



Factors driving customer service performance

- Creativity and innovation
- Customer perceptions
- Improving customer perceptions
- Customer service systems and procedures
- Improving customer service

Process

Review the actions for each factor.

Identify three things we do well and three things we could do better.

In relation to the things we could do better, ask – what needs to happen? What do I need to initiate?



Creativity and Innovation

1. Discuss what is meant by creativity and innovation.
2. Discuss and suggest new, different and better ways to do things.
3. Network with other departments and business units within the organisation to find out what they are doing which is creative and innovative.
4. Identify specific areas in which 'pilots' of new methods can be trialled.
5. Encourage our team members to try different ways of doing things.
6. Acknowledge and praise staff who are innovative and creative.
7. Identify the possible risks that being creative or innovative might cause.
8. Discuss the benefits of being creative and innovative.
9. Read about and research new innovations in areas similar to that of our work area.
10. Identify and discuss which things we do as a department that could be done better.
11. Take risks where the consequences of failure will not adversely affect the work that we do.
12. Explain the benefits of ideas we have which we would like to implement.
13. Allocate one hour each month to meet to discuss better ways to do things.
14. Read articles which relate to thinking creatively.
15. Look at a problem from the angle of 'how can we solve it?' rather than 'why it can't be done' ie think positively.
16. Celebrate the successful implementation of new initiatives.
17. Meet with external consultants to find out about any new innovations they may have developed or are involved in.
18. Encourage ideas from "out of left field".
19. Implement ideas that are creative and innovative.
20. Brainstorm ways of solving problems regardless of how ludicrous ideas might seem and then identify what needs to be done to implement each suggestion.
21. Avoid ridiculing any suggestions about how we can improve the way things are currently being done.



Customer Perceptions

1. Identify the expectations and the perceptions customers have about our products and services
2. Inform customers about the quality standards that are expected of your organisation during the provision of service or during production.
3. Display the quality policy, vision and mission statements where customers will see them.
4. Inform customers of the ethos and values of the organisation.
5. Establish a company logo so that the customer associates your brand with high quality.
6. Offer guarantees on quality of product.
7. Train all staff in the need for 100% adherence to quality standards.
8. Inform consumers of inspection processes and procedures that are undertaken to ensure quality.
9. Acquire testimonial statements from influential people and authorities advocating the quality of our products and services. Inform customers of these.
10. Establish, document and implement systems and procedures which exceed the requirements of the industry standards.
11. Train all representatives of the organisation in how to promote your products and services with quality as the key feature.
12. Conduct tours of the organisation to demonstrate quality standards and to build a bond between customers and suppliers and your organisation.
13. Change the name of products which consumers associate with poor quality or outdated products.
14. Discuss with staff what they can do to promote the image of the organisation.
15. Recognise and reward staff who actively promote the organisation in a positive way.
16. Reward loyal customers with special privileges, invitations, gifts or discounts.
17. Sponsor local community initiatives, e.g. sporting competitions, buildings, events, schools, charities.
18. Satisfy customer complaints to the point where the customer's expectations of your response are far exceeded.
19. Check that customers are happy with the product or service provided and act when the response is one of dissatisfaction.
20. Ask customers what they believe your organisation can do to improve and where possible incorporate their suggestions in your improvement plan.
21. Provide a money back guarantee on faulty product and inform the customer of any warranty agreements that may exist.
22. Never make promises that staff in your organisation can't keep. Inform staff of the importance of not creating false expectations in the minds of customers. Train staff in providing service that exceeds customer expectations.



Improving Customer Perceptions

1. Discuss the concept of perceptions – use outside professional expertise if necessary.
2. Identify what causes people to have different perceptions.
3. Identify the types of things about which customers have differing perceptions.
4. Identify and agree who the customer is.
5. Check where our perceptions differ from those of the customer.
6. Measure customer perceptions about what they see as the role of our area.
7. Measure customer perceptions as to the standard of service our area provides to them.
8. Document the specific functions and roles of our area showing how it links to the strategic plan of the organisation.
9. Provide customers with information about what our area does and doesn't do.
10. Discuss with customers what our actual role is where they have an 'unrealistic' expectation of what our area should be doing.
11. Where our area has made a mistake, correct it, apologise and make any recovery action that is required.
12. Check with customers, on a regular basis, that their needs and expectations are being met.
13. Report back to senior management any issues that relate to customer perceptions – positive and negative.
14. Gather testimonial statements from satisfied customers.
15. Promote the positive aspects of our services to prospective and current customers.
16. Establish a customer 'code of conduct' for our area and display it in a prominent position.
17. Share success stories with others in our area.
18. Take the view of the customer when they are dissatisfied about what our area has done or not done.
19. Invite customers to our work area for meetings.
20. Check that all staff understand the importance of providing exceptional customer service.
21. Recognise and thank customers who help us to deliver our services to them.
22. Acknowledge staff who actively promote our area in a positive way.
23. Establish a working relationship with customers.
24. Identify the likely 'problem customer' and pre-empt problems that may arise by raising them ourselves.



Customer Service Systems and Procedures

1. Key customer service systems and procedures are defined, documented, discussed and followed.
2. We check that everybody is clear on how to follow key customer service systems and procedures.
3. The consequences for self and others if customer service systems and procedures are not followed are known and accepted as demonstrated by our customer service behaviours.
4. The benefits of following the established customer service systems and procedures are clarified and accepted.
5. We identify where customer service systems and procedures are not being followed.
6. When identifying causes of why procedures are not followed, we look at both the system and the human factor.
7. We identify the things about customer service systems and procedures that need improving.
8. We discuss and agree the purpose of the customer service system or procedure to be improved or developed with those who are affected by it.
9. We all suggest better ways to do things.
10. The consequences on other relevant areas of changes to our customer service systems and procedures are explored and factored in to those changes.
11. We discuss the best ways to implement improvements to customer service systems and procedures.
12. We plan what has to be done to implement the agreed changes.
13. We involve those who will be affected by the changes in the planning process.
14. We implement and follow through with the agreed changes.
15. We acknowledge the efforts of people who act to make improvements or implement new changes.
16. We inform others of the reasons why the changes are being made.
17. Changes to customer service systems and procedures are incorporated into standard operating procedures.
18. Training in changes to customer service systems and procedures is provided and evaluated during implementation.
19. Management do what needs doing to support these improvements to customer service.
20. The impact of the change is reviewed appropriately.



Improving Customer Service

1. The reasons for and benefits of improving customer service are discussed and accepted.
2. We explore and implement creative and innovative ways to improve customer service.
3. Our customers' expectations and perceptions of our service are identified and used to make improvements.
4. We ask customers how they would like to see us improve services or introduce new services and then use their suggestions in our plans to improve things.
5. We explain what our customers need to do to help us help them.
6. We identify how and why customer service breaks down.
7. We check with customers that we have understood what they have told us.
8. We agree and implement ways to exceed the expectations of our customers.
9. Senior management do what we require from them to help improve customer service.
10. We check regularly with our customers that the service provided meets their expectations.
11. All key systems and procedures are capable of meeting customer expectations
12. We establish how soon the customer needs the service provided and then inform them of when we will be able to comply.
13. We provide customers with feedback in relation to progress.
14. Complaints are followed through to check that they are resolved to the satisfaction of the customer.
15. We provide unknown answers to questions from customers from those who know.
16. We identify the training needs of staff in the area of customer service and then provide and evaluate the appropriate training.
17. We identify ways to co-operate more effectively, internally, during the provision of customer service.
18. We implement agreed actions to improve customer service.
19. We confirm that customer's needs have been met.
20. Define our roles in relation to customer service, then document and follow the key things that we are responsible for in this area.
21. We implement 'recovery' actions if we have caused a problem.
22. We take accountability and apologise for errors that have been caused by 'us'.
23. We discuss the consequences of an error on a customer, with the area where the error occurred, and explore ways to avoid making the same mistake again.