

January 2007

Think as a Customer

- ◆ Key to becoming a partner.

Past Issues

Employee Turnover

- ◆ Impacting your effectiveness.

Sales Performance

- ◆ An equal measure of expectation and accountability.

Making the Correct Decision

- ◆ The customer is served; the company is not put at risk.

Performance Management

- ◆ Expectations and needs, the cornerstone to significant growth.

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I send this letter out to all my clients as a reminder to address the basic questions and issues on a regular basis. If you'd like more information about this topic, or would like to receive this letter on a regular basis, contact me at:

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Think Like Your Customer

“Think like your customer, and that attitude will be transmitted to the people who work with you.” states Richard Whiteley, author of The Customer Driven Company; Moving from Talk to Action – *Perseus Books 1991*. Thinking like your customer is a key component critical in developing lasting customer partnerships.

To think like your customer you have to go beyond your perspective of the products' value, its niche in the market, the primary needs that are satisfied, how the products are utilized, and by whom. A corporation that thinks like their customer has an advantage over their competitors.

Where to start:

Train your sales staff to uncover opportunities to learn more about the important issues from the customer's perspective.

- ◆ Listen first to what the customer is saying
- ◆ Repeat their statements for further clarification
- ◆ When necessary empathize with their dilemma
- ◆ Ask open-ended questions to seek additional insight

Be aware:

The tendency to react without listening first is especially common when a customer is expressing displeasure. Opportunities abound when a customer complains. The confrontation provides:

- ◆ The chance to gain insight into the performance of your organization
- ◆ An opportunity for improvement
- ◆ To experience a specific instance from your customer's viewpoint

Why:

It is proactive to become skilled at thinking as a customer does. Seek opportunities to experience your products or services from your customer's perspective. Doing so will improve your ability to think as a customer. It will increase an awareness of your customer's desires; improve your propensity to be proactive, consequentially assisting your customer toward further success.

Summary:

The more you think like your customer, the more difficult it is for your competitors to infiltrate your relationship. You develop a partnership, created through a genuine understanding of what is important to your customer; you are providing solutions that result in growth for both organizations. Your actions, based on trust, construct a lasting relationship.

PS: For an overview of our services, please look at our enhanced website www.flinnassociates.com