

Chapter 2

Contributing to the Service Culture

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Teaching Tools

The tools included with this text are listed below.

Instructor Teaching Tools

- Instructor's Manual
- PowerPoint Presentations
- Asset Map
- Test Bank
- Customer Service Videos
- Sample Syllabi

Student Learning Tools

- Customer Service Interactions
- Customer Service Videos
- Chapter Objectives
- Flashcards
- Online Quizzes
- Practice Tests
- Glossary
- Spanish Glossary
- Worksheets

Brief Chapter Outline

Learning Outcomes

- 2-1: Explain the elements of a successful service culture.
- 2-2: Define a service strategy.
- 2-3: Recognize customer-friendly systems.
- 2-4: Implement strategies for promoting a positive service culture.
- 2-5: Separate average companies from exceptional companies.
- 2-6: Identify what customers want.

I. Defining a Service Culture

A. Service Philosophy or Mission

B. Employee Roles and Expectations

Rumba

Employee Roles in Larger Retail and Service Organizations

Employee Roles in Smaller Retail and Service Organizations

Employee Roles in Nonprofit Organizations

Policies and Procedures

C. Products and Services

D. Motivators and Rewards

E. Management Support

Strive for Improvement

Look for a Strong Mentor in Your Organization

Avoid Complacency

F. Employee Empowerment

G. Training

II. Establishing a Service Strategy

III. Customer-Friendly Systems

A. Typical System Components

Advertising

Complaint or Problem Resolution

B. Service Delivery Systems

Direct or Indirect Systems

Third-Party Delivery (Outsourcing/Offshoring)

C. Tools for Service Measurement

IV. Twelve Strategies for Promoting a Positive Service Culture

V. Separating Average Companies from Excellent Companies

VI. What Customers Want

Chapter Outline and Lecture Notes

I. Defining Customer Service

- **Service culture** is a service environment made up of various factors, including the values, beliefs, norms, rituals, and practices of a group or organization.
 - No two organizations operate in the same manner, have the same focus, or provide management that accomplishes the same results.
 - A culture includes the values, norms, beliefs, rituals, and practices of a group or organization.
 - Any policy, procedure, action, or inaction on the part of the organization contributes to a service organization.
- **Attitude** is the emotional responses to people, ideas, and objects.
 - They are based on values, differ between individuals and cultures, and affect the way people deal with various issues and situations.
 - Attitude is critical to the success of an organization
- **Customer-centric** is a term used to describe service providers and organizations that put their customers first and spend time, effort, and money identifying and focusing on the needs of current and potential customers.
 - Efforts are focused on building long-term relationships and customer loyalty rather than simply selling a product or service and moving on to the next customer.
 - Successful organizations are customer-centered or customer-centric and focus on individual needs.
- In the past, organizations were continually making changes to their product and service lines to try to attract and hold customers.
 - Now, many major organizations have become more customer-centric and stress relationships with customers.
 - Advertising campaigns often reflect this new awareness as companies try to communicate that they are focused on their customers.

A. Service Philosophy or Mission

- Generally, an organization's approach to business, its **mission** or its **service philosophy**, is driven from top of the organization.
 - Upper management, including members of the board of directors, when appropriate, sets the vision or tone and direction of the organization.
 - Most successful organizations have written **mission** and **vision statements** that answer the questions of "What does the organization do?" and "Why does the organization exist?"

- Leadership, real and perceived, is crucial to service success.

B. Employee roles and expectations

- Depending on the job, the size and type of the organization, and the industry involved, the **employee roles** and **employee expectations** may be similar from one organization to another, and yet they may be performed in a variety of different ways.
 - Such roles and expectations are normally included in a job description and in the performance goals.

RUMBA

- **RUMBA** is an acronym for five criteria (**r**ealistic, **u**nderstandable, **m**easureable, **b**elievable and **a**ttainable) used to establish and measure employee performance goals.

Employee Roles in Larger Retail and Service Organizations

- Customers expect service employees to typically have at least the following qualifications and competencies in both large and small organizations:
 - Broad general knowledge of products and service.
 - Interpersonal communication skills (e.g., verbal, nonverbal, and listening along with cross-gender and cross-cultural communication).
 - Technical expertise related to products sold and serviced.
 - Positive, customer-focused, “can-do” attitude.
 - Initiative.
 - Motivation.
 - Integrity.
 - Loyalty (to the organization, to products, and to customers).
 - Team spirit.
 - Creativity.
 - Sound ethics.
 - Time management skills.
 - Problem-solving capability.
 - Conflict resolution skills.

Employee Roles in Smaller Retail and Service Organizations

- The growth of sole proprietorships (one-owner businesses) and small

businesses has an upside in that they provide more choices for customers.

- On the downside, this growth also created problems for people making the transition from large to small organizations.
- Employees in small businesses perform greatly varied tasks.
 - To stave off failure and help ensure that customer needs are identified and satisfied, owners and employees in such establishments must continually strive to gain new knowledge and skills while working hard to deliver a level of service equal to that offered by the bigger organizations.

Employee Roles in Nonprofit Organizations

- Even though revenue generation is not the primary goal in nonprofit organizations, money is a significant force.
 - Without donations, grants, and other fund-raising efforts, these organizations cannot provide the crucial services, products, and deliverables to their customer/client base (often lower-income and older people or others who have few other alternatives for attainment of needed items and services).
 - In such organizations, administrators, staff, and volunteers provide a wide degree of services and support.

Policies and Procedures

- Although there are a lot of local, state, and federal regulations with which you and your organization must comply, many policies are flexible.
- Many customers negatively meet organizational culture directly when a service provider hides behind “company policy” to handle a problem.
 - The goal should be to respond to policy customer requests and satisfy needs as quickly, efficiently, and cheerfully as possible.
- Return policies in a retail environment are a case in point.
 - An effective return policy is part of the overall service process.
 - In addition to service received, the return policy of an organization is another gauge customers use to determine where they will spend their time and money.

C. Products and Services

- If customers perceive that the organization offers reputable products and services in a professional manner and at a competitive price, the organization

will likely reap the rewards of loyalty and positive “press.”

- On the other hand, if products and services do not live up to expectations or promises, or if the service employee’s ability to correct problems in products and services is deficient, the employee and the organization could suffer adversely.

D. Motivators and Rewards

- People work more effectively when and productively their performance is recognized and adequately rewarded.

E. Management Support

- To handle some customer-related situation, frontline service providers will have to depend on the knowledge and assistance of a more experienced employee or supervisor or manager and defer to his or her experience or authority.
 - A key role played by the manager, supervisor, and/or team leader in a customer-related situation is to provide effective, ongoing coaching, counseling, and training to their subordinates.

Strive for Improvement

- Customer service can be frustrating and, in some instances, monotonous.
 - Employees may need to create self-motivation strategies and continue to seek fulfillment or satisfaction.

Look for a Strong Mentor in Your Organization

- **Mentors** are people who are well acquainted with the organization and its policies, politics, and processes.
 - They are well connected (inside and outside the organization), communicate well, have the ability and desire to assist others (the **protégé**), and are capable and experienced.

Avoid Complacency

- The people who excel, especially in a service environment, are the ones who constantly strive for improvement and look for opportunities to grow professionally.

- They also take responsibility or ownership for service situations.

F. Employee Empowerment

- Employee **empowerment** is one way for a supervisor to help ensure that service providers can respond quickly to customer needs or requests.
 - The intent of empowerment is a delegation of authority where a frontline service provider can take action without having to call a supervisor or ask permission.
- Empowerment is also an intangible way that successful service organizations reward employees.
 - Often someone who has decision-making authority feels better about himself or herself and the organization.

G. Training

- To perform a job successfully and create a positive impression in the minds of customers, frontline employees must be given the necessary tools.
 - Depending on the position and the organization's focus, this training might address interpersonal skills, technical skills, organizational awareness, or job skills, again depending on the position.

II. Establishing a Service Strategy

- The first step a company should take in creating or redefining its service environment is to make sure it knows who its customers really are and how it plans to attract and hold those customers.
 - It is not just the organization's responsibility to insure the success of customer service.

III. Customer-Friendly Systems

A. Typical System Components

- **Customer-friendly systems** refers to the processes in an organization that make service seamless to customers by ensuring that things work properly and the customer is satisfied.
 - Some customer-friendly systems that can send positive messages are advertising and complaint or problem resolution.

Advertising

- Advertising campaigns should send a message that products and services are competitive in price and that the quality and quantity are at least comparable to those of competitors.
- An advertisement that appears to be deceptive can cost the organization customers and its reputation.

Complaint or Problem Resolution

- The manner in which complaints or problems are handled can signal the organization's concern for customer satisfaction.
- As a service professional, one should make recommendations for improvement whenever he or she spots a roadblock or system that impedes provision of service excellence.

B. Service Delivery Systems

- **Service delivery systems** are a combination of people, technology, and other internal and external elements that make up an organization's method of getting its products and services to customers.
- The organization must determine the best way to deliver quality products and service and to provide effective follow-up support to its customers.
 - This includes the way information is made available to customers, initial contacts and handling of customer issues, sales techniques (hard sell versus relationship selling), order collection and processing, price quotations, product and service delivery, processing of paperwork, invoicing, and follow-up.

Direct or Indirect Systems

- The type of delivery system used (direct or indirect contact) is important because it affects staffing numbers, costs, technology, scheduling, and many other factors.
- In a direct contact environment, customers interact directly with people.
 - In an indirect system customers' needs are met primarily with self-service through technology (possibly integrated with the human factor in customer contact/call centers) integrated with Internet services.
 - ATMs versus branches of a bank would be an example of direct versus indirect systems.

Third Party Delivery (Outsourcing/Offshoring)

- Many companies are eliminating internal positions and delegating, assigning, or hiring outside (third-party) organizations and individuals to assume eliminated and newly created roles (call center customer support functions, human resource benefits administration, accounting functions, and marketing) for an agreed-upon price (normally without the extra cost of benefits).
- The practice of outsourcing jobs to a third party provides multiple benefits while also bringing with it some downsides.
 - On the positive side, companies can save money by:
 - Eliminating large ongoing salaries.
 - Reducing health benefits, retirement, and 401(k) payments.
 - Avoiding the need to purchase and update computers and related equipment and a myriad of other equipment.
 - Increasing workforce size without necessarily doing likewise to the budget.
 - Bringing in new, fresh expertise, ideas, and perspectives from outside the organization.
 - On the negative side:

Long-term employee expertise is lost.

 - Employee loyalty to the organization suffers.
 - Succession planning opportunities and the potential to groom and hire from within an enculturated workforce is reduced.
 - The organization's reputation in the eyes of local citizens is potentially tarnished due to sending jobs away.
 - The morale of the "survivors" (employees whose jobs were not eliminated) is adversely affected.
 - Managing becomes more complex.
 - Customers must deal with "strangers" with whom they cannot build a long-term relationship because their provider may be gone the next time they call or stop by.
 - Response time in getting a job or task completed may increase because of distance or other factors.
 - Quality of work is not always up to expectations internally or for customers (e.g., dealing with service representatives who have hard-to-understand accents or do not fully understand the customer's culture or expectations)

C. Tools for Service Measurement

- Some of the typical techniques or tools available to organizations for customer service data collection are as follows:
 - Employee focus groups
 - Employee opinion surveys
 - Customer focus groups
 - Mystery shoppers
 - Customer satisfaction surveys
 - Customer comment cards
 - Profit and loss statement or management reports
 - Employee exit interviews
 - Walk-through audits
 - On-site management visits
 - Management inspections

IV. Twelve Strategies for Promoting a Positive Service Culture

- Following are 12 strategies for service success:
 - Partner with customers.
 - Explore your organization's vision.
 - Help communicate the culture and organizational vision to customers—daily.
 - Demonstrate ethical behavior.
 - The **ethics** of the organization are intertwined with its culture.
 - **Ethical behavior** is based on values—those of the society, organization, and employees.
 - Identify and improve your service skills.
 - Become an expert on your organization.
 - Demonstrate commitment.
 - Work with your customer's interest in mind.
 - Treat vendors and suppliers as customers.
 - Share resources.
 - Work with, not against, your customers.
 - Provide service follow-up.
 - This can be through a formal customer satisfaction survey or telephone callback system or through an informal process of sending thank-you cards, birthday cards, special sale mailings, and similar initiatives that are inexpensive and take little effort.

V. Separating Average Companies from Excellent Companies

- The following factors can demonstrate an organization's level of service commitment:
 - Executives spend time with the customers.
 - Executives spend time talking to frontline service providers.
 - Customer feedback is regularly asked for and acted upon.
 - Innovation and creativity are encouraged and rewarded.
 - Benchmarking (identifying successful practices of others) is done with similar organizations.
 - Technology is widespread, frequently updated, and used effectively.
 - Training is provided to keep employees current on industry trends, organizational issues, skills, and technology.
 - Open communication exists between frontline employees and all levels of management.
 - Employees are provided with guidelines and empowered (in certain instances, authorized to act without management intervention) to do whatever is necessary to satisfy the customer.
 - Partnerships with customers and suppliers are common.
 - The status quo is not acceptable.

VI. What Customers Want

- **What customers want** are things that customers typically desire but do not necessarily need.
 - It is value for their money and/or effective, efficient service.
- Following are seven common things that customers want and expect if they are to keep doing business with you and your organization:
 - Personal recognition
 - This can be demonstrated in a number of ways, such as sending thank-you cards, returning calls in a timely fashion, etc.
 - Courtesy
 - Basic courtesy involves pleasantries such as “please” and “thank you”, as there is no place or excuse for rude behavior in a customer service environment.
 - Timely service
 - A customer service professional should provide prompt yet effective service.
 - They should work diligently to stay on schedule and at least explain when delays do occur so that the customer understands the reason for the wait

- Professionalism
- Enthusiastic service
- Empathy
 - As a service provider, one should make every effort to be understanding, and to provide appropriate service.
 - A common strategy for showing empathy is the **feel, felt, found technique**—a process for expressing empathy and concern for someone and for helping that person understand that you can relate to the situation.
- Patience

Class Activities and Sample Assignments

1. Read chapter two. (LO 2-1 through 2-6)
2. The service culture of an organization is often defined in its mission statement. Ask students to find mission statements that define the service culture. (LO 2-1)
3. Give examples (or have students role play the situations) using the feel, felt, found technique in the following situations: (LO 2-3 through 2-6)
 - a. A customer is angry because the service department is not able to get to his home and fix his problem for another three days, but he wants it done tomorrow.
 - b. A customer is disappointed that the price for a particular item has gone up since the last time she bought it.
 - c. A customer is acting irritated and mentions the fact that he had to wait five minutes in line since no one opened another cashier lane.
 - d. A customer has emailed because the clothing item she ordered on the website is much larger than standard sizes.
 - e. A customer emailed because he keeps getting promotional emails even though he has requested his name be taken off the mailing list.
4. Identify specific types of training that might be needed to provide excellent customer service when performing the following jobs: (LO 2-3 and 2-4)
 - a. A call center representative for a cable company
 - b. A shoe store salesperson
 - c. A plumber
 - d. A teacher
 - e. A department of licensing agent
5. Compare and contrast the differences between a mentor and a boss in a short paper or group discussion. (LO 2-1 through 2-6)

Discussion Opportunities

1. Discuss a situation where you were not allowed, due to policies and procedures, to grant excellent customer service. If this has never happened, think of an example and discuss. (LO 2-3)
2. What would motivate you to provide good service to customers? Discuss how your motivation is related to the factors discussed in the chapter. (LO 2-1 through 2-4)
3. Of the items listed in the chapter on customer expectations, how would you rank them in terms of importance? Which are the top five most important expectations to meet? (LO 2-6)
4. This chapter discusses some of the ways customers gain information to evaluate products. How do you evaluate products? How important is customer service to your choice of products? (LO 2-3 through 2-6)
5. Using RUMBA, evaluate your personal goals in regards to career. Do they meet the criteria of a RUMBA goal? If not, how might you change the goals so they do meet the criteria? (LO 2-1 through 2-5)

In the Real World Notes

Retail—Ben and Jerry's Ice Cream

This opening discussed some of the service components offered by Ben and Jerry's. Founded in the 1960s, this organization embodied the “for the people” philosophy. Their success is largely due to the fact that the owners had loyal customers. These customers were a result of non-traditional marketing methods, such as a RV that drives around the country giving away free ice cream. The company was purchased by a multinational corporation in 2000, but the founders are still involved in some of the promotional aspects of the organization although they do not hold board or management positions.

1. Do you have personal experience with this company? If so, describe your impressions.

Students will likely have strong opinions about this company if there is one in the area. Either way, students may have heard of it due to its many social responsibility programs. Students who do not have a shop nearby may have seen Ben and Jerry's products in their local supermarket.

2. How does this organization differ from other similar successful companies of which you are aware?

Answers will vary, but some possibilities might include the involvement of the owners, the unique marketing practices, the commitment to social responsibility, and the fact that the owners touted themselves as “regular people” and not as “the man.”

3. How is this organization similar to other successful companies of which you are aware?

Answers will vary. Most of them may say they have a shared mission and values, and they tend to hire people who will support both. Customers get the sense they are cared about, and feel like Ben and Jerry are people they know and would be friends with. It's easier for companies to be successful when the customers are rooting for them!

4. What does Ben and Jerry's do that encourages customer support and loyalty?

Unique, memorable product names, free products on special occasions, and the

feeling that they are “one of us” can create customer loyalty. Good training of employees and employee empowerment are other ways this company, and many others, can gain loyalty.

5. Does the organization do anything that might cause a negative impression in the mind of customers? Explain.

Answers will vary, but students may say the former owner’s “antics” might turn off some customers.

6. Would you want to work for this company? Why or why not?

Answers will vary. Students should make the point that it is important to work with a company that has similar values as theirs.

Work It Out Notes

Work It Out 2.1—*Organizational Culture*

This first Work It Out box focuses on the components of organizational culture. The box asks students to think about their own organizations or ones they are familiar with and asks what the service philosophy of the organization is and what things make the organization unique. Students will likely enjoy talking about their own organizations, so instructors may consider doing this as a group discussion activity. The other questions ask about the factors that stand out about employee performance and other factors about the organizational culture. Students will likely have a list of positive and negative aspects or things that do not contribute to a service culture. One example would be lack of training or lack of empowerment. Finally, the last question asks students what they would do differently. Here, the instructor can make the point that the best employees are those who not only complain but offer solutions as to what can be done differently to make things better.

Work It Out 2.2

This box asks students to look at the two return policies in figure 2.4 and react to them. To probe further, instructors can ask students how likely they would be to shop at either store depending on the return policies. To expand the discussion, consider leading a discussion on stores in an area close by that has generous return policies and not-so-generous ones. What are the advantages from a customer service perspective? Are there disadvantages?

Work It Out 2.3—*Managing Customer Encounters*

This box asks students to think about a situation where they experienced a customer service situation in which a manager became involved. Ask students to discuss in groups and determine if bringing the manager into the situation was justified or if the employee should have been more empowered. Next, ask students to discuss how the manager handled the situation and what could have been done to improve the situation. For follow-up questions, instructors can ask students what role training has in a manager's ability to handle situations well.

Work It Out 2.4

This box asks students to discuss, in groups, the skills training needed to be in customer service. It also asks the types of training that students have had or need to

have in this area to qualify for a position in customer service. Consider asking students to brainstorm a list of traits in groups and then write on the board or flip charts.

Assuming most of the skills are emotional intelligence (EQ) type skills, such as friendly and approachable, instructors can make the point that while skills training is important, sometimes personality is equally important in getting a job.

Work It Out 2.5—*Your Customer Expectations*

The decision a company makes affects the customer service environment. The box asks students to think about their own expectations when patronizing a company. Ask students to brainstorm a list on their own and then share their lists in groups. Which items appear on more than half of the individual lists? As a group, can they agree that these components would be the most important?

End-of-Chapter Material Notes

Key Terms

- Attitudes (p. 45)
- Customer-centric (p. 46)
- Customer-friendly systems (p. 65)
- Employee expectations (p. 49)
- Employee roles (p. 49)
- Empowerment (p. 62)
- Ethical behavior (p. 72)
- Ethics (p. 72)
- Feel, felt, found technique (p. 77)
- Mentors (p. 61)
- Mission (p. 47)
- Mission statement (p. 48)
- Protégé (p. 61)
- Rumba (p. 49)
- Service culture (p. 45)
- Service delivery systems (p. 66)
- Service measurement (p. 51)
- Service philosophy (p. 47)
- Vision statement (p. 48)
- What customers want (p. 76)

Review Questions

1. What are some of the key elements that make up a service culture?

The elements of a service culture include the service philosophy or mission, employee roles and expectations, policies and procedures, management support, products and services, motivators and rewards, training, and delivery systems.

2. How does management's service philosophy affect the culture of an organization?

Service philosophy of an organization is the direction or vision of the organization that supports the day-to-day interactions with customers. It is the approach that an organization takes to providing service and addressing the needs of customers. This will affect the organization's culture as it is based on what the organization

stands for. If all employees are aware of what their organization stands for, how it accomplishes its mission, and where it is headed in the future, they can play a crucial role in creating a service culture that strives to identify and meet customer needs, wants, and expectations.

3. How does RUMBA help clearly define employee roles and expectations? Why is each component important?

Employee roles and expectations must be clearly defined and communicated in terms of certain characteristics, sometimes referred to as RUMBA which stands for realistic, understandable, measureable, believable and attainable. To be realistic, the company's employee standards and goals must comply with the workplace and customer base. To be understandable, it must be communicated and clear to every employee. To be measureable, there has to be some way to determine the accomplishment of goals, usually by the numbers. To be believable, every employee must commit to the goal and the people must believe it is achievable. Of course, management must also give employees the tools to achieve goals.

4. How can policies and procedures affect the customer's impression of customer service?

Many customers negatively meet organizational culture directly when a service provider hides behind "company policy" to handle a problem. If the policies prevent or make it difficult to provide customer service, it could create a negative perception. However, if employees are empowered, it can create a favorable impression when employees can do almost anything to make the customer happy.

5. What questions should you ask yourself about your role as a service provider?

Students might consider asking who the customer is, what they can do to achieve organizational excellence, whether their efforts are focused on customer satisfaction, and whether they are empowered.

6. What are some indicators that a company has customer-friendly systems in place?

Customer-friendly systems are apparent through policies that say "We care" or "You're important to us." The advertising done and the way complaints or problems are handled would be examples.

7. What are some of the tools used by organizations to measure their service culture?

Following are some of the tools that organizations can use to determine how well they are providing customer service:

- Employee focus groups
- Employee opinion surveys
- Customer focus groups
- Mystery shoppers
- Customer satisfaction surveys
- Customer comment cards
- Profit and loss statements or management reports
- Employee exit interviews
- Walk-through audits
- On-site management visits
- Management inspections

8. What are some strategies for helping promote a positive customer culture?

Following are strategies to help promote a positive customer culture:

- Partner with customers.
- Explore the organization's vision.
- Help communicate the culture and organizational vision to customers—daily.
- Demonstrate ethical behavior.
- Identify and improve service skills.
- Become an expert on the organization.
- Demonstrate commitment.
- Work with the customer's interest in mind.
- Treat vendors and suppliers as customers.
- Share resources.
- Work with, not against, the customers.
- Provide service follow-up.

9. What separates average organizations from excellent ones?

Spending time with customers, taking customer feedback seriously, rewarding innovation, productive use of technology, and open communication are some examples of how an excellent organization differs from an average one.

10. What are some typical things that customers want?

Following are some of the typical things that customers want:

- Personal recognition
- Courtesy
- Timely service
- Professionalism
- Enthusiastic service
- Empathy
- Patience

Collaborative Learning Activity

In this day and age when many of the students work, it can be hard to arrange a field trip. What instructors can do, however, is ask students to note service in their daily dealings. For example, the student can note if the mission of an organization comes through in the service that is provided. They can also observe and interact with the customer service providers to determine if the proper training and empowerment is taking place within the organization.

Face to Face—*You and Your New Job in Customer Service*

This situation asks students to assume the new role in customer service at United Booksellers. The organization has been heralded for its high quality service and a friendly atmosphere. The facilities are nice, and the efficiency and helpfulness of the employees are notable. Each store has its own coffee shop where patrons can relax and read. The organization employs 3,000 people and provides extensive customer service training before being allowed to interact with customers.

The questions following this case include:

1. Are there indicators of United Booksellers' service culture? If so, what are they?
2. If you were an employee, in what ways would you feel that you could contribute to the organizational culture?
3. If you were a customer, what kind of service would you expect to receive at United Booksellers? Why?

Answers will vary, but the point is to ask students to think about what personality traits they have that can contribute to a high quality organization.