

Communication
becomes very
important to ensure
that



Communication with customers Communication forms an important part of every organization.

It forms the backbone of various activities that take place in the organization.

For any business to run efficiently it is important that they are able to communicate with their customers in a transparent manner (Kodish 2015).

Customers are the final consumers of the business' products or services.

Therefore it becomes very important to ensure that the organization is frequently touching base with its customers. This also helps the organization stay aware about the changing needs and demands of customers.

The importance of effective communication is as below: Understanding of customer needs Communicating with customers allows various organizations to gauge the changing needs and demands of their consumers. This helps the firm to mold their offerings as per the requirements of their customers. This in turn will lead to increased customer satisfaction and number of repeat purchases.

Customer service Once the product or service has been delivered to the customer, it is extremely important to provide for an after sale service. This after sale service helps the organizations in building a long term relationship with their consumers and this is only possible through effective communication. Communication with customers also helps the firm in addressing grievances of customers as and when they arise.

Feedback Feedback is highly important for any business to ensure that there is consistent improvement. Feedback is only possible through transparent communication between the customers and the organization. Communication

with customers enables them to provide a genuine and transparent feedback. This in turn makes sure that the brand's offerings are consistently improved and molded leading to increased customer satisfaction. Introduction of new products Every time a brand wishes to launch a new product, the product must be effectively marketed and communicated to customers to initiate purchase.

The role of effective communication is very vital in ensuring that people are aware of the new product and are interested in buying it.

Brand positioning Brand positioning refers to the image of the organization that holds in the minds of the consumers (Nalca, Boyaci & Ray 2017).

Effective communication with customers helps the companies in setting the right brand positioning for themselves. Brand positioning plays a vital role in the success of any business. An effective brand positioning will attract the right customer segment and help the firm in enhancing their customer base.

Channels of communication with customers There are various channels through which an organization can communicate with its consumers. The presence of a larger number of communication channels leads to effective communication and helps in building a strong connection between the organization and its customers. These channels of communication are as below: **Product or service marketing** The basic style of communicating with customers is through acts of marketing.

This is a one way communication and allows the organization to inform the customers about any new or existing offering by the brand. These advertisements also build an image in the minds of the consumers which is

known as brand positioning. Social media Every organization has marked its presence on social media.

Social listening skills are very important while communicating with customers. Social listening refers to the organization being widely aware of what is being talked about the brand on social media channels like Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram etc. Social media is not a tool to communicate with a large group of customers through a single platform (Tuten & Solomon 2017). For effective communication, organizations must respond to customers on social media and address their grievances as well.

Service center Most organizations have physical service centers spread across different areas. These service centers are an effective way to communicate with the existing customers of the brand and address their issues in real time. Effectiveness of the service center leads to increased customer satisfaction (Wilson, Zeithaml, Bitner & Gremler 2016).

Call center Every company has a call center or a help line where the customers can call the organization and reach out to their customer service team. The idea is to help the customers and address their issue by speaking to them on the phone. Communication in these call centers largely determines the efficiency of the brand and its service. Issues with communicating to customers Unfortunately, if the communication with customers is either missing or is ineffective then it is expected adversely impact the company's performance as well as its brand positioning in the industry. Customers are approached by organization and vice versa through various channels like social media, customer service centers, telephonic customer care and face to

face communication with customers (Lemon & Verhoef 2016). All these channels cater to customers in a different manner.

Social media allows the company to communicate with a large number of customers under a single platform (Hollensen & Raman 2014). However, it makes it difficult for the company to respond to all the customers individually. Face to face communication with customers through service centers are highly effective but very few customers take the pain of approaching the customer center. There are various issues that a company may face while communicating with their customers. These issues are as below: Cultural clashes There are various multinational firms who have spread their business across different geographies of the world. Therefore it is difficult for them to gauge complete understanding of the local culture. This culture includes local ethics, language or religious sentiments of people. Lack of information about the same may create a cultural clash and the organization may then find it difficult to communicate with customers.

Lack of transparency Often, communication with customers is not transparent. The number of customers is large and not all of them directly communicate with the organization. Therefore, this leads to spreading of numerous rumors which may or may not be true. A lot of misinformation travels through customers which adversely impacts the brand's reputation in the minds of its consumers (Coombs 2014). Therefore it is recommended that companies must remain transparent to their customers by making necessary announcements on public platforms and addressing customer grievances as and when they arise.

Unavailability Organization being asingle entity can be reached out by customers through various differentchannels of communication. On the other hand, it is impossible for a largeorganization to touch base with all their customers individually. Unavailability of customers makes it difficult to communicate with customers. Many organization float surveys to gain a deeper insight about consumer needsand demands. However, if the customers are not available for such researchesthen it is difficult for the organization to understand consumer needs anddemands. Lack ofinformation or misinformationA major issueregarding an organization's communications with its customers is the inabilityof the organization to communicate effectively leading to consumers beinguninformed or misinformed. This breeds into consumer's perception and makes itdifficult for organizations to ensure effective positioning.

Misinformation orwrong information about the company is also a major issue faced whilecommunicating with customers (Austin & Pinkleton 2015). Too muchinformationAnother issue thatmay arise while communicating with customers is disclosing too much informationor unnecessary information that the customer does not require. This willadversely impact customer relationships and may make the organizationvulnerable due to excessive sharing of information (Sharma & Crossler 2014). Therefore, it is recommended that organizations must not give away too muchinformation about the internal details of the business like their costing orany internal politics.

ConclusionIt has beenestablished that communication with customers plays a vital role in the successof any business (Nave 2014). Organizations must
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ensure that they communicate with their customers in a transparent manner and the chains of customer communication might be well established in the business process. While communicating with customers, organizations must be aware, active and highly responsive to make the communication process effective. There are various channels to communication and organizations must leverage on all of them to ensure a better connect with their customers. Business organizations must be careful while communicating with their customers so as to ensure that their local culture is respected and correct information is revealed to them. Transparency in communication leads to enhanced trust within the organization and its customers. This is why it forms a very important part of customer satisfaction. Communication problems must be immediately addressed to ensure a smooth flow of communication with customers throughout the business lifecycle.

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