

An employeesurveys.com Tip

Employee Satisfaction -- A Necessity for Keeping Customers Satisfied

Around the corner from my office is a U.S. Post Office. I dread going there. While I acknowledge obvious service improvements that the U.S. Postal Service has made in its customer service, these improvements have not been enough to overcome my frustration in dealing with a particular employee of this branch. She never smiles, she never looks me in the eye, and she never thanks me. I feel that she is irritated at me for walking into the office and causing her to do work. She looks very miserable and unhappy in her job. This would account for her behavior.

It is difficult to overestimate the impact of employee attitude on the satisfaction levels of customers. While positive employee attitudes and customer treatment may not be enough to fully overcome problems with product or internal systems, it can reduce the damage that product/systems problems cause to customer satisfaction. If your products and systems are performing to customer expectations, happy employees are in a position to dazzle customers by treating them with respect, courtesy, and warmth. Because of their monopoly, the Post Office can get away with mistreating customers. Most businesses cannot.

The link between employee attitude and customer satisfaction can be seen both in quantitative studies and in everyday life. Think back to the last sour experience you had with a person who was servicing you. How did this make you feel? You have found yourself making a mental note to not return to a place of business where you were mistreated. At the very least, you probably will not recommend an organization whose employees have mistreated you. On the other side of the coin, you probably can recall positive, memorable experiences you have had as a customer that caused you to return to a place of business and/or recommend it to a friend.

In the case of the problem Post Office employee referenced above, it is possible that she is beyond redemption, in which case she should be fired. In her particular case, I believe termination may be the appropriate course of action. However, it is possible that her attitude could be improved if her situation at work changed. Perhaps she is unhappy with the management style in her organization, her hours, her pay/benefits, her supervisor, or her career growth opportunities. If one of these items is at least partially responsible for her attitude, it is possible that she is not the only such affected employee. The only way to know for sure whether company policies or conditions are causing attitude problems is to ask the employees. One excellent way to do this is to administer an employee satisfaction survey, analyze the results, and make appropriate changes to policies and procedures. By repeating this process annually you can track your company's progress toward improving employee satisfaction.

In addition to improved customer treatment, other benefits of measuring and improving employee satisfaction include reduced turnover and associated reductions in training costs. Also, an improved reputation of your company as a place to work may make it easier to attract quality employees.

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