

A C B

Attracting Customers Bootcamp

Week 8
Processes

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Processes

Before we get started let's recap the outcomes from the ACB course:

- Understand what marketing is
- Understand how marketing can benefit you
- Understand your client completely
- Learn how to identify the best products or services to increase sales
- Identify the best way to promote your products
- Discover how you can give your customers the best experience
- Work out how you can stand out from your competitors
- Create a realistic and relevant marketing strategy

This week we will begin to look at the following learning outcomes:

- Discover how you can give your customers the best experience
- Work out how you can stand out from your competitors

The 7 p's

Now that we have looked at Product; Price; Place; and Promotions we can now look at the remaining 3 elements of the marketing mix: Processes; Physical Evidence; and People. Let us explore each of these elements now:

Process

Customers do not simply buy things, they invest their time and resources into an experience. From the moment they discover your business to the last contact you have, they are involved in the processes of your business. Processes can include things such as how things are delivered and how you send emails.

People

Everyone who comes into contact with your customers will make an impression. It is vital that the impression is a positive one. Many customers will not separate the product or service from the people that sold it to them. Anyone involved or who represents your business will have an impact on the customer experience. It is important to make sure they have the right impact.

Physical Evidence

Buying something is a risk because customers do not know if the product or service will meet their needs, and will be any good. However by using the right physical evidence you can overcome some of the risk. Physical evidence includes everything your customers physically experience from shop decorations to packaging.

The Customer Experience

Let us consider the customer experience. The customer experience is the impression your customer has, which influences how they perceive your business at any point of interaction. As a result offering a good customer experience can enable you to stand out from your competitors.

Now for the good news- it is quite easy to create a good customer experience when you consider what your ideal client wants from your business. Let us consider a bad customer experience and a good customer experience.

Businesses succeed when they put the customers needs first.

A bad customer experience

For years I had been with an online bank, and until 5 years ago they were brilliant. You could speak to a real person quickly over the phone or via a secure message. It was easy to login to the website. Everything was user friendly. Then 5 years ago I received an email, they were encouraging you to only contact the bank via secure message. Phone calls suddenly involved choosing from a hundred choices, and using voice recognition which did not work. Then, I was informed the log in process was changing and you now needed to do X, Y and Z and dance around the moon! As a result I quickly switched banks.

When have you had a bad customer experience? Did you tell anyone about it?

It is more than likely that you have told someone about a bad experience, as most people will spread negative reviews.

A good customer experience

A few years ago I needed a new outfit for my graduation. I went everywhere to look for the outfit, and at the end of the day shopping, I decided to pop into one last high street store just in case. It was part of a chain, just like the 20 other shops I had visited earlier that day. However as soon as I walked in the sales assistant spoke to me. This was the first time anyone had approached me all day. I explained what I was looking for. The assistant pulled a selection of outfits for me to try on. I tried on a dress I loved. The assistant then suggested accessories to complete the outfit. It was perfect. I purchased everything. Unlike everywhere else, the sales assistant went out of her way to listen to my needs and present a solution.

When did you have a good experience as a customer? Did you tell anyone about the experience?

These are two really common experiences that almost every one of us will have faced. What was the main difference between the good and the bad? The focus on the customer.

Importance of Customer Experience

As we have already seen offering a good customer experience can differentiate you from your competitors. This is vital in today's world where customers have so much choice. By offering a good customer experience you can also:

- sustainably grow your business
- increase brand loyalty
- receive positive reviews
- gain more customers through word of mouth- a cheap promotional method
- save money - it is cheaper to retain current customers

Consequently you can attract more customers and increase profits by simply offering the best customer experience.

How you can offer a good Customer Experience

There are some general ways in which any business can offer an exceptional customer experience. These include:

- Customer feedback
- Rectify mistakes
- Make it easy to exit
- Tailor the buying process
- Delivery
- Internet Experience
- Information Provided
- Connect with customers
- Solve your customers needs, not your own
- Offer exceptional customer service
- Staff training
- Staff attitude
- Sales Support
- VIP programs
- Visual Experience
- Reviews
- Packaging

Let us now see how offering an exceptional customer experience links to the three remaining elements of the marketing mix- process, people and physical evidence.

Customer feedback	
Rectify mistakes	Process
Make it easy to exit	Process
Tailor the buying process	Process
Delivery	Process
Internet Experience	Process
Information Provided	Process
Connect with customers	Process
Solve your customers needs, not your own	People
Offer exceptional customer service	People
Staff training	People
Staff attitude	People
Sales Support	People
VIP programs	People
Visual Experience	Physical Evidence
Reviews	Physical Evidence
Packaging	Physical Evidence

Processes and the Customer Experience

This week we will consider the impact of process on the customer experience. Next week we will look at the impact of people and physical evidence on the customer experience.

What is a process? A process is something which your customer participates in at different points in time.

The Overall Process

There are various types of processes, however the main process you must consider is the overall process a customer goes through when they work with you- from the moment they enquire until the sale is completed. Let us look at two overall processes:

Product: Cruise

The customer enters a travel agent or call a travel agent and the agent greets the customer

The agent listens to the customers needs and offer a selection of options

The agent contacts the customer again to see how they are getting on.

The customer then chooses a cruise

The travel agent books the cruise and sends a confirmation to the customer

The travel agent sends email reminders and information to the customer

The day of the cruise, the customer is greeted at the dockside and baggage is taken to their room

Throughout the cruise the customer is offered various services, trips and entertainment

The customer may have their own tour guide or butler

When the customer arrives at the final destination the baggage is delivered to the customer

Product: Online product purchase

The customer comes across the product or business via social media or a search engine

The customer clicks on the link and accesses the website

The website clearly displays the right information, such as price, product information, delivery prices and times

The customer selects a product and pays easily in their preferred payment method

The business sends an email confirmation with expected delivery date

The product arrives with the customer at the right time with a thank you note

The business sends an email to the customer requesting feedback

You need to understand the processes your customers go through to enable you to offer the best customer experience.

It can sometimes be difficult to list the customers process. The best way to identify it, is to imagine you were explaining the process your customers go through, step by step, to a child aged 7.

Write down the customer process that your customers currently go through. This is the general process every customer goes through regardless of the product or service

Types of Processes

There are an additional four types of processes that you may have in your business. Once again you must be aware of these to understand how you can offer the best customer experience.

There are technological processes, electronic processes, direct activities and indirect activities.

1. Technological Processes

These include the manufacture of goods, and adapting goods to meet the needs of clients. For example technological processes include delivery services, and personalisation options.

2. Electronic Processes

Examples of electronic processes can include the use of receipts or barcodes which can be scanned by customers or company staff. This can also include loyalty schemes or payment processes.

3. Direct Activities

These are things which add value to the customer as they experience the product, service or business. This can include the people who interact with your customers, the checkout process, waiting times, and communications with customers

4. Indirect Activities

These are the behind the scenes activities which support the purchase that the customer does not see or directly experience. This can include any office work or behind the scenes things.

Once again you need to identify each of the processes you have which are part of these categories to ensure that they are designed with your ideal customer in mind.

List all the technological processes, electronic processes and direct and indirect activities in your business.

Standing out and the customer experience

Whatever processes you have in your business remember processes can:

- add and deliver value
- be tailored to different needs
- provide customer feedback which can be used
- help you attract and keep customers

As we saw before there are some easy ways to ensure you offer the best customer experience through introducing certain processes. Let us look at some of these processes now, and explore how you can introduce them into your business.

For additional ways to offer the best customer experience and value it is worthwhile speaking to your customers and asking them what they want.

Mistake Process

We are all human- we all make mistakes.

The difference between a good business and an exceptional business is how mistakes are dealt with. This is especially relevant in today's world with online reviews and complaints. You need to have systems in place for when mistakes are made and when a customer complains. Let us now consider two processes which you can implement today.

Complaint Process

1. Make it easy for customers to complain by asking for feedback and have clear contact details on paperwork or your website. This is vital when it is so easy to leave bad reviews online.
2. Respond within one week or less to any complaints
3. Remain polite, acknowledge the complaint
4. Listen to the customers and acknowledge their point of view
5. Investigate the complaint and inform the customer of how long this will take and any updates
6. Seek a resolution and apologise if you or your business has made a mistake
7. Learn from the results

Mistake Process

1. Acknowledge the mistake has been made and be honest to anyone who has been affected
2. Apologise where required
3. Evaluate what went wrong
4. Fix the problem
5. Make any changes to stop it happening again
6. Move on- mistakes do not define you or your business

What is your current process for complaints and mistakes? Can it be improved?

Feedback Process

One of the best and most worthwhile processes for any business is asking your customers for feedback.

You can ask your customers for feedback after they have purchased from you, or if they decide not to purchase from you.

You must make it easy for customers to provide you with feedback. Use the customers feedback to improve your business. You could request feedback via an online form, an email or a comment card.

Do you currently ask for feedback? How could you ask customers for feedback?

Exit Process

Whether your customers have signed up for emails, subscription or membership, or if they need to return something, you must make it easy for them to exit.

If you create an ongoing relationship with customers you must make the leaving process as easy as possible, after all we all know how horrible it is if you cannot leave a service.

You can make it easy to exit by providing:

- clear information when they sign up on the exit process
- clear contact information
- an easy exit strategy customers can follow without any hassle

Consider now, how can you make it easier for your customers to exit?

Buying Process

Tailoring the buying process for different customers is absolutely vital, whether you offer services from a bricks and mortar store or you operate online. You can easily tailor the buying process to meet customers needs. this can be as simple as offering multiple payment methods or making your shop or offices accessible.

How can you tailor the buying process for your ideal clients?

Delivery Process

Whether you have a service business, a bricks and mortar or online product based business you have to make sure your products or services are delivered in the best way for your customers.

Some of the methods of improving the delivery process include:

- reduce waiting times
- offer various delivery options, even for bricks and mortar stores
- offer reliable delivery services
- offer multiple delivery charges
- ensure your packaging suits your customers needs- we recently received a book from amazon and it was sent in a box which could have held 20. We actually complained as a result!

How can you use the delivery process to improve the customer experience?

Information Process

Customers need the right information at the right time. From making sure your prices are clear, to making it easy to return goods you must ensure every customer gets the information they need.

The best way to identify this is to get a friend or family member to go through the purchase process to identify what information is missing from the customers point of view.

Remember sometimes it is hard to see your business from the customers point of view.

Write down step by step the information process that your ideal clients goes through. From the moment they discover you, what information do they need and when to help them on their journey with you.

Online Process

We have already established the internet is a huge focus in today's world. Whatever interaction your customers have with you online, you must ensure you offer the best online experience. Some of the things which you can do to make sure your customer experience is the best include:

- respond to customer queries quickly
- make your website user friendly
- convey the right information clearly e.g. prices, delivery and contact details
- make your website mobile friendly
- ensure your social media profiles are in line with your business

Describe your online processes and identify how you can improve them?

Summary

This week we have begun to look at how you can stand out from your competitors and offer the very best customer experience. I have given you some prompts to encourage to look at how you can introduce some processes to offer an exceptional customer experience. However there will be other things which you can do.

I cannot emphasize enough how important it is to listen what your customers are saying and what your competitors are doing, because this will be the best way to offer the best experience.

Take a few moments before next week and jot down how else you can offer the best customer experience.

Notes