

White Paper



The service sector is becoming ever more challenging; upward expectations of services, a downward pressure on margins, an increase in regulatory constraints and a challenging market outlook.

Customers want more service, information, quality and innovation, for less money, time, effort and risk.

So how can you differentiate and gain a competitive advantage?

At OIM we are passionate about building dynamic organisations, and believe that enhancing your customer engagement can be a key step forward.

Here are our top 10 tips for retaining and developing customers

1. Listen and Observe

Do you fully understand how your services create value for your customers?

Spending time with your customers and experiencing your service as they do, can prove invaluable. This insight can help you to identify opportunities for you to improve or enhance your services, or create a new one entirely.

2. Focus on profitable customers

Obvious isn't it? Surprising then that many organisations don't have a detailed picture of their client profitability. Understanding which customers create profit, in each activity or service, is key to remaining competitive.

Profitability studies are an excellent way of gaining a detailed understanding of how your organisation delivers to your customers, whilst capturing the costs and value at each interface. This can allow you to make positive changes and deploy your resources more effectively.

3. Tailor your approach

Your customers have varying needs and requirements so why treat them all the same?

Classifying your customers based upon their unique characteristics, and tailoring your approach to each group accordingly, can have a dramatic effect on your customer retention, engagement and profitability.

4. Staff are key

The real service culture of your organisation lives within your staff. How they behave, what they are motivated by and what values they hold will ultimately influence the customer service experience.

Recruiting and developing staff with the right motivational and cultural fit, and aligning your reward and performance management to your customer strategy will deliver huge dividends.

5. Are you fronting?

A great sales pitch, introductory offer, or dazzling website may help in acquiring customers, but if the service doesn't match up, the likelihood is you will lose them as soon as you win them – and getting them back will be much harder.

Ensure your sales pitch reflects your service, highlighting your real strengths. Getting honest customer feedback and conducting regular Win / Loss reviews will help you sharpen your sales pitch.

6. Build trust

Relationships are based on it, so building trust is key to retaining your customers.

You can incorporate trust building behaviours into your operations in many ways including being consistent in your approach, demonstrating your accountability, adding a personal touch, providing a named contact or making and keeping small promises.

7. Reliability counts

Do customers really want bells and whistles? Or do they want reliable, quality products? Research consistently points to the latter.

Doing what you said you would do, delivering the right thing at the right place and time, are more powerful than added extras.

8. Turn mistakes to your advantage

Mistakes will happen. How you deal with them can have a dramatic effect on your reputation and the overall customer experience.

When mistakes occur we often have a concern for the immediate and a heightened sensitivity towards the supplier at hand. Having a clear, well organised and understood approach to dealing with mistakes can prove your customer commitment and leave a lasting impression, restoring confidence and demonstrating the calibre of your organisation.

9. Promote referrals

Research at Harvard Business School demonstrated the significance of promoters. Their studies linked the number of customers happy to promote your services as being highly indicative of future performance.

Referrals can have a significant influence on potential customers and can be a huge asset to your sales effort.

Identifying promoters and encouraging them to generate further word-of-mouth referrals, by feeding them with information about your successes and latest news, will prove a wise investment.

10. Be distinctive

Can you name the top five car hire companies in the UK?

We often demonstrate a limited ability to recall beyond the "top of the list". So having a distinctive approach can really help.

Importantly it is what you do differently, rather than what you say, that counts.

OIM are a leading consultancy specialising in the customer engagement arena.

We are passionate about building competitive businesses, through outstanding customer engagement.

If you would like to find out more about how we can help you retain and grow profitable customers in a distinctive way, we would love to hear from you.

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