

5 Characteristics of a Guest-Focused Culture

- a note from the Vision Room Curator: During August we are focusing on Guest Experience in churches, but some of the most powerful learning for churches can occur by reading about **customer service** - all you have to do is substitute the word "Guest" every time you see "customer." The following content was graciously supplied by Annette Franz, a customer experience expert. Enjoy!

Creating a Guest-Focused Culture

I was looking through some old files last week and came across something I had written a couple of years ago about how to go from collecting feedback to creating a service culture, especially among your frontline staff/teams.

My thoughts haven't really changed much since then. Let's get started!

Hire and build it.

- Hire the right people - those passionate about customer service.
- Like Zappos, ensure there's a good culture fit, too.
- Train and empower your staff.
- Encourage ownership of execution at the front lines; ask staff to define the ultimate customer service experience.
- Remove employees who don't want to adopt this new culture.
- Treat your employees the same way you want your customers treated.
- The customer experience is driven by the employee experience.

Announce and socialize it.

- Make sure everyone understands why this initiative is so important.
- Create a "greater cause" mentality in all staff segments.
- Create a language around your VOC initiative; brand it, give it a name, etc.

Live it.

- Mystery shop your own products and your service. You. Yes you!
- Call your customer service line to see what your customers are experiencing.
- Ask yourself, "Would I enjoy being, or want to be, a customer of this store?"

Operationalize it.

- Prioritize key metrics and communicate them to the team.
- Define your ultimate customer experience - taking into account feedback from your customers.
- Outline your "Truly Outstanding Customer Contact" and train the team on what that

means; better yet, let them define what it means so they own it (see above).

- Realize that this is not about quick fixes; it's a life-long endeavor (for you and your customers).
- It is a way of doing business, not just the initiative of the day.
- Talk about your scores in every team meeting.
- Be sure to share comments with your frontline and let the voice of the customer be heard!
- Communicate process changes internally and externally; close the loop with customers and let them know what process changes have been implemented as a result of their feedback; communicate changes to employees. Make "visible" your commitment to listening to and acting on feedback.
- Look for ways to be proactive in communicating with customers about new services, products, etc.
- Be proactive in correcting an issue; don't wait for a customer to call it to your attention.
- Provide great service to everyone: prospects, customers, employees, vendors/partners.
- Fix issues quickly, and close the loop with all involved.
- Create and maintain a best practices log/manual. Document it all: suggestions, solutions implemented, culture designed by employees, etc. Use it for coaching, training, onboarding, etc.
- Treat customers as you would like to be treated!
- Remember that customers are the reason that you are in business
- (Over-)deliver on the brand promise! Every day. Every interaction.

Celebrate it.

- Incentivize key staff for improvements.
- Celebrate great service! Reward, recognize, and share examples.
- Develop a competitive spirit! Have fun!
- Find ways to show your appreciation... for customers and for staff.

"A customer is the most important visitor on our premises. He is not dependent on us. We are dependent on him. He is not an interruption in our work. He is the purpose of it. He is not an outsider in our business. He is part of it. We are not doing him a favor by serving him. He is doing us a favor by giving us an opportunity to do so." - this quote has been attributed to Mahatma Gandhi

> [Read more from Annette Franz](#)
