

CUSTOMER CULTURE

How FedEx and Other Great Companies Put the Customer First Every Day

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MAIN IDEA

Building a business organization which focuses exclusively on what the customer wants and needs doesn't just happen by chance. Instead, the right systems need to be put in place so the people behave in ways consistent with that goal. And in any business, how people behave is an extension of the company's prevailing culture and beliefs. So, to build a company that serves customers well, start by building the firm's internal culture first.

CustomerCulture means to build a culture that focuses on providing superior customer experiences. This requires six elements:

1. Vision – the compass – develop a clear picture of precisely what will constitute the desired customer experience.
2. Values – the boundaries – the code of conduct or the way everyone in the organization will act towards customers.
3. Goals – the deliverables – the specific time-critical results the organization aspires to achieve.
4. Relevance – the determination level – the incentives and personal recognition people receive when they deliver on the goals.
5. Action – the activities – which ideally will be the natural consequences of achieving the goals.
6. Feedback – the scorecard – which lets the people know where they stand in relation to the goals.

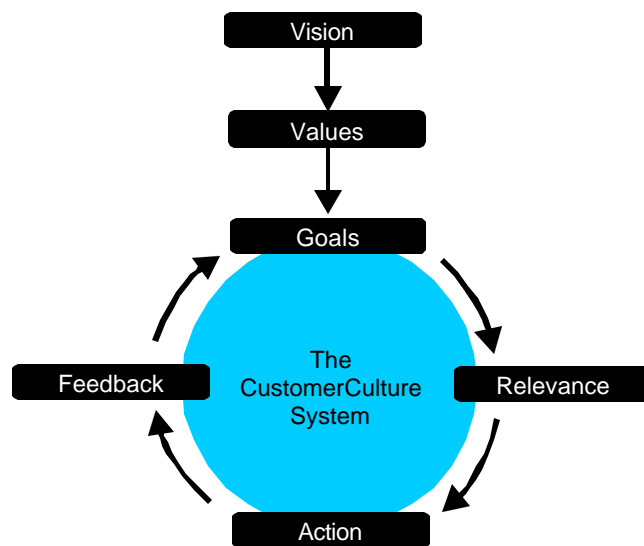
Therefore, concentrate on getting the system right and everything else will follow as a cause-and-effect. Put in place the right culture and your people won't be able to do anything else except deliver outstanding customer experiences. And if you're currently failing to deliver great customer experiences, don't look at your people, look at your system for growing the appropriate culture.

"Ordinary people working with extraordinary systems deliver extraordinary results. To put it another way, systems, not people, drive 95% of what goes on in an organization. If you want to change your results, you change your cultural systems."

– Michael Basch

1. The Theory – How to Grow a Customer Focused Culture Pages 2 - 5

To establish a CustomerCulture – a customer-centered organization – build the right company culture first and then let systems emerge where the behaviors needed are clear and recognized. The key elements of a customer-centered culture are:



Note the goals/relevance/action/feedback cycle is an evolutionary process. The organization goes through this cycle again and again looking for better ways to serve the customer over time in a never-ending quest. This is the essence of CustomerCulture.

2. The Application – Lessons You'll Learn in Applying the Theory Pages 5 - 8

- Lesson #1 – Sustainability means focusing on customers alone, not the favorite projects of the managers.
- Lesson #2 – The bigger the company, the slower its ability to change.
- Lesson #3 – Systemize the routine; Humanize the exception.
- Lesson #4 – Develop an organizational structure that focuses employees on customers.
- Lesson #5 – Understand and use the seven dynamics of change:
 1. People always feel uncomfortable about change at first.
 2. People always feel lonely whenever changes occur.
 3. People can only handle so much change at a time.
 4. It's human nature to always look at the negative first.
 5. People will usually feel there are not enough resources to make a change.
 6. Everyone in the organization will have a different state of readiness for change.
 7. Without external intervention, people will prefer to revert to the familiar every time.

