

that translate into attitudes, attitudes are the way a person thinks and feels. Attitudes then form a person's behavior or how someone chooses to act. The resulting actions stimulate a reaction for the person who is being interacted with as a certain type of behavior has a direct impact on them.

How Do the Customers See us

Based on the above Mindset Cycle and as a result of the Catch 22 situation mentioned earlier, our customer often perceives us to be unreliable and irresponsible. This perception is a reaction to the behavior that our customer witnesses. There may have been situations where we have behaved poorly, shirking responsibility or blaming another department. On top of this the grooming of the frontline staff is sadly often far from satisfactory, which does not impress the customers at all. With this in mind, their attitude towards us would become apathetic and condescending. In turn, when they have any encounter with us, their attitude can be hostile. Often no matter how hard we try to improve our service and deliver a high standard, customers will always have the same attitude. This attitude is difficult to change and often leads to confrontation.

How Do We See the Customers

In the same way that customers develop an attitude toward us we can also develop a set of beliefs that contribute to our attitude and behavior toward our customers. As a result of some of the more difficult encounters with our customers, we believe them to be negative, unreasonable and intimidating. Consequently our behavior towards them becomes apathetic; our service delivery sub standard. Unsurprisingly, this behavior only serves to reinforce their negative belief in us and create an environment for constant confrontation.

What is causing the Customer's Reactions?

In trying to rectify this constant confrontation, we have to change the way we behave so that our behavior appeals to our customers. The only way the belief of our customers will change is if our behavior towards them changes also. We need to deliver customers the service that they want. Instead of shying away from our responsibilities, we need to understand their needs and then ensure we deliver it to them in the best possible way.

Common Problems

As our dealings with customers are part of day-to-day requirements, we need to shift our attitude from one of pessimism to a positive interaction. We need to be confident in our dealings with customers, as they are part of our roles every day. We cannot be too quick to doubt the intentions of our customers; always thinking that are causing trouble or challenging our position is the wrong attitude to take. If we are constantly facing each customer encounter with the wrong attitude then we will react in an inappropriate manner and further enhance the customer's attitude. For example, if a customer claims to have suffered some damage to their property, we immediately minimize their complaint as a result of our attitude towards them, in this instance we do not react the way the customer wants and thus the next encounter may be a hostile one. On top of this, people are always very quick in discussing bad experiences and therefore our unhappy customers are quick to communicate to papers and senior management their grievances with our service. This reaction does not contribute positively to our reputation.

The Solutions

Knowing the issues that exist between ourselves and our customers, we need to ensure we tackle the problem head on. Understanding customers' needs and feelings is the key to success, once we do that we can then work together with them to solve any problems which may arise and provide the level of service they desire. Being prepared to offer solutions and alternatives is another critical factor in working with our customers; this will be a challenge and will require initiative. Once we have gained the trust and respect of our customers we need to constantly deliver the right solutions as once you lose trust it is difficult to regain.

The Long Term Effect

If we are successful in changing the beliefs and attitudes of our customers then we can enjoy a long-term prosperous relationship with them. This relationship will be based on trust and mutual understanding. As the relationship improves and continues to grow so will the positive encounters. Our staff will be more comfortable in offering solutions and providing help and customers in turn will be happier and easier to deal with. The cycle will continue. Out of this positive cycle will come positive praise and recognition that will in turn create a better reputation for us.

