

# 119

## THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

INSTRUCTOR

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### COURSE OUTCOMES

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At the conclusion of this class, participants will be able to:

- Understand the importance of Customer Experience and its impact on venue business
- Define Customer Service versus Customer Experience (CX)
- Recognize the role of your staff and culture in building the Customer Experience
- Implement Customer Journey Mapping and Event Life Cycle touchpoints
- Emphasize need for Providing an Experience for Underserved Communities
- Gain awareness ROX vs ROI
- Discuss the latest Trends and approaches to develop a solid CX strategy.

Pre- Class video watch:

[4 Ways to Elevate the Customer's Experience | Mark Sanborn Customer Service Keynote Speaker](#)

#### **Special Acknowledgement**

I would like to credit and thank all previous instructors for their contributions and legacy elements of this class.

## **Introduction**

*"A customer is the most important visitor on our premise. He is not dependent on us; We are dependent on him. He is not an interruption in our work; He is the purpose of it. He is not an outsider in our business; He is part of it. We are not doing him a favor by serving him; He is doing us a favor by giving us an opportunity to do so."*

*Kenneth B. Elliott, VP of Sales, The Studebaker Corporation ~1941*

*"What we found out was that today's event attendees don't just want a ticket to sit in a seat and be a spectator. They want to participate..." People want to choose their adventure and have an individual experience. Seventy percent of the survey responders said the single most important thing to them was having an experience."*

*Brian Mirakian, senior principal with Populous Activate.*

Customers are the cornerstone of all business success. As such, customer service philosophies are the leading components in the mission and value statements of most successful organizations and facilities. They establish a corporate culture that encourages and celebrates exceptional customer service, and they keep the organization focused on the customer's expectations as a prerequisite to the delivery of exceptional service. They mean what they say, and they deliver.

Prior to coming to VMS, take a moment to review your vision, mission & values statements and your customer service philosophy. Then, consider these excerpts from the statements of leading facilities:

*"Success starts with our people. Driven by an enduring commitment to our core values we will enrich the lives of our guests, clients and community by creating extraordinary experiences..."*

*Hamilton Convention Centre*

*"To be an iconic international standard multipurpose indoor Arena that will place Dubai on the international touring circuit for world-class entertainment and indoor sports to enhance the lives of residents of the UAE and generate significant ongoing growth of inbound tourism to Dubai.*

*Coca Cola Arena*

*"Lumen Field is a special place to work, and it takes a special type of person to join this team. We are all professionals dedicated to our culture of service and guided by our mission statement in all that we do.... We are a service organization. Each of our employees is dedicated to creating memorable experiences for our fans, guests, and clients."*

*Lumen Field*

*The Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts' vision is to enrich the lives of everyone in our community through extraordinary and diverse performing arts experiences.*

*Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts*

## Why Focus on Customer Experience?

To truly understand why customer experience is so important to an organization, we need to first understand some core metrics. Much of the research quoted in the customer service field was originally conducted in the 1970's by an organization called TARP (the Washington, DC-based Technical Assistance Research Program). Based on this, it is now the accepted standard that:

- Satisfied customers tell three to five people about their experience, while dissatisfied customers tell 10 or more people.
- At a management level, companies only hear from 4% of dissatisfied customers.
- 95% of customers who complain will return to your facility if you resolve their issue quickly; 54-70% will remain a customer if their issue is resolved.
- 68% of customer defections occur because of an attitude of indifference towards the customer by the staff.
- "Tip of the Iceberg Phenomenon"; that is, more than 50% of customers who encounter a problem do not complain; roughly 45% of customers will complain about a problem to a front line person; only 1-5% of customers will escalate their complaint to management or corporate office.
- Customers who complain and are satisfied with the response are up to 8% more loyal than if they had no problem at all.
- 20% of dissatisfaction is caused by employee actions, 40% by corporate products and processes that have an inherent surprise for the customer, and up to 40% are caused by customer mistakes or incorrect expectations.
- The ratio of cost to win a new customer versus retaining a current customer varies from 20:1 to 2:1.

TARP has since revisited this research, and these studies have been replicated by countless other organizations with similar results.

Based on these details, it is highly likely that venue managers only hear about a very small percentage of the negative (and positive) experiences people are having with the venue. Research suggests that organizations *will* hear from people who feel they did not get their money's worth, but likely *will not* hear from people who have concerns about minor inconveniences or treatment. Therefore, the onus is on the manager to develop a culture that consistently focuses on the total experience and encourages feedback at all levels of the organization.

The research also illustrates that customers who have issues resolved quickly become your brand ambassadors and supporters because you demonstrated your concern for their experience. Recognizing that it can cost up to 20 times

more to find a new customer than it can to retain an existing one, we understand that an exceptional customer experience becomes an investment and not an expense.

Marketing and promotion can go a long way towards inviting and encouraging customers to patronize a facility. However, if customers do not enjoy their experience on-site, they may not return. With the increasingly rapid pace of the home viewing experience and the increasing costs associated with live entertainment and sporting events, it is not enough to simply host an event anymore. You must provide a better experience than the couch at home or the local sports bar, theater, or Zoom window. One study by the management-consulting firm of Booz, Allen, and Hamilton, Inc. found poor service to be responsible for 40% of customer defections. By driving customer loyalty through exceptional service, you can significantly increase your sales and your profits.

Customer service can provide additional financial benefits by effectively reducing employee turnover. According to John Tschohl, the President of Minneapolis-based Service Quality International, employee turnover is inversely proportional to their perceptions of the quality of service provided by an employer. When a company's service is poor, customers do not like to patronize the business. This results in employees having to work harder to keep the business coming in. Sometimes the result is high employee turnover, which can be an expensive warning sign to employers that the company is not customer focused.

### **Define the WHAT so we can give meaning to our WHY.**

WHAT DO CUSTOMERS WANT? A fundamental question we surely must ask ourselves at the initiation or reexamination stage of our customer experience.

Venue executives have had to adapt the means and methods of defining the "what" significantly over the past decade. It is no longer enough to put a winning team on the field or a top-selling show on the stage or the newest product in a booth. In these times of unlimited internet/social media, television, and instant everything, people demand more from all they encounter, especially the events and venues they attend. They demand ENTERTAINMENT.

Before we define our "what," we have to better understand two core concepts of the customer experience.

**Customer Service** includes the person-to-person interactions between your staff and customers before, during, and after the purchase of a product or service.

Successful businesses understand that customer care can make or break their relationships with customers, so they make sure to offer the type of service their customers expect:

- **They provide fast responses.** According to the Zendesk Customer Experience Trends Report, 60 percent of customers say speed is the most important aspect of good customer service.
- **They keep interactions empathetic and kind.** Nearly half of customers want to talk to an empathetic, friendly customer service agent.
- **They offer support on customers' preferred channels.** (i.e. website, email, social media apps, etc.) 58% of customers expect a response to a comment on social networking. 42% expect a response within a day.

**Customer experience (CX)** is all the ways a customer interacts with your venue and how they perceive those interactions.

“Customer experience is how a customer feels about the sum of their interactions with a business,” says Dave Dyson, a community marketing specialist at Zendesk. “It involves every way a customer interacts with a company, at all stages of the customer journey — including the marketing materials they see before they become a customer, the sales experience, the quality of the product or service itself, and the customer service they receive post-purchase.”

Customer experience is spread across many touchpoints and is always ongoing. A customer's experience is shaped by the three Ps: people, process, and product.

- **People:** Customers want to speak to helpful and kind employees, whether they're on a call with a sales agent or live chatting with a support agent.
- **Process:** Customers prefer seamless and memorable experiences as they move through the buyer journey. This could be anything from a simplified payment process to an easier way to contact customer support.
- **Product:** Customers want intuitive products that solve their problems and meet their entertainment needs.

### **What are the differences between customer service and experience?**

Bruce Jones, Senior Programming Director of the Disney Institutes explains customer experience and the distinction this way in the Harvard Business Review: “Customer experience is about much more than just customer service. It is about fostering employee engagement. It is about truly understanding your customer, architecting a plan for delivering exceptional customer service, and then empowering employees to deliver it. It is about training leaders to reinforce the right behaviors that support exceptional customer experience.”

Jones also lists the three actions any organization can take to start moving its customer experience toward tip-top shape:

1. **Create an organizational common purpose.** A common purpose is a succinct explanation of what you want the customer experience to be at an emotional level, and it is the essential foundation on which all other service decisions can be developed. It represents to all employees what you stand for and why you exist.
2. **Get to know your customers holistically.** Your knowledge of the customer must extend far beyond the boundaries of traditional service criteria. Truly understanding their needs, wants, and emotions is the key to creating personalized interactions.
3. **View exceptional service as an economic asset instead of an expense.** Lifetime customer relationships are at stake, so the return on investment for providing consistently exceptional service clearly justifies the short-term cost.

### **Customer Service vs. Customer Experience: Which matters more?**

The short answer is both. Memorable customer experiences and great customer service go hand in hand, and your customer service has a direct reflection on customers' perceptions of their experience.

Zendesk provides the following supporting data:

- Seventy-five percent of customers are willing to overlook the prices to buy from companies that offer a good customer service experience.
- Seventy-seven percent of customers are more loyal to a company that gives them a good customer experience when issues arise.
- Eighty percent of customers will stop doing business with a brand and move to a competitor after more than one bad customer service experience.
- Companies that rank customer service as a top priority are six times more likely to surpass their customer retention goals.

But a customer's experience goes beyond just the individual service interactions. According to Michael J. Wolf, author of "The Entertainment Economy," "Consumers are seeking out fun and engagement in just about every buying decision. People want to have a place to go, so they have a sense of shared community, and they want to be entertained". What better place for this than our sports, entertainment, and meeting venues?

The "secret sauce" is to deliver great customer service AND provide memorable customer experiences!

## Commit to the WHO.

*“Sure, it’s our aircraft that fly you places, but it’s really our people who get you there. In fact, our entire corporate culture has been built around caring for you, our guests, by providing a great guest experience.” - WestJet*

The first step in building your customer experience is to ensure it is a priority with staff at your venue. Everyone, from the CEO to the new intern, is an ambassador for your team. There are four phases to ensure that customer experience is top of mind for everyone:

### Training:

According to John Tschohl of the Service Quality Institute, a good customer service training program is worth at least five times its cost. The primary goals of a great training program should be to shape attitudes and behaviors, reinforce basic skills, and keep enthusiasm high. To be effective, training must be consistent, continuous, and involve everyone in the venue.

When employees have the skills and tools to be successful, they are more likely to provide an outstanding experience. Utilize the training to establish clear objectives and provide specific examples, so employees know how you want them to respond in any given situation.

Mr. Tschohl lists five elements that are critical to any training program:

- 1) *Make it fun and entertaining.*** You can make better points by using humor than by drowning your employees in statistics. Use a variety of a/v, written materials, and participation to vary the pace of each session.
- 2) *Focus on fundamentals.*** Remind your employees of the importance of a “thanks,” or a friendly greeting. It is always “I will find out for you,” not “I don’t know.” Keep it simple. Give real life examples.
- 3) *Use attractive packaging.*** Make sure the materials you use are well packaged and communicate value. Use the same effort you would in producing an annual report or marketing brochure.
- 4) *Build training around group interaction.*** An emotional buy-in is best gained through experiential learning. When employees are actively involved in the process, they are more likely to retain the information and put it to use.
- 5) *Build your employee’s self-esteem.*** Employees who feel good about themselves treat others well, including your customers. Happy employees = happy customers.

### Empowerment:

An empowered employee has the authority to make immediate decisions to take care of a customer and is encouraged to take the initiative to resolve issues as they happen. With 45% of all comments being reported only to frontline employees, these quick actions can have a tremendous impact on whether your

customer leaves with a positive perception of your facility.

Disney World is seen by most as the epitome of customer service and empowerment. Empowerment is virtually a religion for Disney, with employees who are thoroughly trained and given the authority to do whatever is necessary to make customers happy. In fact, management interference is discouraged. The Disney philosophy is reflected in the following statement: *“Management must not only support the front line, but it must trust it as well”*.

As an employer, you must support and reinforce empowered action by employees. There is risk involved with taking matters into their own hands, and employees must be assured they will not be reprimanded if they make mistakes. Imagine your venue having an atmosphere where the consequences are greater for *not* taking empowered action on behalf of a customer, rather than the reverse.

### **Recognition:**

Employees who feel valued are more motivated and provide a higher level of service to your guests. Positive reinforcement and public praise will solidify behaviors. Design a recognition program that “catches people doing things right.” Celebrate the smallest successes and do it publicly.

A simple “thank you” goes a long way in motivating employees.

*“A motivated staff is the cornerstone of quality customer service. By acknowledging your employee’s achievements, you let them know their contributions are integral to the organization’s success,”*

- Max Messmer, chairman of Accountemps

The most effective means of motivation, according to Accountemps research:

- Frequent recognition of accomplishments – 38%
- Regular communication with staff – 37%
- Giving employees regular responsibility – 14%

### **Your Employees as Customers:**

Perhaps the most often overlooked group of customers that engage with your facility are your own employees. The experience you provide to them sets the tone for the experience they will provide to your guests and customers. Employee needs are not all that different from those of your customers.

Are the work areas and back-of-house areas clean and well maintained? Are they treated fairly and with respect in their interactions? Is there strong communication between management and frontline staff? Without first ensuring that you are properly servicing your employees, any customer service program you create will ultimately just be words on a sheet of paper.

## Enhancing the Experience

According to a study reported in December 2017 by design firm Populous and Nielsen Sports, one of three surveyed fans thought the future of entertainment would be found in a virtual world but that “two of three would still rather experience a concert or sporting event in person. Past decades have taught us a big lesson when it comes to the live experience: the game itself will get you only so far. It’s time to think beyond filling seats. Fans want to get up and explore the live experience, not sit idle from the sidelines.”

Trade show producers used to throw on a few hors d’oeuvres and pipe in some music. Today anything short of a full-sized interactive showroom on the event floor is simply not enough. Michael J. Wolf calls this “the E-Factor” – infusing entertainment into everything we do.

Before we can really get to work on the E-Factor, we need to ensure that the basics are in place. Your venue should continually review every aspect of your operations and upgrade systems with the goal of ensuring they are as good as any in the industry. It is important your patrons and clients can conveniently get into and around your venue, use clean and well-functioning restrooms, have a positive multi-sensory experience at the food and beverage stands, enjoy clear sound and a clean floor. All of these things, done well, are part of enhancing the experience.

The successful venue manager audits and analyzes the systems your customers use to make improvements to “everyday” things such as drink rails, height of food & beverage counters, breakout areas, merchandise layout, lighting, sound levels and so on. Become obsessed with the “design of everyday things” and how you can improve on design flaws to create conveniences for your customers – all which will add up to a greatly enhanced experience.

Erik Hauser, Founder and Creative Director of Swivel Media, tells us about our customers habits: “We make buying decisions based on both rational and emotional factors...a feeling about something, using our senses of smell, touch, sound, sight. Those feelings are engendered in experiential marketing situations, and that’s particularly true for people in their teens and 20’s. They’ve grown up so bombarded by messages that it’s difficult to get their attention. Experiences that engage their senses and emotions are more apt to get their attention, to break through the message noise and clutter”.

You can affirm these during your customer journey mapping, sometimes referred to as Sensory Exposure Audit. Consider the specific touchpoints where you can enhance the guest experience, beginning with the first contact with your venue brand.

## **EVENT LIFE CYCLE TOUCHPOINT OPPORTUNITIES**

We must continually look for and evaluate the customer touchpoints available to us for creating and enhancing our patron experiential moments.

### **Pre-Event:**

Event information: venue website and receptionist/phone system, subscription brochures

Ticket Purchase/Show Registration: ticketing partner website, venue ticket office windows

### **Ingress:**

Traffic; Parking; Exterior Walkways & Wayfinding “curb appeal”, Security Checkpoints; Ticket Scanning, Concierge Services

### **Event:**

Hospitality Spaces; F&B; Restrooms; Patron Conflict and/or Ticket Resolution process; In Venue engagement, Digital Fan Experience

### **Egress:**

Pedestrian exit flow, Vehicular exit traffic, Exterior venue vicinity: nighttime safety “atmosphere/lighting”, etc.

### **Post Event:**

Patron/Client follow-up; customer surveys; data tracking analysis

## **Evaluating Your “E-Factor”**

Once you’ve got your basic services locked in, where do you go to Enhance the Experience for your guests? Start by evaluating your E- Factor, defined as “the infusion of entertainment into everything you do”. Look at your venue from the perspective of your patrons and clients. CB Wismar, former Executive Vice President of PGI, an independent trade show producer, recommends, “Start by developing a new set of eyes for yourself and by getting someone else to help you. It’s too hard to be objective when you’re right in the middle of things all the time”. This “fresh eyes” philosophy will help you see the elements you may overlook every day. What are the engaging elements of your venue, and what could enhance those elements?

## **Customer Journey Mapping**

One way of evaluating a business “E-Factor” or level of customer experience is by doing a Customer Journey Map. This is the process of forming a visual representation of customers' processes, needs, and perceptions throughout their interactions and relationship with an organization. It helps you understand the steps customers take – the ones you see, and don't – when they interact with your business.

Understanding the customer journey is vital to improving business performance. A customer journey map provides valuable insights into how customers interact with your brand across various touchpoints, revealing your service's strengths and weaknesses. This holistic view of customer interaction is beneficial in refining your business model and improving customer satisfaction, loyalty, and advocacy.

Remember, customer journey mapping must become a constant reoccurring exercise and not a one-time project. As our customers inevitably change (relative to both their expectations and behaviors), so to must our businesses evolve. When we do this, we'll stay customer-focused, raise our guest experience level, and succeed in a competitive marketplace.

#### *How to Create Customer Journey Maps: (MindTool)*

- 1) Define your Objectives
- 2) Gather Information
- 3) Identify Your Customer Touchpoints
- 4) Outline the Key Stages of Your Customer Experience
- 5) Map out the Customer path
- 6) Validate Your Results
- 7) Analyze Your Map
- 8) Treat Your Map as a Living Document

#### **Experience in the Digital Age**

Enhancing your guest's experience in the digital age starts with their first online interaction with your venue. Text, email, social media and other online resources have become an important way to interact with our customers. Whether through facility websites, social media accounts, customer service email accounts, or the traditional phone calls, conversations with our customers are now occurring in real time 24/7.

The ability to provide instantaneous feedback to an organization has resulted in the expectation of instantaneous replies and corrections. Additionally, with the rise in online ticketing purchases, increasing numbers of customers are moving toward mostly electronic interactions with our facilities. Providing customers with a satisfying experience when interacting electronically is vital to success.

Recent research conducted by E-Satisfy and a separate study conducted by RightNow and Harris Interactive found the following:

- Almost half of customers contacting companies online have to follow up with a telephone call. Only 30% of electronic customers receive a response to their contact within 24 hours, and almost 40% never receive a final response.

- Poor handling of online contacts results in a high level of negative word-of-mouth: dissatisfied online customers tell twice as many people about their experience (both online and off) than satisfied customers.

Other concerns raised by the survey included email responses that were too generic, responses that did not use the customer's name, and other responses that did not provide any real answers at all.

But our digital communication is just the technological starting point for today's enhanced experience. No matter your venue type, using technology to enhance the guest experience is about bringing them closer to the action, creating a more seamless journey, and increasing their interaction with the event. There are countless opportunities to enhance the experience, some include:

- Event specific phone apps
- Augmented & virtual reality or immersive suites
- Digital athlete, event or artist photo booths
- Event related gamification via smart phone and/or wearable devices
- Food or merchandise coupons delivered via social media or QR codes
- Interactive and immersive kiosks serving both as engagement and data collection
- Cashless capabilities
- Real time event information: sport stats, conference event info.
- Robotic mobile self-serve concessions
- Event specific green screen backdrops delivered directly to your phone
- Real-time interactive polling
- Generative AI chatbots (tread carefully with this one)
- Live Streaming & Social Media Feeds
- Contactless Entry and Security

### **Elevating the Experience for Guests with Different Needs**

It has become industry standard (and the United States law) to provide accommodations for guests with visible or stated accessibility needs. All venues provide accessible parking & seating, sign interpreters, service animals, and more. However, the requirements for preparing staff to enhance the experience for guests with "invisible" needs can be a bit more challenging.

KultureCity.org: states that 1 in 6 individuals have a sensory need. Making our events sensory inclusive has been the mission for organizations like Kulture City, and partnering with them has helped many venues bridge this gap. This work supports our neuro-divergent guests whose experience is made possible through additional understanding and support of their unique needs.

Many venues have also started including language access services to support their guests who may not count English as their first language. This work includes updated signage, on call translator services, and live captioning or transcription services.

While these items and many more may be discussed in your accessibility class at VMS, I wanted to purposefully touch upon it here as well, so we do not forget we have an obligation to create spaces of access and belonging for all segments of our communities.

The Society for Diversity writes: “It's not just about meeting legal requirements; it's about creating an inclusive environment where every attendee feels valued and accommodated. This approach enriches the overall event experience, promotes diversity, and fosters a sense of community.”

## **Return on Experience – a new measuring stick.**

John Maxwell wrote in his 2019 article titled: ROX is the new ROI: Prioritizing Customer Experience, “Consumers have more power over your company’s success or failure than ever before, and it’s time for a new metric that captures the return on your investment in them”.

We are all familiar with the concept of Return on Investment – the math associated with the cost of an investment vs the net return, but taking a look at the entire experience requires a broader view on measuring success. Venue managers need to become familiar with a new business metric. Return on Experience, referred to as ROX, is a holistic approach to understanding and increasing the value of your investments across customer experience (CX), employee experience (EX) and leadership experience (LX).

Building proposals for budgetary or capital expenditures focused on experience related projects requires a firm grasp of these ROX components. Qualtrics explains the elements of building a business case for ROX investments as such:

### **Building a business case for CX**

1. Define your CX objectives
2. Establish a CX baseline
3. Calculate the CX value
4. Subtract CX operating costs

PwC helps provide a simple business use case on how return on experience can helping drive business decisions:

**Application Example:** Hotel Chain X with luxury resorts & budget properties

- By analyzing data, they discover that speed of check-in significantly impacts business travelers' satisfaction.
- To increase ROX, they train managers to staff reception adequately and encourage guests to use the mobile app for quick check-ins.
- The hotel chain continuously uses data to uncover causal loops and improve both EX and CX

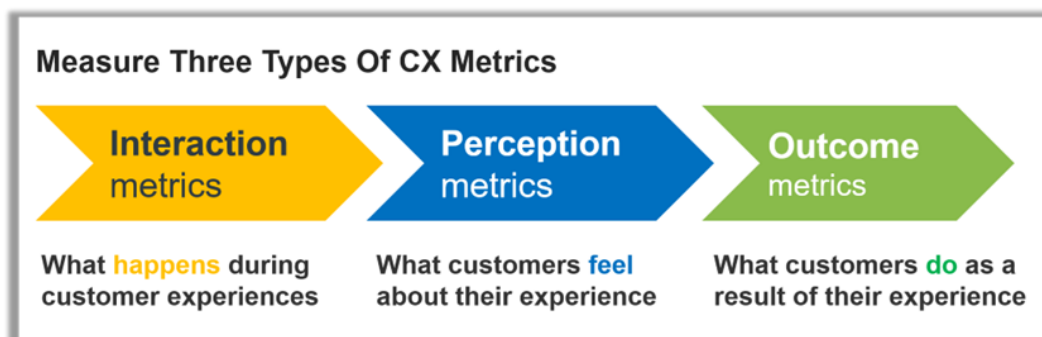
## How do we Analyze and Measure Experience

### Customer Experience Analytics

Once the decision is made to concentrate on CX as the driving force of a business, the next step is to gather data and measure it using CX Analytics. Customer Experience Analytics (CX Analytics) is the collection, processing, and evaluation of customer data to measure and ultimately improve CX.

Customer Experience Analytics includes reporting on:

- The best customer market for your business and how to reach potential brand ambassadors and loyal customers
- A complete picture of the customer journey and pain points or roadblocks along the way
- Customer feedback, both positive and negative
- Success rates of your current offerings and areas of potential for the future



It's these analytics that help you answer the following questions:

- How **good is the quality** of our customers' experiences?
- How can we **improve the quality** of our customers' experiences?
- How will our **organization benefit** from improving our customers' experiences?

## **Customer Experience Analytics**

We've already reviewed mapping the customer journey and analyzing the event life-cycle touchpoints to better understand what happens during customer experiences, and our final event sales data will give us a pretty good idea of what customers do as a result of their experience.

So, how can one find out how customers are feeling if the research tells us they are not going to be up front and report it to management?

First and foremost, you must empower your frontline staff to receive these comments and either act on them or ensure they are passed up the chain quickly for resolution. By fostering an atmosphere that allows front line staff to forward complaints without fear of reprisals, you ensure that management is made aware of an additional 45% of comments.

Many facilities also perform regular satisfaction surveys. A venue manager can only know what customers are thinking if you ask. A sample of a customer satisfaction survey is in the Appendix. A manager can also survey employees as a means to rate internally the organization's customer service delivery. Results of such surveys can help managers determine if further training is required or if systems and processes need revision.

Another feedback option is the employment of the "secret shopper" method. In addition to many professional companies which can conduct these programs, providing a trusted employee, colleague, or friend with tickets to an event and instructions to report back on the experience through a standardized report can provide a lower cost option for feedback. Secret shopper reports offer managers valuable feedback as to the customer experience in your facility.

No matter which feedback collection you use, the true success is dependent on the follow-up. Feedback collection should occur on a regular basis with the results being shared with all areas. Discussions, action plans, monitoring results, and ongoing evaluation must occur to get real value from the process. Staff must come to understand what service levels are expected within your organization.

## **Final Thoughts & Take Home Strategies for Enhancing CX**

Providing an excellent customer experience is an ongoing challenge for all venue managers. As technological developments continue to enhance our ability to engage with our customers, the theory of what constitutes a "good" experience will continue to evolve. An organization that wishes to stay on the cutting edge must be constantly reviewing and improving their customer experience to ensure they evolve as well.

## **10 ways to improve customer experience (CX)**

1. Empower your employees
2. Value employee ideas
3. Use tech to create breakthrough customer experiences
4. Embrace an omnichannel mindset
5. Personalize, personalize, personalize!
6. Adopt a top-down approach
7. Use customer journey mapping
8. Include open-text feedback in surveys
9. Improve your customer service
10. Implement Voice of the Customer programs

## **Definition of Terms:**

**CX:** Customer Experience - all the ways a customer interacts with your company and how they perceive those interactions.

**Customer Service:** is the act of assisting and advocating for your customers before, during, and after the purchase of a product or service.

**ROI:** Return on Investment - a simple ratio that divides the net profit (or loss) from an investment by its cost.

**ROX:** Return of Experience - a holistic approach to understanding and increasing the value of your investments across customer experience (CX), employee experience (EX) and leadership experience (LX).

**EX:** Employee Experience - the sum of perceptions employees have about their interactions with the organization in which they work.

**LX:** Leadership Experience - general term used to describe your exposure to leading other people in various settings.

**VoC:** Voice of the Customer - feedback about customers' experiences with you and their expectations of your products or services

**UX:** User experience - the internal experience that a person has as they interact with every aspect of a company's products and services.

**Experiential Marketing** – experiential or engagement marketing is defined as “a marketing strategy that invites an audience to interact with a business in a real-world situation.

## **Reference & Suggested Readings**

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[Customer Experience ROI: How to Build an Investment Case \(qualtrics.com\)](#)

<https://www.qualtrics.com/blog/global-consumer-trends/>

[Return on Experience \(ROX\) \(pwc.com\)](#)

[Know the Difference between Customer Service and Customer Experience - SPONSOR CONTENT FROM DISNEY INSTITUTE \(hbr.org\)](#)

[Return on Experience \(ROX\) \(pwc.com\)](#)

<https://www.mindtools.com/au8vys8/how-to-create-customer-journey-maps>

[Creating Inclusive, Accessible Events: Tips for Event Organizers \(societyfordiversity.org\)](#)

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## Appendix A

### CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY

Customer satisfaction is the key to success. You want customers to be happy with the experience you provide. If they feel they have received good value for their money, your business will prosper. Getting your customers to tell you what's good about your business, and where you need improvement, helps you to be sure that your business measures up to their expectations.

A customer satisfaction survey is one way to gather this vital information. There are any number of ways to get copies to your customers. In today's digital age, it's easier than ever to provide surveys to our customers. The important thing to remember is that you should solicit that feedback in whatever manner is convenient for your particular customers. Many surveys won't be completed, but those that are will make it worth your while.

The customer satisfaction survey below is a potential template designed to get your customers to tell you what they really think. No lengthy questions, just a list of key activities and easy ranking selections with additional space to respond if they so desire. Some survey's remove the option of having multiple rating levels, limiting the choices to just "outstanding" and "needs improvement." Doing this sends a clear message that you expect the products and service you supply to be the best available, period. Keeping the survey short makes it more likely that customers will take the time to respond. Be sure to include instructions on how to return the completed surveys. You may also look at providing an incentive to return the survey like an enter-to-win drawing or discount off their next purchase.

Don't forget to follow up on the comments you receive. If you have to change a procedure, tell an employee how you want things done, pick a new delivery service, do it. And advertise the fact that you did. Send thank you notes to the customers whose comments caused you to make a change. Let them know that you can do an even better job because they took the time to help you improve.

Remember, surveys are only as good as the follow-up!

Dear Client,

Thank you for (selecting / returning to) the (venue name) for (event). It is our commitment to assist you in creating successful events by providing outstanding customer service every step of the way.

Your feedback is a vital component of our goal to continuously improve as an organization and as your event partner. Please take a few moments to complete our online survey by [Clicking Here](#).

We appreciate your feedback and your choice of the (venue name) for your event.

Remember, it is never too early to book next year's event. We will be happy to reserve space for you in 2026!

Warm regards,  
XXXXXXXXXX

**ONLINE SURVEY FORM**

Page 1: Facility & Staff Performance

**Q1**

In order to better serve you, please complete the following information:

Event Name

Event Date(s)

Total # of Attendees

Your Name

**Q2**

Please indicate below (in each category) the primary staff member with whom you worked with on your event?

Sales Manager    Event Services    Catering Services    Audio Visual    Parking    Ticketing

Staff Members:

Other (please specify):

Page 2: Overall Experience

**Q3**

On a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (great), please rate your overall experience at the Greater Tacoma Convention Center.

(no label)

Page 3: Overall Value

**Q4**

On a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (great), please rate the overall value of your event at the Greater Tacoma Convention Center.

(no label)

**Q5**

Please make any comments related to the overall value of your event. There will be another opportunity to rate the value numerically in each of the service provider areas (food & beverage, audio visual, etc).

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Page 4: Sales Manager Experience

**Q6**

On a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (great), please rate your overall experience working with your Sales Manager.

(no label)

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**Q7**

On a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (great), please rate your experience working with the Sales Manager in the following areas.

Knowledge of facility and services

Response time and follow-up

Quality of service provided

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**Q8**

Comments regarding your experience with your Sales Manager

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Page 5: Event Services Manager Experience

**Q9**

On a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (great), please rate your overall experience working with your Event Services Manager.

(no label)

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**Q10**

On a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (great), please rate your experience working with the Event Services Manager in the following areas.

Pre-event planning

Day of event assistance

Overall communication

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**Q11**

Comments regarding your experience with your Event Services Manager

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Page 6: Food and Beverage Experience

**Q12**

On a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (great), please rate your overall experience working with the Food and Beverage department.

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**Q13**

On a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (great), please rate your experience with Food and Beverage service in the following areas.

Pre-event planning

Overall quality and presentation of food

Timeliness of food and beverage service

Customer service of food and beverage staff

Value

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**Q14**

Comments regarding your experience with food and beverage service. Please include anything we could do to improve our food and beverage service for your next event.

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Page 7: Audio Visual (PSAV now Encore) Experience

**Q15**

On a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (great), please rate your overall experience working with PSAV/Encore.

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**Q16**

On a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (great), please rate your experience with PSAV/Encore in the following areas.

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**Q17**

Comments regarding your experience with PSAV/Encore and audio visual service.

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Page 8: Parking Experience

**Q18**

On a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (great), please rate your overall experience working with REEF Parking.

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**Q19**

Comments regarding your experience with REEF Parking.

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Page 9: Ticketing Experience

**Q20**

On a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (great), please rate your overall experience working with Ticketmaster.

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**Q21**

Comments regarding your experience with Ticketmaster.

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Page 10: Destination & Accommodations

**Q22**

How did you hear about us?

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**Q23**

Why did you choose the Greater Tacoma Convention Center?

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**Q24**

Did guests stay overnight in a hotel?

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Page 11: Hotel Experience

**Q25**

Please select the hotel(s) you utilized for overnight accommodations:

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**Q26**

How would you rate your overall hotel experience?

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Page 12: Travel Tacoma + Visitor Information Experience

**Q27**

If you utilized convention services provided by Travel Tacoma - Mt. Rainier, did it meet the needs of your event?

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Page 13: Additional Comments

**Q28**

Please share any additional comments on what we could have done another way that would have made a difference for your event.

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**Q29**

Please share any comments on people or departments you would like recognized for delivering exceptional service.

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**Q30**

May we use your comments for future marketing purposes?

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