



Marketing Matters

By Richard D. Czerniawski

ARE YOU DOING A SERVICE OR DISSERVICE TO YOUR BRAND?

We need to get beyond the product we sell and think about the experience we deliver. The whole product—tangible features and intangibles that add value to your offering—shape the customer experience.

Service is intangible. However, it has a tangible impact on the customer experience and, therefore, the ultimate satisfaction with your brand.

Imagine going to your favorite restaurant. You love the food they prepare and serve. However, if the service is flawed—the food comes out cold, the waiter gets the order wrong, s/he serves various members of your party at different times, the waiter interrupts the meal frequently, etc.— you will not have a pleasant experience.



The substandard service and resultant poor experience do a disservice to the brand. The disservice turns off potential customers from switching to your brand. It also spurs current customers to abandon your franchise and join another brand.

We're probably more attuned to second-rate service from others than we are to our own brand and business service deficiencies. Here are some of the unacceptable servicing I've received recently from brands and companies:

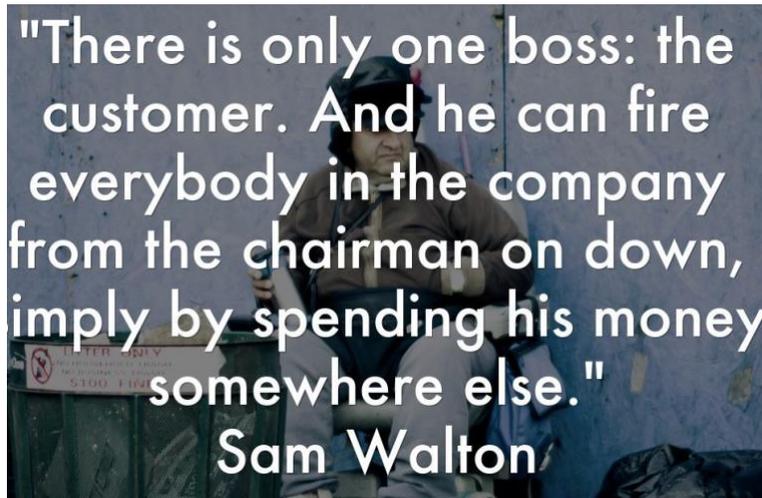
- The requirement to go through a lengthy telephone menu when calling into a business (“listen carefully as our menu has changed”)
- Being put on hold for an inordinate amount of time
- Needing to repeat my needs as one rep passes me along an interminable chain to another person
- Talking with company representatives who are not authorized to decide on my case
- Dealing with a company rep who is neither empathetic nor responsive to the customer
- Dealing with a company rep that doesn’t understand the product or service
- Dealing with a sycophantic company rep who unceasingly thanks me for my business when s/he has done little or nothing to address my needs
- Dealing with a rep who asks how else s/he can help me when they s/he hasn't resolved my issue
- Lack of brand availability, distribution, or access
- No or incomplete instructions for appropriate assembly, use, and/or maintenance
- Inability to provide me with a firm delivery or servicing date
- Inability to give me a date when they can provide me with a firm date for delivery or servicing
- Getting my order wrong
- A website that is cumbersome to navigate
- A website order that is dropped and requires me to reenter my data (for the third, fourth time)
- Packaging that requires a Ph.D., engineering degree, outsized mechanical acumen or muscle to open
- Keep me waiting, waiting, waiting
- Bombarding me with messages that provide no added value to my purchase
- Not providing appropriate support following purchasing of the brand
- Poor follow-up
- Missing or being late for appointments
- Over designed product
- Too damn complicated to operate
- Not providing a call-in number and forcing me to go online with my needs
- Behaving like they don't respect or need my business (perhaps, because they have too much business)
- Making me wait days for a response, among many others

On the other hand, I do appreciate good service. Among notable examples:

- Demonstrating that they genuinely value my business by doing what it takes to keep it
- Providing information and help to get the most out of what I've purchased
- Living up to a guarantee of customer satisfaction
- Being responsive
- Admitting to, and fixing, errors
- Volunteering compensation for any errors
- Treating customers as always being right, among many others, including the converse of those poor servicing practices identified above

When marketers don't properly service their brands, they do them an incredible disservice by disserving their potential and current customers.

Review your brand and business. Identify what you may be doing that is a disservice to it and fix it. Note where you are winning on servicing and determine what it would take to dial it up.



An important goal is to provide superior service versus your competitors to win and retain customers. Exceptional service makes for a better customer experience. A better customer experience helps create brand loyalty.

Take your marketing to the next level! Read my most recent book, AVOIDING CRITICAL MARKETING ERRORS: How to Go from Dumb to Smart Marketing. It will provide you with a list of common marketing errors to avoid and, importantly, effective ways to make your marketing matter more. Learn more here: <http://bdn-intl.com/avoiding-critical-marketing-errors>

Peace and best wishes,

Handwritten signature of Richard Czerniawski.



Richard D. Czerniawski

1812 Yates Avenue
Pensacola, Florida 32503

847-312-8822

richardcz@bdn-intl.com

richardcz@me.com

www.bdn-intl.com