

Tunnel Vision Impedes True Assessment of Customer Satisfaction

By Carol Bergeron



I recently made some changes to my data and telecommunications infrastructure for tv, internet and phone applications. You know the drill. Do your homework to compare providers, features, pricing and service. Select the mix of services that best serve your needs. Then move onto implementation which is always a treat and why I don't change providers very often. (Many of you are chuckling right now because you know what I am talking about.)

Work requests get submitted. Installation involves false starts, stops and delays due to unanticipated prep work and missed on-site service visits. A flood of phone calls become necessary, including lots of time on hold and getting bounced between departments because missed appointments have to be rescheduled and no one seems to own integration responsibility. So, out of necessity you transform yourself into the integration manager which can be daunting when mixing and matching technologies.

After about a half dozen on-site service visits (installation is not yet done as of this writing) and a dozen phone calls, I receive a ring from customer service for feedback on one specific visit. The rep asked some great questions and once tabulated will no doubt provide insight on customer satisfaction. There was, however, one fundamental flaw. The rep repeatedly advised me to answer the questions based on one specific visit as if the others never happened. I conveyed to her that as a customer I don't care about how well one visit goes. What I care about is the total experience, ease of doing business and the results. She was not receptive to my suggestion for a more holistic assessment of the customer experience. She had a job to do and did it. A little receptivity would have gone a long way.

Why am I sharing this story? Because we can all recount similar situations and because it raises some very real business and related talent management issues.

- How do you choose to measure customer satisfaction (internal customers too)? Gathering event or task specific information is fine so long as it is coupled with feedback on the overall experience.
- What mechanisms are in place for customers to express how they think you should measure satisfaction?
- What do you do with the customer feedback?
- Does customer feedback influence the value delivered to customers? Does it influence the tools and processes used to deliver that value?
- How does customer feedback influence your talent strategy? For instance, if customers see great value in integration then what are you doing to develop those skills in your workforce? What are you doing so that customer service reps are receptive to, capture and share valuable insight when speaking with customers?
- As a leader, what role do you play so employees see and understand these connections and their importance to retaining customers and growing the business?

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If you are interested in how my installation turns out, just give me a ring but wait a couple more weeks. I am looking forward to reconciling billing issues related to the old and new services.

Cheers!

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Bergeron Associates
101 Middlesex Tpke, Ste 6, PMB 326
Burlington, MA 01803-4914
781-376-4071

carol@bergeronassociates.com

www.bergeronassociates.com

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