

Your True Purpose

Over the years, companies have struggled creating Mission Statements - those phrases that describe what organizations are all about and how they try to distinguish themselves from their competition. But thanks to Peter Drucker, the pain of creation is now over. Here's something he said, the essence of which could be part of any good Mission Statement: "The purpose of (your) business is to create and keep a customer." Well, at least the Mission Statement piece is looked after. Now comes the hard part. How do we do it? Well, this month we focus upon the things that customers want and expect from us – every time. Do these things well and you will be on your way to fulfilling your organization's goals.



Why People Deal With You

By David Colman

Have you ever sat down and figured out why you deal with the companies you do, the stores you shop in, the restaurants you eat in? At the same time, have you ever wondered why you keep returning to some of them while giving others a wide berth? Flip that over and ask yourselves why people do or do not deal with you and your company.

It's every company's dream, likely including yours, to have these magical answers. Uncounted fortunes are spent trying to figure them out.

There are, of course, the obvious solutions: you are conveniently located; you may have a product or service that no else provides; and you offer value. But is it that simple? Perhaps not.

Most of us, and the companies we lead or work for, do not have a 'product or service that no one else provides'. If only. To your customers (potential and otherwise), your products and services may look an awful lot like your competitors'. We may all think and believe that we offer something very special but the customers may differ. Speaker Jerry

Fritz got it right. He said, "You'll never have a product or price advantage again. They can be easily duplicated, but a strong customer service culture can't be copied." Every bank I've ever come across, for example, thinks that some of its products and services are unique. When you parse the offerings though, they look an awful lot like other banks' services.

Because this is so important, as leaders we need to help our employees understand why customers walk through our front door, call us up, or visit our websites. I believe there are two reasons why people come to us, namely: the business need and the human need. I want take a quick look at each.

The business need is quite straightforward. Your customers want to receive timely and orderly service and to receive help. It's that simple. That's why, at a minimum, your employees need to know their stuff. They need to thoroughly understand your products and services. That's non-negotiable. Unfortunately for most companies, because they don't have the market cornered, this alone will not sustain them. Simply put, customers have a choice of product and

service providers.

Because clients have such a choice, their human needs becomes so important. Think for a moment, if you will, what you want and need when dealing with a service provider. Yes, you need the business points I've mentioned, but you probably want much more. You probably want to be made welcome, to feel comfortable, to be understood, to feel important, appreciated, respected, recognized and remembered.

Whether your products and services are perceived as similar to others in the marketplace or not, as leaders we need to ensure that all employees have the right skills to treat customers the way they demand to be treated. It's your job. After all, customers will accept nothing less.

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