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Understanding The Customer In CRM

OBJECTIVES OF THIS ARTICLE

At the end of this lesson, readers should be able to understand:

- who a customer is,
- what it means to treat customers as a king
- the act of knowing your customers and the relationship that they keep, which can help an organisation to retain their customers for life.

Let us first clarify some points about a customer. It is widely agreed that a customer is a person who has come to experience the product or services that you have to offer. He is interested in the products and services that you have to offer and would likely move to another organisation [that produces similar products and services](#) if you are no longer satisfying his or her needs. Therefore the following point must be well noted.

Customer is king

Have you ever been to a palace? If your answer is no, you need to visit one. It's also very imperative for you to study Royalty. A king is treated with respect. He commands, in Yoruba land for example, it is not proper for kings to make suggestions, they give orders.

When we say that a customer is a king, all we are saying is that you have to treat them with respect and honour. You don't need to argue with them in whatever they are doing. That is why it is often said that "A King does no wrong"



It always amazes and baffles me the way some organisations and small businesses treat their customers. They treat them as if they are doing them a favour. This is with the wind of privatization that is blowing in the government sector, customers will dictate the way they want to be served, Organisations that are not ready to abide by the rules of the game should prepare to go out of market. It is as simple as that.

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On the other hand, in every organisation; most especially in customer-centric enterprise, they treat customers as an asset. When we say something is an asset, we mean that such things are capable of generating more wealth.

You should know that the first thing that drives vent customer to vent life Cycle is because you have goods and services that can satisfy their needs. You should also know that you are in a competitive environment.

If another organisation is able to produce superior goods and render services at a cheaper rate, there is high tendency that your customers will move to their Life Cycle. That is why customer-centric enterprise always finds every opportunity to delight their customers. They treat their customers with dignity and respect. They treat them like Royalty and retain them for life. This xviii force the customer to introduce the product to another customer.

A Scenerio

There was a time that I was so much delighted in using *Dudu-Osun* as my bathing soap. I will buy twelve at once as if I am going to use them all at once. I started using the soap because of the scent and name.

It got to a stage that I forced my wife to be using the soap, even though it is not really good for her. The company producing the soap has increased the price many times over but still continue to use the soap, along with my wife. That means I am one of their assets and if they failed to meet up with my expectation, it can forced me to start using another soap.

Know your Customer

I want you to take time to ask this question from many organisations in Nigeria. It will surprise you the kind of result that you will get from them. Ask giants like MTN, GLO. First Bank of Nigeria Plc. Zenith Bank Plc, Oando or any other organizations in Nigeria to tell you the exact number of customers that they have or who their customers are: many of them cannot answer that questions correctly. They don't know their customers.

Many organizations in Nigeria today just open shops and start selling, they don't take into consideration who their customers are, who are the end users? How many of their products does a [particular customer need?](#)

As a customer-centric enterprise, you must endeavour to know the person that is actually responsible for the settling of the bills, Don't just assume that the person using the line is also the person making the recharge. As a boss, I will compel my staff to open a salary account with GT Bank Plc.

If the bank is no longer meeting with my expectations as the boss, I might be forced to move them to another organisation. It is very sad that organizations in Nigeria do not really understand the potentials of CRM. If you ask an average business person, they thought it is all about opening a call centre with multiple touch points.

But CRM involves almost every department in an organisation. Part of it is what we called Partner Relationship Management where you let your partners and distributors understand the position of your organisation as far as relationship with your customers is concerned, so that you are not misrepresented by them.

Knowing your customers goes beyond giving out a form to fill. It goes beyond KYG in banks. It involves looking in depth into those forms and deducing some facts which you can use in retaining those customers for life.

SUMMARY

In this chapter, we have learned that:

- A customer is someone who is interested in any goods or services that you have for sale.
- A customer should be treated as a King. That is, you should allow them to determine what you produce and how you produce them. Never argue with them.
- Knowing your customer should go beyond getting data about your customer. You should be able to ascertain the kind of relationship that they keep and how you can use such relationship to your own advantage.

Brainstorming Session

1. Some scholars have argued that it is more profitable to do business from customer perspective than product perspective than many organisations in Nigeria still prefer to do business from product perspective. Discuss the factors that are responsible for this.
1. Many Customer Care units in many organisations in Nigeria attend to customers issues as if they are doing them great favour and this is affecting the perspective of the organisation from the aspect of the customers and management seem to be helpless about. As a CRM Consultant, how do you think Management can address this issue on ground?

Action Point

PS: I know you might agree with some of the points that I have raised in this article. You might not agree with some of the issues raised. Let me know your views about the topic discussed. We will appreciate it if you could drop your comment. Thanks in anticipation.

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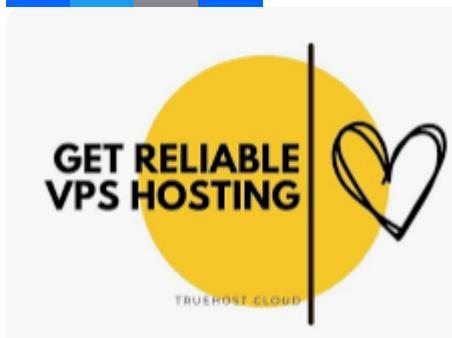
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