# SOLVERMINDS
## SOLUTIONS AND TECHNOLOGIES

# Customer Experience

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# 1. What is Customer Experience all about?

Customer Experience is the on-going "feeling" or perception both conscious and sub-conscious, a customer has when interacting with a provider of goods and service. …researchgate.com. This "feeling" or perception affects customer behavior and drives customer loyalty. In shipping it starts at the initial contact between a shipper / consignee and the shipping line or its agent and exists throughout the duration of the "relationship" between the customer and the service provider. At any point in the "relationship" a bad Customer Experience has the ability to alienate a customer to the extent that they may break off the relationship and take their business elsewhere.

On the other hand a positive Customer Experience can result in a customer staying loyal to the provider despite the goods and/or services not necessarily being the "best in class" or least expensive. Customers will also expect their providers to have the knowledge and understanding of their requirements and to demonstrate their ability to execute and fulfill the customers' requirements.

*Customers will not be won on the price page or by product features, but rather on the entirety of your customer's experience."* …..www.nanorep.com

# 2. Why is Customer Experience Different now and How it Was?

The biggest change in what Customer Experience is driven by the advent and adoption of social media on a global basis. Before the days of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc., many goods and service providers expected their customers to just accept what they were offered. Their attitude was, almost a "don't care" approach because there was very little a customer could do only less interaction with the provider. That was THEN….! Today's customers are well-informed, conscious of the alternative choices available to them, empowered and have higher expectations than ever.

Not only do they expect their inquiries, requirements or needs to be handled with speed and accuracy, but if they receive unsatisfactory service, they can (and will) share their bad experience and make recommendations regarding alternatives they perceive to be "better" in pictorial detail in social forums like Facebook and Twitter.

Shippers and Consignees, making use of shipping services now will evaluate the service on a total END-TO-END service basis. They will expect (and demand) a consistent service and experience every time. If they sense that's lacking they will revert to social media as discussed above and/or find alternative providers.

Shipping lines now need to really draw on their systems integration capabilities in order to drive the needs of the shippers and consignees, who want access in real-time to almost everything. Without an integrated system supporting them a line would really find it difficult to be able to meet the insatiable demands for access to information.

Be aware that perception is very easily influenced negatively, directly impacting the shippers experience with the Liner Company and its services. Building great customer experience takes dedication and clear attention to detail in each and every shipment with customer advocacy and loyalty. Achieving this level of satisfaction requires a dedicated team supported by good access to accurate information so as to deal with problems in service or information as quickly as possible.

# 3. What Must I be Aware of?

So, while the basics of providing goods and/or services at fair value to their customers may be exactly the same for different providers, what will differentiate them, when all else is equal, is the Customer Experience they deliver in addition to the goods and/or services.

**VISIBILITY** – Shippers and Consignees as well as their "agents" want better visibility and access to accurate information. With the right system to support them and having access to tools and technologies that make real-time information available to the relevant parties at the right time. Accuracy and timing of the data is absolutely essential for shippers and consignees to be able to plan their costs and forward schedules accordingly.
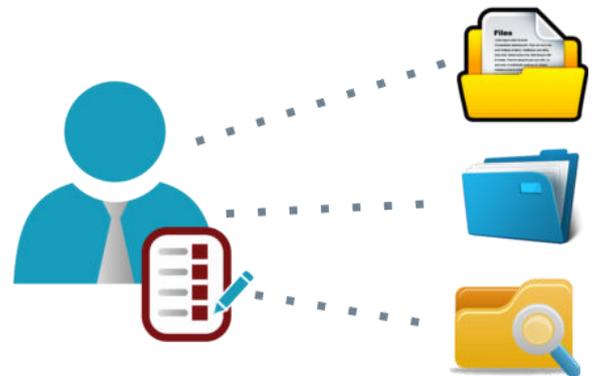
**COMMUNICATION** - Knowing exactly where each container (and increasingly each customer's consignment) is, and communicating this to the customer via the web and mobile apps could reduce a significant number of unnecessary box moves / charges, lower the number of calls from unsatisfied customers and make turnarounds happen more quickly—and thereby ultimately lowering costs for the shippers / consignees and improving Customer Experience.

# 4. Why is Customer Engagement Important?

Customer Experience is fast becoming the biggest differentiator in a world where service providers have very little else to differentiate themselves with. Some of the main reasons why Customer Experience should matter to are listed below;

- Customer Experience can improve customer satisfaction
- Positive Customer Experience can result in customers coming back repeatedly, as long as the Customer Experience remains positive they will tend to be loyal
- A Positive Customer Experience also often results in a customer referring others in their sphere of influence to the service provider
- A positive Customer Experience can help reduce the customer churn rate (number of customers who take their business elsewhere)

- Customer Experience can improve a service providers competeness which could lead to an advantage over competitors
- Customer Experience can have a very positive influence over a service provider's profitability, sales volumes and revenue numbers.
- A positive Customer Experience will result in establishing a good relationship between the customer and service provider

# 5. What to Look for in a Good Liner

Good Customer Experience systems will provide among other things:

- **Support for mobile devices** – Not just a website to be browsed on a phone or tablet, but proper tailor made mobile applications that are not just screen scrapes on to a small screen that is not fit for purpose.
- **Facilities for live chat** - Giving the customer the opportunity to chat on-line to a service provider agent thus enhancing the problem solving or enquiring shippers information needs.
- **Self-service management** - Providing knowledge based repository, where customers will have access to resolutions to relevant frequently asked questions.
- **Multi-channel support** – Allowing customers the freedom of choice as to how they would like to interact with the service provider. Important however is to ensure that the customer experience is consistent across all the different channels the service provider has chosen to embrace.

# 6. Best Practice to Achieve Better Customer Experience?

Essential steps to implementing a successful Customer Experience programme:

**Establishing a sound Base of Knowledge** – A solid knowledge base that incorporates easily accessible, institutional and domain knowledge, accumulated during recurring interactions with customers, arranged in such a way that it is focussed on the customers' needs and not based on internal priorities of the line or its agents.

**Omni-channel Customer Facilitation** – Creating facilities for customers to interact with the service provider via multiple channels such as Web, Mobile, Interactive Voice services. The key is to provide these facilities in such a way that the customer perceives them as easy to use and the preferred way of interacting not a last resort. Shippers may well start in one channel and then move to a different channel with the same query and or service requirement. It must be easy for a customer to escalate an item and move easily and quickly from one channel to another and get satisfactory resolutions as fast as possible.

**Access to the right information** - Equipping Service Providers Front-line Employees – It is essential that the people customers are going to interact with are provided with the tools, service provider knowledge and customer knowledge to ensure the customers enquiries are quickly and completely satisfied. Providing the frontline employee with real time information and customer context is essential. This means all recent and relevant customer interactions with the Service Provider must be easily and quickly available to the frontline employee so that their interaction with the customer is contextually relevant to the customer. Using an integrated systems approach this is achievable if not essential to drive up customer Experiences.

**Customer feedback** – Gathering customer insights during the customer interaction process can greatly enhance the Customer Experience. Making the Customer feel they are being listened to have a significant positive impact. Any problems listed by the customer should be addressed immediately and suggestions should be taken seriously. Any action taken based on the customer feedback must be communicated with the customer as soon as possible.

**Social media monitoring** – the capability to have access to tools and services that enable one to browse (trawl) social media and pick up on relevant discussions relating to the service provider's business allowing the service provider to proactively address negative social media content or exploit positive social media content.