

Benefits of delighting customers



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Why is it important for marketers to ‘delight’ their customers? Use examples from your experience as a consumer to support your answer.

The emergence of customer-focused marketing and the digital revolution have given customers a dominant position in contemporary market (Kumar et al, 2006). Many companies consequently aim to provide superior customer experiences and to delight their customers (Arnold et al, 2005). This essay identifies two significant changes which have resulted in customer delight becoming indispensable in the marketing era. It then discusses the impacts of the need to delight customers by defining the term, and describing the benefits of delighting customers and the consequences of failing to satisfy them.

The concept of delighting customers has become a crucial issue in contemporary marketing due to two significant changes, which have transformed the capabilities of both companies and consumers. The first of these changes has been the transformation of the marketing paradigm from a mass-production orientation to a customer-focused one. As a result, the marketplace becomes more competitive, with customers enjoying a wider range of choices to fulfil their requirements (Kumar et al, 2006). The second change involves the rapid development of technology. The spread of the Internet has enabled companies to provide consumers with information and to conduct transactions with them online. It has also empowered consumers to evaluate comparable offers by employing powerful search engines and to switch to competitors easily (ibid, p. 10 – 11). These two changes have increased customers’ bargaining power and reshaped their purchasing behaviours. It is therefore especially essential for marketers to satisfy their customers in order to retain them and thereby outperform their competitors.

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Customer delight has had a considerable impact on business. It is the outcome of delivering significantly extra or unanticipated value which exceeds customer's expectations. Merely satisfied customers can defect to similar competitors easily if only minimally acceptable satisfaction is provided (Kotler and Keller, 2006). In other words, delighted customers are more likely to remain loyal longer, and frequently returning as repeat business. Such customers may also refer the business favourably to others, providing it with the enormous benefits of positive word-of-mouth advertising (Mascarenhas et al, 2004). An example from my own experiences is that I recently ate a Chinese restaurant in Southampton where provided the best tasted Dim-Sum I have never had in my life. I then began to go there frequently and even took some friends there to dine together. This illustrates how delighting customers benefits companies by providing sustainable income and free advertising. In contrast, it is possible for customers who have had an unpleasant experience with a business to complaint about it to their friends or to post their dissatisfaction to online communities. Such negative publicity can damage a company's reputation considerably by discouraging other potential customers to purchase from the company, thereby having a negative impact on sales. Thus, marketers clearly need to identify the determinants of customer-perceived value, and use it to maximize the value their offers deliver in order to gain the benefits of customer delight.

To conclude, marketers need to satisfy their customers by providing superior values in today's competitive market, thus delighting them. This should lead to repeated business and referrals of new customers.