical" situation and answer the following question, "As a new client/prospect, what can I expect from this situation?" Have a separate scenario for existing customers and one for prospects—their needs may be different.

Shopping Your Company: Find qualified people to "shop" your company by going through the same scenarios you have identified in the paragraph above. Find qualified shoppers through your personal board of directors or friends/relatives that know enough about your business to be qualified customers/prospects. Some of our clients use long-time customers to improve their business.

Tip From The Business Lab: Give your "shoppers" a script that outlines a specific customer scenario and give them detailed questions to ask.

Sharing Your Findings With Your Team: Compare your expectations with the "shoppers" findings and outline a game-plan for closing any gaps.

Tip From The Business Lab: Diffuse any threatening feelings your team may have about being shopped, by explaining that you are doing it for their benefit by helping them become experts in their positions.

Remind them that the more successful they are, the more successful the company will be.

Tip From The Business Lab: Have your team write their own expectations from a customer's or prospect's point of view prior to sharing your findings. Then ask them to compare their own expectations with the shopper's findings and note their own gaps and ideas for closing them.

Closing Gaps: Gaps may be simple or complex to close, depending on their size and nature. From a customer service perspective, closing the gap may be as simple as providing more education and training for your reception/administrative team so they can offer clients/prospects more information on your company. Nothing is more frustrating for your clients/prospects than not getting the information they need, when they want/need it. A receptionist that can only take messages rather than provide information will be a source of frustration for your clients/prospects. Other gaps may be more complex and require complete restructuring of the department or job description. The most important thing to keep in mind when closing the gaps is your customer. A total commitment and focus on the customer from each and every member of your team will lead to success for everyone.

More Information? If you'd like our FREE Business Ideas & Resources Booklet please fax a note on your letterhead to 281-655-9365 or send an E-mail to ideas@thebusinesslab.com and we'll send it to you!

Author's Note: Kathy Ellis is a Marketing Coach and the owner of The Business Lab, a full service marketing and graphic design company. We specialize in relationship marketing programs including database marketing, company brochures, client newsletters and promotional marketing materials for our clients. We share with you our FREE newsletter to showcase powerful marketing tips, techniques and ideas to help you improve your business. The Business Lab is based in Houston, Texas at 281-517-0998 or by e-Mail at kathy@thebusinesslab.com