

Customer needs and expectations

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Here at Travel Weekly one of the representatives at Virgin Atlantic have honoured us by writing an article about 'A day as a representative' Lets see what Kaye Goodwin from Virgin Atlantic has to say! In a day of a representative at Virgin Atlantic I have to look at how these needs are identified and I must cover: Customer requests in writing Customer requests to representatives of organisations verbally (face to face or telephone) Recognition of unstated needs Customer type one: Families

If a family was too put in a request in writing, because they may have young children, they could possibly write their requests to me in an email because of convenience and time. For example: a mother and father of two young children will not have time to come into the travel agents to sit down and tell me what type of holiday they would like. Therefore by sending me an email with the requests they would like, it would save a lot of time, and I can look up all of the information for them and respond back to them via email.

Customer type two: Couples If a young couple would like to go on a short break or a holiday, they would come into the travel agent and sit down with me too tell me where they would like to go and what type of holiday they would like. For example: a young couple from Central London would like to book a holiday for early December. They come into the travel agent and sit down with me and tell me what type of holiday they would like. After looking up and discussing different holidays, they would make a decision and hopefully book the holiday.

If they would like more time to think about it, I would give them a few brochures to take home with them while they thought about it. Customer type two: Elderly couple An elderly couple are most likely to come into the

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travel agents and sit down with me to discuss the holiday they would like to go on. After discussing a few holidays, I would recommend a holiday. E. g. I would say ' there is a lovely villa in Spain that is on offer at the moment that is about half a mile away from the beach. If one of the couples were to say that they have been to Spain before and it was too hot, or that their partner was not able to walk very far, that would be known as a recognition of unstated needs, meaning that they would like to go to a destination that is at a cooler climate or they would like to stay in accommodation closer to the beach. Customer type four: Disabled People that have a disability can communicate with me in any way, i. e. face to face, via email or on the telephone.

If a customer was to call me and ask for information on different holidays but said that they were disabled, I would realise that this would mean they would be a unstated need, and they would need special assistance. For example if a lady who wanted to book a holiday and was blind or visually impaired, I would know that they would need maps or signs to be put up in Brail and raised floors so they know when they are too close to a swimming pool. Task 2b - explain how travel and recognition of their needs.

Tourism organisations meet and exceed customer expectations using examples from companies in the travel and tourism industry that you have researched. When our company (VA) recognise customer needs, the customers can be face for face with one of our representatives, have an online chat with one of our representatives or write their requests too us. We meet customer needs by making sure that all of the flights operate on time, airline staff are always available for assistance and always make sure that

customers are kept up to date with important information such as flight times, flight delays and check in times.

The way that we meet these needs are by keeping staff updated with information, regular announcements for customers at the airports and making sure that landings/take off are planned properly to avoid delays if possible. Task 2c - analyse how travel and tourism organisations meet and exceed the customer needs and expectations through the recognition of their needs. You should expand the links between needs, identification of needs and being able to meet and exceed customers expectations. Here at Virgin Atlantic, we identify and meet customer needs through customer survey questionnaires/ comment cards and customer forums/focus groups.

When the survey questionnaires or comment cards have been read by a member for our staff, usually the customer service manager, they then analyse all of the comments to find areas of improvement in order to meet customer needs. For example, if a number of customers have complained about staff not knowing obvious information i. e. directions around the airport, prices of products or check in times, that would tell us that our staff are unequipped to help our customers. From this, we will then need to realise and work our a way to get more information into our staff in order to meet the needs of our customers more efficiently.

This can be done in many ways, however the most ideal one for this situation would be to hold regular morning/afternoon meetings to keep staff updated with information. When we exceed customer expectations, we like to go that extra mile by giving out customers more in-depth information. An example of this would be when a customer asks simply the time of their flight, we like to

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make sure that our staff will fully inform our customers of their flight time, boarding time, gate number and if there will be any delays.

At the Maritime Museum (NMM) they meet and exceed customers expectations by making sure that the company works like clock work. All of the staff are given a two day induction and then on-going training programmes are offered to all staff. All staff are fully trained and new members of staff are teamed up with an experienced team member to meet all of the customers needs. At NMM there are customer comment cards, customer surveys and focus groups to ensure that the organization knows what their customers want and if there are any complaints being made.

For an example if the museum had a number of complaints about staff not having enough product knowledge/information i. e. background history of the area they were working in, that would tell the managers/owners that their staff are unequipped to help their customers. From this information, they work their way to getting more knowledge into their staff. This can be done in so many ways but the most effective way would be to give the staff more training and hold meetings regularly to make sure that they have acceptable knowledge to be working with the customers.