

9 steps to creating a great customer experience

by Dr Ian Brooks

Step 1. Get to know your customers.

- What makes a customer experience a good one for them?
- How do they want to be treated?
- Why are they buying your product or service?
- If they are a company, understand their business.

Step 2. Commit to providing a great experience.

- You must know the kind of experience you want to deliver.
- It must be superior to what people can get elsewhere.
- The experience must add value.
- Publish a customer promise.
- Aim to make your customers successful.

Step 3. Understand how what you do affects your customers.

- Know what you are doing for whom and why they need you to do it.
- What are the consequences for your customer if you get it wrong or right?
- What would this affect your customer's customer?

Step 4: Understand how your performance will affect your business?

- What are implications for your business of getting it right or wrong?
- What is the cost of a complaint?
- What is the cost of losing a customer (life-time value)?
- What does it cost to recruit new customers?

Step 5: Find out how well your customer thinks you are doing.

- Find out what you are doing well and poorly.
- Keep doing the things you are doing right.
- Fix the things you are doing poorly.
- Find out what else you could do to enhance the experience (and do it).
- Know the limitations of customer satisfaction surveys.

Step 6: Make sure you and your people have the knowledge they need.

- About your products and services.
- About your company's policies and procedures.
- About the customer they are serving.
- About your industry.
- About your competitors.
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Step 7: Make sure your policies, processes and procedures facilitate rather than impede.

- Ensure the way you do business puts the customer's needs first.
- Remove policies that prevent staff from delivering a great customer experience.
- Make sure your processes and procedures work for the customer.
- Identify problem areas by asking your staff and your customers.

Step 8: Make sure you have the right people doing the right things.

- Develop a person specification based on the information you get in Step 1.
- Use that to hire the right people.
- Induct them properly.
- Make sure they behave appropriately:
 - Are available – physically and mentally (i.e. listen).
 - Show they care (take ownership).
 - Put themselves in the customer's shoes.
 - Be 'can do – will do.'
 - Are polite and respectful (even when the customer is not there).

- Do what they say they are going to do.
- Act quickly.
- Make it easy for their customers.
- Give them choices.
- Pay attention to detail.
- Follow up.
- Be the customer's advocate.

Step 9: Practice

- The need for deliberate practice.
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