

## Don't underestimate afterglow

Written by Jannie Koegelenberg  
Tuesday, 05 August 2014 00:00

---



Have you been able to successfully court your customers and develop strong relationships? There's only one way to find out ...

We have now come to the moment of truth, namely, the overall evaluation of the customer's (conscious or subconscious) experience.

Customers, who evaluate their experience in a positive light, are more likely to return to your business in the future and, more importantly, will refer the sales person, technician or the business to friends and acquaintances.

The key here is to ensure that the date night was the most positive experience your customer has had with regard to the product or service you, or the business, delivered.

It is important to take note of a study by Technical Assistance Research Programs (TARP), regarding the value attached to effective customer service, both good and bad.

On average, 50 percent of unhappy customers will never advise the company that this is the case. Of the 50 percent who do complain, only five percent will tell management. The remaining 45 percent will only complain to a frontline employee who will, invariably, do little about the complaint.

Management is thus lulled into believing all is well in the organisation ...

Between 54 and 70 percent of customers who complain will do business with the company again, providing that their complaint is resolved to their satisfaction. If this is not the case, only

## Don't underestimate afterglow

Written by Jannie Koegelenberg  
Tuesday, 05 August 2014 00:00

---

19 to 46 percent will do business with the organisation again.

Of the customers who do not advise the company of dissatisfaction, only 10 to 37 percent will return to do business again.

A few facts about customer service:

- It costs six times more to attract a new customer than to retain the current customer.
- Generally, the lowest-paid employee is designated to deal with customers.
- Quality-based companies pick up market share at three times the rate of their competitors.

Focusing on long-term relationship management, it is important to remember that this is a dynamic cycle and each new interaction with your customer goes through the same cycle. As the relationship develops with a customer over the long term, less emphasis is perhaps placed on courting and the transfer of trust. This is because the customer knows and trusts you as a result of previous interactions.

Familiarity and mediocrity are evils that lead to complacency, which will start diminishing the afterglow, giving the customer the opportunity to investigate your competitors. You may feel that you, or your company, are delivering a service in line with expectations, however, never stop courting your customer.

Some pointers that may be perceived by customers as complacent service:

- Changing pricing without advising customers;

## Don't underestimate afterglow

Written by Jannie Koegelenberg  
Tuesday, 05 August 2014 00:00

---

- Lack of explanation when new products or new documentation are introduced, making the assumption that the customer will merely adapt;
- Sending documentation without prior verbal contact;
- Assuming that, due to the length of the relationship, deadlines need not be adhered to and deliverables can be submitted late;
- If the personal touch is important to the customer, forgetting birthdays or other important dates;
- Submitting sub-standard work;
- No longer asking your customers for their perspective in matters that affect them;
- Being unavailable and not returning phone calls;
- Offering special concessions to new customers and not rewarding existing ones.

Good luck with dating your customers!

---

## **Don't underestimate afterglow**

Written by Jannie Koegelenberg  
Tuesday, 05 August 2014 00:00

---

Jannie Koegelenberg is passionate about promoting positive customer experiences. He runs the EDGE Training Consultancy, a leading provider of world-class training and development programmes that meaningfully change and impact on people's lives. He has a 38-year track record in the motor industry, having worked at Mercedes-Benz distributor United Cars and Diesel Distributors, Ford Motor Company SA and Toyota SA Marketing.