PUTTING THE CUSTOMER AT THE HEART OF YOUR BUSINESS

Making your actions align to your words

There is great technology out there to help companies become more customer-centric. However, putting customers at the heart of your business has less to do with technology than with people and, unfortunately, many organizations are designed in ways that inhibit rather than promote a customer point of view. For example:

› People don't receive information to really understand their customers.
› Management, rather than the front line, is responsible for solving problems when things go wrong.
› Production ships bad parts in order to meet their quotas.
› Workflow is designed to meet the needs of functional silos more than the customer.
› Organization members are rewarded for covering up rather than identifying and solving customer problems.
› People over identify with their own function rather than the whole process or customer outcome.

A Mindset

Building a truly customer-centric organization has to do with changing the mindset, attitudes and habits of all members of the organization. Those who try to implement technology without understanding the importance of the social/cultural component do so at the peril of the initiative. What is this change in mindset? It begins with educating members of your organization in a customer point of view. Who are your customers? What do they need or expect? Why have they come to your business? What are the unique benefits you offer that will make their lives better? How is what you offer different from what your competitors can offer? How does each person contribute, personally, to that mission?

A Methodology

We've created a methodology to assist you in putting customers at the heart of your business. It involves bringing together a cross section of employees and walking them through a two day process (afternoon, full day, morning) in which they complete eight tasks:

1. Document historical and current attitudes towards customers using artifacts, trends, and customer feedback
2. Create a mind map of common themes regarding customers
3. Map the flow of a customer order to identify and eliminate breakdowns
4. Share "prouds" and "sorries" regarding customer performance
5. Develop ideal future scenarios
6. Confirm a common future
7. Plan actions to reach that future
8. Form an ongoing customer integration team

This dynamic and highly participative process has a profound impact on employee understanding of your customers. It results in a set of short term actions (up to six months) and long term actions (6 mos. to three years) that the organization will take to improve its customer focus. Groups do detailed planning of these action items including desired outcomes, who will be involved and when the work will be completed. Finally, you'll create a customer integration team, responsible to integrate all of the various initiatives and drive improved customer focus into the future.

THE CENTER FOR ORGANIZATIONAL DESIGN

"In high performing organizations, everything starts and ends with the customer. This is a radical shift from organizations whose business design puts customers as the end receiver of the chain."

-Ken Blanchard, Leading at a Higher Level

Audience:
› Upper management
› Up to 30 employees

Delivery:
› Two and a half days (afternoon, full day, morning)

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