

## **Are you obsessed with customer service?**

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Mention the words "customer focus" to many organisations and, more often than not, they describe in great detail the customer service initiatives they have introduced to demonstrate a care and commitment to their customers. Initiatives such as extended help desk hours, mail shots detailing promotions and dedicated complaints departments are commonplace but although a useful starting point, they do not capture the essence of being customer focused. In order to keep your customers today, you can't be content just to satisfy them, you have to live and breathe the customer experience otherwise a good initiative will never work.

The time has come for organisations to review how they view customer service and how the processes that enable customer focussed delivery need to be improved. Driving this transformation are the needs of the customers as the balance of power now lies with them. The shift in thinking required to create new products and services that follow the customer's lead is a challenge but it is also the primary basis of competitive advantage.

The ICD Partnership believes that companies have to change their core-operating model and essentially their corporate culture to ensure that their HR frameworks and culture is totally customer orientated. In order to go the extra mile that keeps your customers happy, you have to have the correct competencies and manage the right behaviours at each level in the organisation. While most companies with robust HR frameworks will have identified customer competencies, behaviours and performance indicators, most that we work with have not really specified those that will sustain customer focus. It may be that all you require to do is to adapt your own HR framework.

We believe that any solution has to be sustainable and by developing your HR framework to ensure the customer is ingrained in the culture and your in house training capability ensures that you have the means to manage staff to ensure that the right skills, roles, attitudes and behaviours are in place for the future. The ICD 'Customer Competence and Behavioural Model' is a means of ensuring delivery processes are tailored exactly to the customer needs.

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