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All together now:

The key to customer satisfaction is better collaboration

Among service business executives, you'll get little argument that customer satisfaction is an essential component to business success. "CSAT," after all, is a direct line to long-term customer loyalty, referrals, and repeat business.

With that as a given, it's curious just how elusive customer satisfaction can be in the services business universe. Companies continue to make unforced errors that not only fail to enhance and fortify customer relationships, but actually damage them.

The check-box requirements for achieving customer satisfaction are easy enough to list out. Fast time-to-quote, time-to-staff and time-to-kickoff. The right resources on the right projects. Keeping projects on track. On-time, on-budget delivery. Speed to serve and quicker business outcomes.

Making the list is the easy part. It's in the execution of those items where so many businesses fall short. For service businesses, in particular, consistent roadblocks emerge. Fortunately, however, these roadblocks can be surmounted by having the right techniques and tools in place.

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HPE has continued to successfully deploy the new skills management platform within our PSA solution. As of today, we are deriving value across 5,800 users in 57 countries. This is a solid ROI for us, as we are increasing resource utilization and improving time to staffing projects. We see this as a path to greater customer satisfaction. „

Tom Boland
Senior Director, Global Workforce Management Account Services

The collaboration conundrum

Take, for example, the challenge of effective teamwork. Customer dissatisfaction often arises when a business cannot quickly identify and resolve the customer's questions and requests. An issue arises in project management, resources, timing, or billing. The customer reaches out for a solution. And it gets bogged down in a morass of red tape, repetition of information, and buck passing.

This malady is often the result of weak collaboration with and among teams, as well as suboptimal project management. (Some companies actually still manage projects via email, of all things; they have no other mechanism to stay in sync on projects.) Visibility into projects is limited by multiple, siloed spreadsheets — fostering functional finger-pointing when something slips between those siloes. It's inefficient internally and downright maddening externally, as customers can't get a simple answer to the question, "How are things going?"

To wit, then, effective customer collaboration suffers when a business uses multiple, disconnected systems to try to manage the customer journey. The result is problematic handoffs from system to system, activities and issues falling through cracks between them, and an unhappy customer.

Certinia PS Cloud will help us realise our multi-year growth plans to deliver the highest levels of customer and staff experiences. I wanted to enhance customer collaboration so it is at the heart of everything we do, and the Certinia solution will make that happen. 99

Mathew Salter
Professional Services Director, Idox

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A single customer record

There is light at the end of the collaboration tunnel: a unified technology platform that connects all stakeholders and keeps all parties in sync via a shared, unified view of the customer. With a single customer record, every functional touchpoint links to every other, with shared visibility to any issues that may arise. The risk of issues falling between cracks is greatly reduced. When that happens, it leads to better collaboration between customers and partners, so customers can quickly both gain and provide needed information across departments. Connect the dots, and you have customer satisfaction and renewals.

A single platform can also be a boon to project management, by facilitating a "golden record" for project scoping. It creates a single source of truth for all parties to reference, resulting in cost transparency and clear, real-time customer communication. Not only does that help prevent project pipeline problems, it also reduces risk by avoiding relationship-damaging disputes over SOWs, invoices and delivery issues. The result: elevated customer long-term value (CLTV).

In the last 3 years alone, we've integrated 10 companies, added 7,000 users, managed revenue forecasts to 1% variance +/-, increased our sold roles by ~20K roles and ~14M billable hours. **"**

Mark Conklin
Senior Director of Operations, Salesforce

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Simplify, simplify

A traditional impediment to customer satisfaction is complexity — that is, a convoluted system landscape that not only hinders customer engagement, but renders CLTV nearly impossible to measure. The answer is simplification. By using a single, simple platform to reduce complex systems, customer engagement can be more consistent across departments, and CLTV can be measured...and enhanced.

Speaking of enhanced CLTV, nothing irks customers more — or is a bigger reason for customer losses — than a provider who cannot deliver what and when they promise. Yet many services businesses continue to fall into this trap, because they use systems that can't predict risks in upcoming scheduled work that may impact delivery.

A central platform can solve for this. Armed with a simple scheduling risk dashboard, project leaders can identify schedule issues before they occur. They can track projects that have a high likelihood of going off track — and plan alternatives at the earliest possible point, before a potential hiccup becomes a delivery nightmare. Services leaders can anticipate risk with high probability, then proactively intervene, course-correct and keep projects on track.

For all the reasons mentioned above, a unified technology platform creates business resiliency by reducing risk. It affords greater visibility into problems that hamper CSAT — such as off-track projects and delays in quoting or staffing — so those problems can be quickly rectified. By doing so, services businesses can reduce costs, increase revenue, and boost profitability.

That's quite the trifecta created by happier customers.

Case in point

A software firm achieves a 360-degree customer view

Idox, which builds software for government and industry to work better and comply with regulations, was looking to enhance its customer engagement and satisfaction. By implementing a unified technology platform, the company achieved a 360-degree customer view and delivered a positive experience for both staff and customers. Idox's project managers can focus on customer experience, timely project delivery, colleague collaboration, proactive change and achieving business growth targets.

By empowering its professional services team with more flexibility and control over the way they manage and deliver projects, Idox frees time for its delivery staff to focus on other value-added activities, including personal development.

The solution aligns with Idox's growth plans and empowers the company to deliver the staff and customer experience that drives customer acquisition, along with retention of existing customers and top professional services talent.

Experience Modern Delivery

Certinia elevates business growth through a complete Services-as-a-Business solution spanning services delivery, finance, and customer success. Native to the leading cloud platform, Salesforce, Certinia enables organizations to run a connected business, deliver with intelligence, and achieve agility at scale.

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