

Customer service redefined

“How can I reinvent myself, or my company to better serve and provide for your changing needs?”

By Bob 'Idea Man' Hooey

Is there some service or other product I should be providing, that would make your experience easier, more rewarding or user friendly? Just one of the questions you need to ask yourself and your customers on a frequent basis. Remember, if you aren't asking these questions -- your competitors are!

Here are a few tools to use to help you keep and expand your market edge. Tools to keep your customers happy and coming back for more.

- ◆ **Customer surveys.** Checking in on a regular basis to ask a few questions will work wonders. Take a look at the survey page for some tips to make this more effective.
- ◆ **Telephone polls.** Sometimes a quick phone call to selected customers will be enough to keep you informed and current as to how well you are doing. How about actually calling a month or so after you've delivered your service or product to see how it is going and how the customers are enjoying it. You can bet, not too many businesses are doing this!
- ◆ **Service calls.** These are often a neglected form of information as to the true satisfaction of your customers and the serviceability of your products. Make your service team part of your information gathering team and apply what you learn to make your business better.
- ◆ **Focus groups.** Take some time and invite a few of your best customers to sit down and discuss honestly what you offer and what you deliver. Put your ego on hold and listen carefully as they give you a very valuable gift -- a gift that will help you succeed.
- ◆ **Product sampling.** What a great way to find out what your customers want and what you can provide professionally and profitably. This allows you to test market and adjust before you go full tilt into a new product or service roll out.
- ◆ **Web site feedback.** This is emerging as a great way to allow your clients to tell you how you are doing, what they like, what they don't like and what they would like. It's a great way to share suggestions, changes and updates with your customers at their convenience. And often they will share ideas that will solve problems for each other as well. Visit ours at: www.ideaman.net
- ◆ **Others.** There is a multitude of great ideas. Invest in your business' future by asking questions, and then acting on the responses your customers give you. This might just be the competitive edge you need as we enter the 21st Century.

If you come up with a winner, I'd appreciate hearing about it and will include it, with credits, in a future update. bob@ideaman.net

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