Significance Of CRM For HR Consultants

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INTRODUCTION

Critical to any customer relationship, are the employees who interact with the customer. If an employee is satisfied and has the ability to execute customer strategies, they can fulfill the brand promise. So when companies wish to enhance their customer relationships, they have to realize that the success of CRM initiatives relies heavily on the Human Resource strategies. The rationale is inescapable: if a person desires valued relationships with the customers, he or she needs valued relationships with the employees. This approach is often referred to as Employee Resource Management (ERM)[1]. Trained and motivated staff and a superior staff appraisal system is the key to customer contentment and hence, the foundation of CRM.

The contemporary market environment is characterized by general variability, difficult foreseeability of the competitive situation, surplus economy, and well informed, more experienced, more fastidious, exacting and more impatient consumers and users, who cease being loyal to traditional products and brands [2]. Therefore, we have a dire need for effective tools for increasing customer value, and CRM is the answer to that. Several vendors now offer HR consultancy tools for their CRM software. These ad-ons provide solutions for enhanced staff productivity, end-user self-service and improved reporting capabilities.

The more often primary Customer Service KPI (Key Performance Indicator) is based on mere quantity, the less true Customer Satisfaction is going to take place. The only accurate KPI (Key Performance Indicator) for Customer Service Performance is the actual perception of the Customer as to whether or not they received adequate service.

In Customer Service, the outcome for the Customer and for the Company is in the hands of the professional Customer Service person. How well they perform in each contact with their Customers depends on a number of factors. Their training will have an impact, as will their knowledge, skills and motivation. One of the strongest influencer on their performance with the Customer will be their ATTITUDE.

If you are a Customer Service person, or are building a Team of Customer Service people, it is important that you work at developing the RIGHT attitude, values and beliefs. We all recognize someone with a bad attitude, someone who thinks Customers are stupid, or annoying, or someone who hates their job or their Company. These types of attitudes ensure that these Customer Service people are guaranteed to give their Customers a very bad experience.

Identifying the IDEAL Customer Service attitude is important, so that we can build this ideal attitude in ourselves and in our Teams. We call this attitude an Assertive Customer Focussed Attitude.

AN ASSERTIVE CUSTOMER SERVICE TEAM

In Customer Service, the ASSERTIVE zone is one of mutual respect, having a positive, respectful attitude to the Customer, the Company and to themselves. This compares to -

❀ An aggressive attitude, trying to put the other person down;

❀ A submissive attitude, feeling weaker and pushed around by other people;

❀ A defensive attitude, feeling weak but lashing out to protect this weakness.

Assertiveness in a Customer Service Team is that zone of quiet confidence and helpful competence that Customers will like and trust.

IDENTIFYING POSITIVE CUSTOMER FOCUS

To identify the right Customer focus for oneself or for one's team, look at the place you do NOT want to be. The researcher compares 3 types of attitudes typical in Customer Service Teams -

1. Poor Customer Focus

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2. Overly Accommodating Focus

3. Positive Customer Focus - the ideal.

1) Poor Customer Focus : Characteristics of someone with poor Customer focus are -

❀ Thinks negatively about customers;

❀ Thinks of THEIR OWN feelings and interests before that of the Company or the Customer;

❀ Thinks he/she knows better and they already know what the customer needs;

❀ Is uncomfortable with new people contacts or different types of people;

❀ Is unwilling to handle complaints or special requests;

❀ Does not listen well to customers and does nothing in response ;

❀ Is defensive and blames the customer ;

❀ Is afraid of difficult situations or people and may react with aggression. They might say, you can't handle people like that.

2) Overly Accommodating Focus : Characteristics of someone who is overly accommodating to Customers are -

❀ Overly responsive to customer demands;

❀ Negative about the Company, its organization, its products and services;

❀ Too willing to change established processes and timetables to respond to unreasonable customer requests;

❀ Makes too many exceptions and does not form consistent policies, practices and processes for others to learn and follow ;

❀ Does not look for other workable options to solve customer problems and can resort to blame game;

❀ Has real difficulty with complaint handling ;

❀ Has long, ineffective interactions and has difficulty steering back on track ;

❀ Sides with the customer too much.

3) Positive Customer Focus - The Ideal : Characteristics of someone who has the RIGHT Customer Focussed Attitude are -

❀ Wants to serve customers, to work with them to ensure every customer has a good outcome wherever possible;

❀ Believes in the Company and its products / services ;

❀ Believes that every customer and every situation is worth the effort;

❀ Displays sensitivity and empathy for customers;

❀ Works at building skills and is continuously improving;

❀ Reacts to customer feedback and drives improvements;

❀ Sees irate customers as a positive challenge to demonstrate the high quality of his skills;

❀ Learns from their experience, continuously seeking to do/be better;

❀ Is interested in the job. Talks about it , share experiences with others and learns from others' experiences;

❀ Always seeks to go the extra mile, occasionally taking risks for customers;

❀ Works as a Team to continuously improve the level of service he/she delivers;

❀ Takes great pleasure in success.

CRM STRATEGY FOR HR CONSULTANTS

When planning CRM strategies for Human Resources, a company needs to provide solutions for some basic issues. Some of these issues are employee grievances, inter-group conflicts, and lack of career paths for ambitious employees, dissatisfaction with salary and remuneration, unclear job roles, no visible performance measures, poor recruitment policies, no induction training for new employees, critical skill shortages and management's ignorance towards any of these problems [3].

APPLICATION

Today's evolved consumer behavior demands a lot from companies. It is no longer a competition only among your own products. An organization is up against a multitude of astute competitors. That is why every company needs something to diversify itself from the contenders. Physical and timely accessibility of product/services is just as important as giving a customer valued service. In that scenario, the staff's approach to managing the relation with

customers is the key factor for the success of Customer Relationship Management[4].

The success of CRM will depend mainly on professional work approach of employees, on their motivation and skills and knowledge, and also on systematic and consistent measurement and appraisal of their achievement.

The basic workforce attributes in the context of CRM are an uncompromising concentration on customer's needs, competitiveness and will-to-win recognition, decisiveness, skill to improvise, the ability of a team work and the ability to lead a team. The willingness and skill of continuous training and self-education are also crucial factors, and in doing so, the requirements for training must primarily come from the skill recognition and staff appraisal[5].

STAFF APPRAISAL SYSTEM

A well managed staff appraisal system for HR consultants can be a very competitive advantage. Also of value is the system by which to inform employees about the appraisal results and what conclusions to derive from the appraisals. It is possible to use a lot of appraisal criteria for this system. It is also possible to use many other criteria that refer to a worker personality; for example: skills, professional knowledge, self discipline, independence, reliability, loyalty and stress resistance.

The appraisal process proceeds in following three phases: *Preparation, Practice And Assessment*. The preparation phase covers the activities starting with identification of the appraisal need, then the choice of the appraisal type and method after as much as fixing the criteria. The practice phase means obtaining the data for the appraisal. Registering of the obtained information is a very important activity within the framework of the practice phase of the appraisal. Most sensitive, but also the most interesting phase of staff appraisal process is the method of analysis of appraisal and telling the outcomes to the appraised staff.

STAFF TRAINING

We are living in the Information Age where knowledge is the main competitive advantage. But the ability to use that knowledge for the company's benefit is what separates a good employee from a bad one. A good manager needs not only information and feedback, but also training on how to use the assessed feedback/data to his advantage. Therefore, education is no more left only to institutions - companies need to get into educating as well.

It is for the company's own benefit that they use revised training methods for employers. They must give staff supplementary courses, retrain them and help them adapt to company policies, specialties and mechanisms.

The main goal of any CRM technique for human resource is to provide the company with loyal customers. Good HR strategies make sure that the company reaches this goal in the sphere of its performance improvement and growth. These goals can be reached only when the employees have the knowledge, training, skills and motivation necessary to do their work effectively.

AVAILABLE CRM SOFTWARE FOR HR

Some popular CRM softwares for HR consultants are designed to automate and centralize employee management and self-service. They provide enhanced employee productivity management, and reduced administrative overhead. All softwares have various functions like HR Policy tracking, paid-time-off vacation requests, employee expense tracking and commissions, compensation tracking, employee case management, call tracking and problem resolution.

All of these functionalities enable HR consultants to redirect their focus from administrative tasks to strategic business activities, improving staff efficiencies and job satisfaction. They also provide behind-the-scenes analytics work to guide against actions, enhance the value of employee interactions and help enforce the adoption of best practices.

How many times has this happened? - A person works through a myriad of push buttons that would puzzle the most obsessive Sudoku junkie and then, after 15 minutes of finger exercise, when they finally reach an actual person, the line inexplicably goes dead. Who's to blame? Is it the fault of the telephone company? Has technology once again run amok? It's more likely that the caller has been the victim of a poorly thought out Customer Service Performance KPI.

It works something like this. Call Center operators are largely unsupervised, sitting in a cubicle answering hundreds of calls a day. Even though the calls are occasionally monitored, the vast majority of the time the operator knows that no one will be listening in. So what motivates the quick hang up? Because the operator knows that the monthly

performance bonus is based on one thing and one thing only: how many calls are processed in a given shift? Whether the customer is actually satisfied or not is practically irrelevant. That only relevant factor is the number of calls *"processed"* not whether or not those calls are effective.

A similar scenario takes place when the order comes down from the executive offices that no call should take longer than 13 minutes (or some other arbitrary number) to complete. The call center employees' performance bonus is based on clearing calls quickly and *"efficiently"*. That's all well and good until a major issue comes up that takes longer than 20 minutes and then, suddenly, the previously helpful call center rep is doing everything possible to hustle the caller off the line.

As long as Customer Service Performance KPI is based on the quantifiable rather than the true level of satisfaction of the Customer, these scenarios will continue to frustrate the buying public. That is why many companies have introduced a more reliable system of measuring Customer Service Performance. These new KPI more accurately reflect whether or not the Customer actually feels like they have received a level of service that meets their needs. These models look something like this: When the clients' questions have all been answered, a series of questions are asked by the Customer Service rep. *"Are you satisfied with the responses to your queries?"*, *"Were your questions answered adequately and professionally?"*, *"Is there anything else we can help you with today?"* Sometimes, these questions are asked by the rep themselves and sometimes a follow up call is made by a supervisor or another rep. The employees' primary KPI is based on the customers' answers to these questions.

CONCLUSION

Competitive advantage is more a matter of creativity and sustaining good relations with the customers, by providing excellent services and quality product. This is maintained by the employers, who in turn need to have proper HR strategies working for their benefit. HR consultants can benefit hugely from the software's availability to ensure employee satisfaction. The strategies of employee satisfaction hugely relies on a good appraisal system and employer training.

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