

## Customers Are The Business! Part Two



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**In** part one of these articles, I explained that in order to achieve excellent customers' service, the first thing is that the entire organization must understand that giving excellent service is not optional; it is a must. The entire organization – from the CEO down - must be directed, aiming and focusing on creating customer-centered attitude and culture.

Organizations must focus first on creating internal [customers' service excellence](#). The organization's internal customers are the people who work for the organization and rely on it for their pay, the information necessary to perform their jobs, and their skills development. They need the same care that the organization gives to the external customers. Otherwise, there will never be satisfied loyal external customers.

Identifying the customers' needs is the second step towards customer service excellence. No organization or business owner can use his/her own thought and assumptions to identify the customer needs. There is only one person who knows these real needs; the customer.

Most of the time, the way customers think and feel about what they need and the way organizations think about the customers needs are almost polar opposite. Organizations – and I mean any organization – must focus on asking questions and take actions

according to the answers of these questions rather than taking their own assumptions as facts.

Organizations must give the customers what they want, not what the organization thinks the customers want.

This can be done through surveys, interviews, suggestions forms and many other ways. However, none of these will work unless the organization takes actions to fulfill these needs and bring a state of satisfaction to its customers.

The needs of customers are many and they vary in their titles and ranks. However, there are fifteen needs that are globally accepted and must be met in order to create and keep satisfied loyal customers.

The first need is **help**. Regardless of the many definitions of selling and providing service, my humble opinion and definition of selling and providing service is, "The process of helping people, honestly, ethically and with loyalty and integrity, solving their problems in exchange with something of value".

Every customer is a patient who needs help. To a doctor, the patient is a customer who needs help. The doctor must give this patient either a permanent solution or at least put him/her at ease. To the restaurant owner, a hungry or a thirsty person is a customer who needs help; a drink or food. To a mechanic, the vehicle owner is the customer who also needs help; repair or service, and the list goes on with every other business.

The business must provide the needed help to the customer the same way any physician would do. No physician would give his/her patient a prescription without examining him/her. He will examine the person, ask questions, analyze and then give the patient the best solution he/she has to offer. This must be implemented with any kind of business.

The second need is **information**. Customers need to know almost everything about why to buy or deal with you, how is your process, and what your product or service would benefit them; not to explain for two hours about the product or service it self. The customer – any customer - cares only about (What Is in It for Me?).

Moreover, in our time, the information about a product or a service is easily accessible by almost every one. The internet is full of information with great detail about everything; you name it. When the need arises, the buyer will search and read all the available information about the product or the service he/she needs. Then, by the time he/she make the buying decision, he/she – in many cases - would know about the product or the service more than your company's salesperson.

The third need is **options and alternatives**. One of our personality needs is variety. Customers need to have more than one choice before they make the buying decision. However, the organization should give proper (and I mean proper) alternative choices to the customer. The salesperson must put in mind that the first purchase is always a trial.

The fourth need is **fairness**.

How many times have you purchased something and later you found out that one of your family members or a friend had bought it with half of the price you paid? How do you feel about it? You feel cheated, and you feel it was unfair at all.

You may buy a product from a retail shop, weeks later you will find the same product with 70% discount! It is unfair.

Doing so will make the business hit once, but it will not create long-term customers.

The fifth need is **quality service**. Regardless of the type, the size or the kind of a business, (Jual Nasi Lemak, or running the biggest corporation in the country), as an owner, manager, an executive, or an operative employee you have to provide an outstanding excellent service to your customers. Otherwise, you will be struggling to survive and will not stay long in the business. The service quality that the organization provides, must match the price that the customer pays.

The sixth need is **adequate price**. The price of the product or service must match the service, the quality and the market value. If the price or the value for a product or service is, for example, RM 1000, do not sell it to someone by more than that. You may make fast money, but that person will never buy from you again. Moreover, he will tell every person he/she knows about you, and they will not ever deal with you.

The seventh need is **quality**. The quality of the product or service must be acceptable and match the customer's expectation and the price that he/she pays.