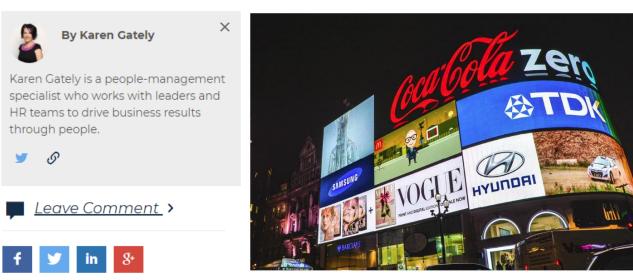MANAGEMENT & LEADERSHIP

4 steps to optimise customer experience through culture

How does your organisation's culture influence your customers' experiences? Here are 4 ways to ensure you earn customer loyalty.

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How do your customers experience your organisation? Are they left feeling confident in your team's ability and level of commitment? Do they typically believe your team are working hard to deliver on the promises you make? Do they trust that they are getting a fair return for the money they spend at your business?

Think of the last time you had a great customer experience and why you were left feeling that way. Reflect also on when you have felt disappointed in the service you received. Chances are the character or competence, or both, of the people you were dealing with played a role.

While of course effective technology and quality products make a difference, how people do their jobs typically has the greatest impact on the depth of loyalty customers feel toward a business.

The most important steps you can take to build a culture that allows you to attract and retain the clients you want, include:

1. Define what great looks like

Go beyond simply saying that customer care or service excellence is a core value. Define what that really means in your organisation. How do you want people to behave, for example, when it comes to dealing with challenging customers or those who need a little more time and attention to be satisfied?

Take the time to identify and communicate what behaviours you consider to be reflective of a great service attitude and approach. Expect every member of your management team to lead by example and showcase what being committed to your customers looks like in action.

2. **Inspire and engage**

The truth is the more people care about your business the more likely they are to strive to do a great job every day. Create a clear vision of the future that the people on your team can feel a part of. Help them to understand why their role and talents matter to achieving the customer service standards you are striving for.

Regularly share customer feedback with your team and engage in conversations about what's working well and what needs to improve. Engage your whole team, not just those working in front-line roles. No matter the nature of their job, every member of your team needs to understand how customers experience your business.

3. **Energise**

The depth of energy someone has in reserve has a profound influence on how they think, feel and ultimately behave. Create an environment in which people feel trusted, respected and valued and they are more likely to be energised. Help them to feel a sense of purpose in the work that they do and they're more likely to have the fuel needed to deliver great service to your customers, even when the going gets tough.

4. **Make behaviour matter**

There is little to no value in espousing values you don't consistently live by. Reward and recognise the people on your team who have a positive impact on their colleagues and customers. Avoid the all-too-common mistake of rewarding so-called high-achieving staff who behave poorly.

Reflect the importance of your customers in all the decisions you make about who to reward and recognise. Take deliberate steps to address cultural misalignment and hold people accountable to the standards of behaviour you need.