

Howard Marketing Services eGuide



20 Service Excellence Management Practices

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Service Excellence Management Practices

Customer service and service quality are critical managerial topics today for many reasons:

- Service quality has strategic importance in the long-term success of any business or organization.
- Excellent customer service is a critical means by which any organization can differentiate itself from competitors or new entrants.
- Everyone in the organization, from senior management to back office support staff, needs to focus on providing good service (not just the frontline customer contact personnel).

Inherent in organizations that consistently provide excellent customer service is the notion of service statesmanship. The two key aspects of service statesmanship are:

- A service statesman is a role model, constantly reinforcing the organization's service message both internally and externally.
- A service statesman is **seen by staff** as constantly engaged and interested in improving the organization's service delivery.

Here are 20 Service Excellence Management Practices that any manager, from a department or business unit head to the CEO, can and should perform in their role as a service statesman:

1. You provide a clear, written statement to employees explaining what you mean by excellent service and how you will create it for your customers.
2. You make certain that employees can explain their specific role in delivering excellent customer service.
3. You make certain that employees know the day-to-day things they can do to deliver excellent customer service.
4. You communicate to employees on a regular basis about the importance of providing excellent service to customers.
5. You ask employees how customer service quality can be improved.
6. You have your managers set personal examples of good service to customers.
7. You set standards for response time to customer complaints or questions.

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8. You track the success of your efforts to improve service quality.
9. You share customers' evaluations of your service quality with all your employees, colleagues, and peers.
10. You reward employees who take a personal interest in resolving customer complaints and problems.
11. You recognize employees who provide superior service to customers.
12. You make it clear that delivering excellent service is important in career advancement decisions.
13. You keep employees up-to-date on customer expectations.
14. You encourage employees to go "above and beyond" regular job descriptions for the customer.
15. You encourage managers to work one-on-one with employees to meet service quality standards.
16. You train customer contact employees to deal with angry customers.
17. You provide employees with sufficient training on the company's products and services.
18. Your policies and procedures are designed to help deliver excellent service.
19. You define procedures for what to do when mistakes are made or errors are discovered.
20. You make it easy for customers to reach the right person or business unit when they have problems or questions.

Like most things in business, you have two choices when it comes to being a service statesman. You can either talk about it, or you can lead by example via the above 20 Service Excellence Management Practices.

The "talk only" approach, or what might be called the NATO (no action, talk only) approach is unlikely to produce the desired results.

When contemplating your role as a service statesman for your organization, picture the restaurant managers at McDonald's, who you frequently see with mop and bucket in hand cleaning up after a spill or when customers leave a messy table behind. You know McDonald's is serious about cleanliness when you see their restaurant managers actually doing the cleaning!

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The same should go for your business. Customers know exactly how serious your organization is about customer service by observing how your managers act and perform. Likewise, so do your staff.

You can reinforce your dedication and your message about excellent service delivery, to both your employees and customers, by putting into practice these 20 Service Excellence Management Practices.

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Howard Marketing Services

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Howard Marketing Services provides consultancy and project management services in the areas of Market Leadership, Product Development, Positioning Strategies, Customer Retention Strategies, New Product Launches, Event Management and Brand Management.

Steven Howard

Steven Howard is a Melbourne-based marketing consultant, author, conference speaker, and Non-Executive Director in both the profit and non-profit fields.

He is a recognized positioning specialist and marketing strategist, whose 30-year marketing and sales career in Asia and Australia has covered a wide variety of fields, ranging from consumer electronics to publishing and from a national airline to personal financial products.

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