



MINI CASE STUDY: CREATING VALUE AT THE MOMENT OF CUSTOMER INTERFACE

The experiences of a frustrated flyer...

We are all aware of the importance of creating a good impression on the customer. Every manager worth his or her salt spends a considerable amount of time ensuring that their team understands the importance of a “happy” customer. Yet it is amazing how often an organisation misses an opportunity to make that vital positive impression.

A month ago I had the misfortune of having my bags waylaid following a brief flight. Upon arrival at my destination I was told that my bags had been located, and would be with me at my hotel later that afternoon. Given that the time between my bags arriving and me being at the formal dinner (appropriately dressed) was relatively short, I was told I could keep updated by calling the special information hotline.

Up until this point, despite the loss of my bags, I felt that the quality of service I received at each contact point with the airline in question was pretty good. I was disappointed that my bags had been lost, but was pleased to be treated well and informed as well as I could hope.

This goodwill was unfortunately ruined later in the day when I called the hotline. There, I was treated like I was the 15,000th person to call that day, and frankly the assistant could not be bothered to answer the same question one more time. So the call was frustrating and left me feeling very angry. That single interaction undid all the goodwill built up earlier that day by her colleagues.

Are you in danger of having a single interaction undo all your hard work? And are you taking advantage of all of the opportunities to put your organisation’s best side forward?

Every single time someone, somewhere in your organisation deals with a customer, there is a risk and an opportunity. Recognising this, many organisations spend considerable time training those staff engaged in classic customer facing duties, and some even recruit specific types of people for those roles (SouthWest Airlines in the US is famous for recruiting particular “types” of people for customer facing roles). Problems can arise however when you have interactions between customers and staff outside of the “normal” boundaries.

During times of abnormal stress, or when people not used to dealing with the customer are drafted in, normal rules do not apply. Messages need to be simplified, so that all staff can quickly and easily prioritise their actions when dealing with customers. It is also worth considering if you have captured and trained **all** staff interacting with your customers. A lesson here comes from Disney theme parks, who found that visitors to their parks tended to ask for directions and assistance from the street cleaners, as opposed to Mickey or Goofy. Disney invested in the training of these staff and saw customer satisfaction rates rocket as a result.

The lessons here are simple: identify those people who may interact with the customer, and ensure they have the appropriate training and guidance to ensure the customer is delighted each and every time.

Have you encountered other examples where the human part of the equation detracted from performance or enabled improved performance? Let us know – we are on the lookout for mini case studies for future issues of iProCon HCMs Insight newsletter: contact@iproconhcm.co.uk.