

Transcription - Getting Systems Right For Your Customer/Client

Welcome back, I'm Kim Baillie, she's Fulyana Orsborn and this is Inside Exec. This is another of our hot topic discussions that we had while waiting for a guest. This time we're looking at getting systems right from the customers point of view. This is a bugbear of mine, I know that you have heard me talk about this before, but if you have got a system that you use online, test it, please.

I have had a couple of unpleasant interactions with organisations very recently. One was a energy provider and I was looking at an anomaly in the billing address and the service address. It's for my 92 year old dad, he's not comfortable being on the phone talking to people about these things because he worries about getting the information right and whether he's hearing them properly, so I generally look after that sort of thing for him. I was sitting with him and I said, "Well, let's see if we can do it online." He had been previously on the phone and been told to send the documentation in an email and I said, "Well, I'll write the email and you can see what I'm writing and you can say if it's the right words or not. Then we'll send through the documentation that they asked for." Did all of that, send it through, the email got rejected.

I went through the process again thinking I had put too much information in, adjusted the form, the online form, sent it through again, still got rejected. So we went on to the website to see if we could fill out a form. We filled out a form on the website and got an error when we submitted the form. I'm used to filling out forms online, you would be the same, you get a little red box that says you've got to change the value that's in this box because it's not right. Well, we got a message that said, "entry for this should be primary." That means nothing to me, even though I know a bit about what should be on a form and what the values are behind the forms. There was no box highlighted so I didn't know where the error was occurring. Cleared it all, tried it again, got the same error. The only option for him was to ring and because he'd already done that, he didn't want to ring again, didn't want to waste his time ringing again and so we're left with a system that forces you to do things online but it doesn't work.

I've had other examples recently where it's been the same thing, where obviously the system itself hasn't been tested. They give you an email address, it is the general inquiries email address and no one monitors it, so no one answers it. I've talked about that previously, I had it with a very large organisation, no one was monitoring the email that was coming in, so they didn't really want the feedback, that's my feeling, so I didn't bother dealing with them anymore.

The other example I have is one that's more in a business sense. For one of my other websites I use a commercial product to sell things on the website and I got an email earlier in the week that said that the account had been closed because they couldn't verify the business. I wrote back and said well I've been using it for two years, why has it taken you this long to not be able to verify the business? It is the platform for people to buy things off this website so I need it resolved. The response to that was that they asked me to send them a screenshot of the email that I got from them, which I did and 24 hours later I still have had no response. It's not a website that creates a whole lot of income, but it's still an income generating website and I wouldn't want to be without it but I can't do it unless I take off that

platform and use something else and is that what they want me to do, not use their product anymore?

That lack of follow through, the lack of understanding of what it's like at the other end of their system, once again something that we've talked about before, is that customers don't have to know how your system works. They don't care how your system works basically, they just need it to work and they need it to work for them. It's just a reminder to people, I guess, because we were talking about it the other day, is to think about it if you're using systems, test them as though you were the user, don't test them in their test mode while they're being developed, go out, go off to a different computer, try on your phone and just see whether it's actually mobile-friendly as well. Use it that way and see what the result is, see where the glitches are, see what the problems are and then go back and make sure you get it right for you as well as the best customer experience possible.

A lot of you listening to what Kim just said would say, of course you test the system, of course, who wouldn't, all of the stuff we've done for years. I think the message here is if we are doing it, we're not doing it right because the customer experience shows otherwise. In every interaction the customer has with us, we have to cater for all customers and make sure they are able to use our system with ease, it's got to be common sense and usable for everyone. Sometimes that can be a tall order of course, because different abilities of the customer. But in the sense of that we're doing more and more online and we're not interacting as much with customers, it is important that we make it flawless, it is important that we listen to what are these obstacles and using total quality and continuous improvement, review the system.

We at the stage where we have enormous amount of technology available to us. Fantastic. So absolutely we should be using that to make it happen. Instead of talking about going through the system and making sure it's working, I would want to spend more time on analysis of the data of customer interaction. Go deep into it and find out what is working and what's not working. The working parts continue to do and enhance and communicate how well the customers are receiving that part of the process. With the others, found out exactly what's not working and improve it. What will happen there if that's applied continuously? It will make sure you're ahead of the game with other competitors because at the end of the day what happens is nobody digs deep as much as you did and then you'll come up with great ideas.

Don't forget you've got a team and the team is very bright people working in an organisation who are very, very keen to come up with new ideas and see them turn into reality. So yes, it's basic but it needs to be done. It's not being done in all cases and because of that we need to do two things, fix what's not right and communicate what we're really happy about so people know what we want as a customer and the continuous feedback to be taken seriously and look deep into it with the view to make it even better.

So there you had our quick thoughts on getting systems right. I am very impressed with Fulyana's suggestions on what you should be looking at in terms of your organisation and I do hope that you will take those ideas on board. For now, I'm Kim Baillie, she's Fulyana Orsborn and this is Inside Exec.