

“GET REAL. AUSTRALIAN SERVICE STINKS”

Confronting. Effronting. Offensive. Challenging. Honest. Heartfelt.

All of the above are themselves real. The word from consumers is that, in general, present Australian customer service standards fall well short of expectations and needs. Negative experiences are widespread, deep and repetitive.

Opportunities for revenues and relationships are lost. So too are sources of referrals, repeat business and advocacy.

The recognition and realities of concerns appear to be distant from those of business owners, managers and team-members. Chasms between the two broad perceptual bases represent a pitfall for brand management. Reputations and images are being crushed. For a majority of customers, clients and consumers the most common, recurring deficiencies are the lack of human service providers who can and will provide answers, solutions and satisfaction – now and locally.

A lack of dealing with experienced, qualified people, who have the authority and drive to resolve issues without referrals to others, is another concern and frustration.

Automated responses via technology, online, and AI (artificial intelligence) are judged to be impersonal, insensitive filters which do not engender sentiments of reassurance, understanding, care and value.

Absences, continuity and lack of consistency, in follow-up and follow-through once the deal has been concluded, possession taken and use made of products, services and applications are registered by, and frowned upon by customers.

WHAT'S NEW

The stark reality is that consumers have changed. Expectations are rapidly evolving. Expressions of disappointment are more direct, personal and emotive than in the past.

Front-line service providers are unsettled. Many feel inadequate. Morale is impacted. Mobility in employment is on the rise, productivity is lapsing, momentum is difficult to sustain. It is a cost being borne by commerce, employees, consumers and society at large.

Clearly, many existing processes are failing. Initiatives to improve internal efficiencies are having profound, often negative, consequences for external effectiveness.

Countless business development initiatives falter at the very first service delivery encounters. Their effectiveness is compromised because of poor and inappropriate attitudes, rather than because of inadequate aptitudes.

In many instances, the need exists to develop greater sensitivity, appreciation and understanding of the dynamic context in which a service excellence outline must be formulated, documented and implemented. No-one is excluded in the key audience. Business owners, management and team-members need to be educated, extended, challenged, supported and where appropriate, applauded in pursuit of the immense potential to promise and deliver great value-based customer service.

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