

What are you famous for?

If you want your company to be known for something, consider stellar customer service. **By Pamela Schuck**

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Planning for your company's future is critical because it ensures you have a clear road map of where you want to be.

It is not about predicting the future, but about understanding the forces that will affect your success. Consider it an opportunity to make fundamental choices about the future of your business.

To do this, you must have a vision of what your business can be. The vision should be so compelling that people feel a strong desire to work together to reach the destination you are working toward.

Let's look at developing a vision for a service strategy in your business. Often, we plan for all other aspects of the business and forget to focus on service vision and strategy.

Visualize what you want your business to be

Visualization is a very successful means of motivation. Visualize a clear picture of what you want your business to be, what you want to achieve and how you will achieve it. Ask yourself: What do you want to be famous for?

Or perhaps, first you should ask what you are famous for now. What kind of service are your customers receiving? Is it the kind of service you want to be famous for? Is it hard for customers to do business with you? Do they have to work at

being your customers?

Are the negative experiences your customers are having creating the wrong picture of your business? Do they feel like you care about them?

Another way to look at service fame is that **you may not be famous for anything**. Customers hardly notice service one way or the other. This is as detrimental as being famous for the wrong kind of service. In today's competitive world, if your competitors seize the opportunity to make their service strategy more responsive than yours, the business is lost.

What you want to be famous for is unsurpassed service — the kind that makes service the product you become famous for. Make your purpose clear and create a picture. If you develop a clear picture of what you want your service focus to be, it will motivate everyone to meet that vision.

It will be a motivator that the business has a commitment to service excellence. It also says the company realizes that service excellence is important to the future of the company.

Put it in writing

Once you have a service vision, write it down and constantly refer to it. Set standards that support your service vision

to your customers and employees. This gives you one simple goal — to own the standards for service within your specific industry.

I always encourage clients to look at five customer evaluators as a starting point:

Reliability — Your ability to provide what is promised, dependably and accurately.

Responsiveness — Your willingness to help your customers.

Assurance — The knowledge and courtesy you show your customer.

Empathy — The degree of caring and individual attention you show your customer.

Tangibles — The physical facilities, equipment, self, work areas and service systems.

All of which leads us back to the most important question: What do you want to be famous for?

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