



LIVE IN THE CUSTOMER'S WORLD

Winning companies are those that get under the skin of their customers. This requires a real understanding of those customers; why they buy, where and when they buy, why they prefer you to other suppliers and the issues and challenges they face in their markets. To gain such insight into your customers you need to:

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Some thoughts:

1. Spend some time talking to new and existing customers. They know your products and services and what it is like to deal with your company. They can tell you what you need to do in order to secure more orders from them and from other prospects.
2. Observe how your customers actually use your products and services - you might identify how they can be made more user friendly.
3. Get to know all the key people in your major accounts. In other words everyone who has influence on the purchasing decision - the actual users, their technical people and whoever signs the cheques!
4. Find out what customers like and dislike about your service and support - and not just what they think of your actual products or services. Poor customer service is the Number 1 reason why customers change suppliers.
5. Talk to your customers when you are starting to develop new products or services - they know better than you what really hits the spot with customers.
6. Conduct a 'Mystery Shopper' exercise - find out what its really like for a prospective customer to contact your company.
7. Insist that all your staff use their eyes and ears! In other words they listen for any comments made by customers. Try to capture ideas for improving your offerings as well as any concerns about doing business with your company.
8. Try to understand your customers' customers! You may be able to help your customers develop more business - and generate more orders for your own products and services.
9. Help your customers when they are developing new products and services. You will learn a lot about how they think and operate.
10. Ask your existing customer contacts who else might need your products and services. You may find that there are other parts of the customer's organisation that could give you business.

Do all the above and 'live in the customer's world' - a lot more sales will surely follow