

The Busy Manager's Guide to Marketing



Bill Donaldson

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 Published by Goodfellow Publishers Limited, Woodeaton, Oxford, OX3 9TJ
<http://www.goodfellowpublishers.com>

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Design and setting by P.K. McBride

5 SERVICE, QUALITY AND RELATIONSHIPS

There are three types of business person; those who make things happen, those who watch things happen, those who wonder what happened

Anonymous

CUSTOMER SERVICE

The expectation of higher standards of service is already a feature of the current market place and you could hardly be blamed for assuming that, if you offer the best possible service, you will prosper. However, customer expectations are continually rising and the levels to which they rise become the minimum levels customers expect; and thus differentiation between you and your competitors will become less clear.

A further consideration is that service has to be viewed from the point of view of the customer. Unless the customer values the service you offer, it is unlikely to gain the business you want. Therefore an early understanding of what really matters to a customer becomes a matter of priority. Customer judgement is notoriously fickle and can be very unfair. A case in point is the often-quoted airline example in which minor failures in cabin staff service to airline passengers become translated into a lack of flight safety. Nevertheless, such a situation has to be treated seriously because in the final analysis you want the business and it is the customer who pays.

The level of service you establish has to convince customers in its quality. There is no point in claiming a first-rate service when it fails to meet such a standard. Customers will feel cheated and the repercussions on your business will be severe. You must develop a consistent approach to service which matches the other aspects of your marketing

Chapter extract

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