

# The Great customer service debate

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Mumbai

## The great customer service debate – 29 January 2010, Mumbai

The economic challenge is staring us in the face. It is now, more than ever that organizations should be working harder to retain customers. Because customers are less forgiving of a mediocre or poor service experience. Don't forget - when it comes to service, the vast majority will not complain and most will go elsewhere. Simply because they are spoiled for choice. They will want to deal with organizations that demonstrate that they want and appreciate their business.

These challenges are driving changes in strategy that will affect business in more ways than one. And while there are seemingly innumerable strategies offered to counter this situation, nothing drives the point home hard enough; nothing examines the applicability of these strategies in daily life; and nothing examines multiple aspects of a strategy.

At Custommerce India Chapter 6, we aim to do exactly that - examine strategies that will help organizations not only weather the economic challenge, but also pick up strategies that will help differentiate them from competition.

Presenting the 'great customer service debate'!

The debate looks at the following strategies / themes, present views in favor of and against each dimension and will finally arrive at a strategy and an industry fit.

### Theme 1

*Which drives desired customer experience better -*

*Value based strategy or metric driven strategy*

Most practitioners who promise service nirvana tend to define service as a set of activities the enterprise will do which will result in a set of numbers; which in turn will establish to the enterprise and to themselves that the job has been well done. While the numbers may be valid in isolation, if you look at the big picture of customer service – you may realize that all is not well. The customer may actually not be expecting a metric from you. Instead, they may be expecting a value when you service them.

Point is – where do you apply metrics and where do you apply value? Should you apply a metric of say 'average handle time' when your most loyal customer is upset with you? Consequently, do you apply the metric of minimum number of calls handled per day per agent? Do you say "I will not service this customer because his / her average revenue for the organization is less?"

Where do you draw the line and how do you decide what should be applied where?

## Theme 2

*Technology is an enabler for desired customer experience – Yes / No*

One has read extensively on why customers are becoming disloyal. We believe this is happening simply because they feel increasingly distanced from their vendor organizations – technology is a key factor in creating this distance. However, it may not be the technology **per se** that is to blame here. It could be the **improper design** in the deployment of that technology that is to blame. Technology can be a wonderful tool to **enhance** customer experience. However – proper care has to be taken in strategizing and **designing** that deployment in alignment with company goals.

### How it will work

The overarching theme for the debate is customer centricity (simply stated – how customer friendly are businesses today). Each sub theme is then linked to the main theme and keynote speakers will present their views on the sub themes in 15 – 20 minutes.

Post this, the anchor takes over, reiterates what was tabled, puts forward his / her views on the subject, and throws the floor open for audience participation.

At the end of the session, the anchor summarizes views and puts on the table the most ‘voiced out’ view.