

BTS Technologies Newsletter, Q1 2011

Email title Line: BTS Newsletter: It's All About Customer Service

## **Contents:**

What is the single best way to improve your bottom line, lead the competition, and build repeat business? Give exceptional customer service!

Genuine, consistent, exceptional customer service confirms the truth: *you reap what you sow*. If you sow the seeds of customer satisfaction you will reap a prosperous business.

This issue of our newsletter focuses on ways to enrich your customer's experience and ways to make your customer a raving fan.

### **LAWS FOR GIVING SUPERIOR CUSTOMER SERVICE**

1. It's not the customer's job to make your life easy. It's your job to make the customer's life easy
2. *Worst.* Oversell / under deliver  
*Better.* Undersell / over deliver  
*Best.* Deliver exactly what you promise
3. It's your responsibility to understand what the customer really wants
4. Listen... ATTENIVELY
5. Empathize with their situation
6. Communicate. Communicate... and Then Communicate. If you ask a customer to send you a document, let them know that you've received it.

7. Be Genuine / real / human... don't hide behind a script.
8. Take personal ownership of the customer resolution. Personally make sure that it has been resolved.
9. Resolve the problem... QUICKLY.
10. Follow up... ALL THE WAY... EVERY TIME
11. Take responsibility for your company's actions. APOLOGIZE
12. Don't even think about making up an Excuse
13. Learn from the master, Sam Walton. Give your customers the benefit of the doubt
14. Don't take it personal
15. Keep your cool
16. Get feedback and FIX the problems
17. If you are a manager, your frontline people will reflect the way you treat them
18. Make your customers feel important
19. If your customers leave a message, send an email, mail a letter, or contact you by carrier pigeon. Answer them ASAP – that means IMMEDIATELY. Even if it's 5:01
20. Learn from other's who are known for giving great customer service.
21. Continue improving.

## **What's the Best Way to Retain Customers?**

Why is it hard to retain customers? It goes back to the basics - doing what you say you'll do - in product, service and value promises, and really knowing your customers. **The unfortunate fact is many** companies have fair or little knowledge of customers' demographics, behaviors, psychographics and transactions, **and** they have no processes in place for reactivating dormant or lost customers.

Customers view product and service quality by far as the most important components of trust. Way down on the list are state of the business, innovations, supporting the public good, and commitment to the environment. Since trust is the basis for long productive relationships, then your customer retention strategy must include oversight on product and service deliverables meeting or exceeding the brand promise featured in marketing communications.

**Economists** examined the revenue gains by increasing positive word-of-mouth and by reducing negative word-of-mouth. They found that reducing negative buzz pays off 300% over improving positive buzz.

Customer retention may be best supported by operational integrity. After all, when you think about your personal relationships as well as your business relationships, you tend to stick with the folks that are really good at showing they sincerely care about you, and doing what they say they're going to do. It boils down to trust. When you dig down to the reasons why people leave a brand for a competitor's solution, it's not so much about the competitors' offers and brand affinity - but the reasons people switch brands is much more about product, service and value disappointments. Companies make huge investments in communicating their value proposition. Logic says a corresponding investment - at least in energy and scrutiny - should be made in making sure their value proposition is lived up to. Trust is the best way to retain customers.

You can retain customers by locking them into contracts, but a better way is to encourage customers to invest non-transferable equity in your brand - for example, customers find quality and attention to detail in your product or service, or they may receive special offers or other loyalty perks through your brand that can't be readily transferred to your competitor. This is better, because it's the customer chooses his or her level of involvement and tie-in with your brand.

You can retain customers through unique technologies that competitors don't offer, either due to patents or lack of common standards. But a better way is to develop customers' passion for your brand – your unique value proposition.

## **Great Customer Service Begins with the Right Hire**

When the right [customer experience](#) philosophy guides the hiring process of a company it usually means they are consistently listed as top customer service providers because they have very deliberate methods for choosing the right people who will properly represent the company's [brand promise](#).

At Southwest Airlines, a culture committee was established to make sure their vision and values are not compromised as the company grows and as it adjusts to economic forces. Their attitude is: "We are a

customer service business that just happens to fly airplanes. Their leadership models a genuine love for people; you wouldn't be put in a leadership if you don't have it. It is not about the company or the management – it's about the customer. The leadership understands that of all the decisions they will make, the most important ones will be hiring decisions. They make it tough to become part of the team," because the traits Southwest looks for are inherent in personalities and cannot be achieved through training." The ideal employee is characterized as a warrior spirit with a servant's heart and a fun-loving attitude: People who are other-oriented, not self-important, who put others first — these are the people who will deliver service. They take their customers and their competition seriously — not themselves.

At Nordstrom, new-hires are selected on their capabilities to anticipate and meet people's needs; management emphasizes smooth leadership transitions and provides employees with absolute clarity about the market being served and the unique selling proposition that brings in customers; employees are given responsibility for their own area of the business, and encouraged to approach their work area with an entrepreneurial spirit, to try new ways of selling and new approaches to customer service all with the goal of doing right by the customer. Mistakes become opportunities to learn rather than efforts to hide, and the single rule of "Use good judgment in all situations" gives employees a tremendous sense that they are trusted to do right all the time.

At Ritz-Carlton, customer experience is managed very seriously. They preach an attitude of responsibility: You get the problem; you own it -- which results in more prompt and efficient resolution of customer needs. Another attitude that Ritz-Carlton Management emphasizes is about identity: they are ladies and gentlemen serving ladies and gentlemen. They work to build a culture of mutual respect throughout all levels of the organization. Everyone is expected to treat each other with respect and dignity and there is pride and joy in the workplace – which is the automatic human reaction. And in turn that spirit makes magic for the customers. Ritz-Carlton makes sure their employees feel special. The intent is to select for life. And it doesn't stop after the hire. At the beginning of each shift, all employees attend a mandatory 15-minute meeting to review one of the company's 20 Basics of Customer Service.

Trust is the foundation of an enduring customer-centric culture, and trust is developed through respect for individuals' inherent worth; trust is demonstrated by empowering individuals to do the right thing – giving them the skills, resources, authority and accountability to provide a quality customer experience.

- Develop a company-wide customer experience philosophy – if you don't already have one. It should be part of your unique value proposition.
- Make sure your managers and leaders are teaching, practicing, promoting and living this philosophy. Make it a lifestyle.
- Clearly define your customer service standards and train your employees to follow through at the highest level.
- Make exceptional customer service an important item on employee evaluations.

- Make sure your staff has the ability to resolve small customer complaints/challenges on their own - and train them to do this well.
- Identify specific problem areas that you are having in your company, brainstorm solutions and then provide additional training and support.
- What doesn't get measured doesn't get done. How do you measure results?

## **Customers Are People First**

When it comes to running a customer-centered business, everybody talks a good game. “Where The Customer is #1” is one of the most common taglines for businesses of all kinds—even those that treat the customers like #2.

Savvy businesses move past lip service about customer centeredness so they can actually achieve it, and reap the incredible benefits.

Most companies focus first on their products and services and think of customers as potential markets for those products and services. It's a 20th century approach that no longer works. A truly customer-centered process starts with customer needs and develops products and services to meet those needs.

Find out what problems the customers are dealing with, what issues they are confronting on a daily basis. Suddenly your path becomes clear.

Sounds easy, but it's not. For one thing, customers can't always put a finger on what their concerns are, much less tell you in detail what products and services will help them solve those problems; so asking questions is crucial, but just as crucial is getting customers talking so you can listen. The more you can interact with your customers, both formally and informally, the better.

For example, if your company is a fresh produce distributor, don't ask your customers if they want a bag of pre-cut lettuce. Instead, ask about customers' lives, and you might learn that the act of converting a head of lettuce into a salad was keeping people from eating salad. And they actually WANT to eat salad.

That information can be used to find an innovative way to meet the need, seize the opportunity, and create a win-win situation.

So what do your customers love? What do they hate? What frustrates them about their lives? Only when you know the answers to these questions can you create solutions that will serve you both. It starts with the customer, and it ends with success.

## **Technology Update:**

### ***Benefit from Latest Advancements in Mobile Communications Technology***

Recent statistics by the industry's leading research firms are showing that mobile Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) is poised to revolutionize the communications industry. This technological advancement is increasing profitability and providing substantial benefits to small to medium sized businesses (SMB) across the globe.

Juniper Research, who specializes in appraising high growth opportunities for the mobile markets, "expects the total number of mobile VoIP users to exceed 100 million by 2012." Paired with InStat's prediction of "288 million mobile VoIP users by 2013" it's easy to see that mobile VoIP is making its way to the forefront of communications.

Roger Wentowski, President of BTS Technologies, Inc. states, "As our customer's trusted technology advisor, we feel obligated to educate our customers about the business benefits of mobile VoIP and how it can enhance the way they communicate. It's up to us to understand where the communications industry is headed, but more importantly it's absolutely vital that we find the technologies that make our customers more *profitable*."

Traditional VoIP has been around since the 90s, but until recently the Internet has not been able to adequately support VoIP. Past developments have stabilized VoIP's performance and this explains the dramatic increase in demand for the technology, especially among SMBs. VoIP's primary appeal lies in its sizable cost savings for end users and in a struggling economy, VoIP was the blatantly obvious choice for most business owners. However, for the past several years SMBs were limited to only using VoIP at the office and at home, which deterred a large section of the population from deriving the technology's benefits. Mobile VoIP "cuts the cord" and allows users to enjoy all of the benefits of VoIP technology *from their cell phone*. Mobile VoIP enhances integrations with applications such as Presence Management, Find Me Follow Me and Unified Messaging.

As smart phones, like Apple's iPhone and Motorola's Droid, continue to grow in popularity, so does the market for mobile VoIP. SMB's are being educated on the value of mobile VoIP and as a result, demand for this technology is accelerating.

## **Training Opportunities**

### **End User Training**

## **Dates for Web-Based End-User Training**

Wednesday, January 19, 4 PM: Transfer, Park, and Pickup on the NEC IPK II and SV8100

Wednesday, February 2, 4 PM: Zultys Conference Calls

Wednesday, February 23, 4 PM: ShoreTel Call Handling

Wednesday, March 9, 4 PM: InMail Voice Mail Tips

Wednesday, March 30, 4 PM: Operator Etiquette

Contact Kim Reynolds at (205) 290-8430 or [kimr@askbts.com](mailto:kimr@askbts.com) if you have questions or are interested in attending a webinar.

Please keep in mind that both web-based and on-site training are also available on an as-needed basis. Whether you have a new employee or would just like a quick refresher class, we can help you. Please contact Kim to discuss or schedule.

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## **Announcements**

### **Business Continuity Seminars**

BTS is hosting several Business Continuity Seminars in 2011. These will be informal meetings at our office at 311 West Valley Avenue in Homewood, AL. Refreshments will be served while we talk about things that organizations can do to protect their critical data from loss due to business interruptions and recovery procedures when the unexpected happens. Call Terry Mayfield 205-290-8424 for more information, or go to [www.gosleepez.info](http://www.gosleepez.info) to register.

### **Continuous Technology Assurance Program**

BTS Technologies and TAG National have the cure for aging technology, unexpected expenses, and “how do I make the phone system do that.” Ask BTS Technologies how CTAP accurately forecasts your Total Cost of Ownership, cures obsolescence, and makes use all of the productivity enhancing features of your phone system.

## **ABOUT BTS TECHNOLOGIES, INC.**

BTS Technologies, Inc., (BTS) was founded on the philosophy of maintaining a profitable business by providing the best in telecommunication systems and services to our customers. The stated purpose of our company not only allows us to provide short term answers to our customer's communication needs, but also affords us a longevity unsurpassed by the telecommunication industry in our region. We strive to provide quality materials, trouble -free installations and total communication services at a fair and competitive price that will allow us to maintain our business with quality employees. This policy insures the on-going system service and support that you deserve and expect. BTS Technologies, Inc. is located at 311 West Valley Ave, Birmingham, AL 35209. For more information on BTS please call (205) 942-6532 or visit <http://www.askbts.com>.

Please email questions or comments to [terrym@askbts.com](mailto:terrym@askbts.com).