



AVOID SPEED TRAP POLICIES

BY JOHN TSCHOHL

If you want to differentiate your company in the marketplace, then you need to show how you can dramatically deliver service and products faster than your competitors. Amazon does it. Apple does it. Why don't you?

Recently, one of my employees was having a problem with an item shipped to her from Amazon. She needed to return the product and was not savvy to the info on the website to make the return and get her money back. So she called and talked directly to a human being. An emphatic and understanding rep sent her a return packing slip via email so all she had to do was print and tape the label on the box. AND...According to company policy, credit will only be issued once the product is received at Amazon. The customer in this case was issued the credit to her account right away. Speed Trap avoided and... another over happy Amazon customer.

Customers value speed ... Amazon! "...if you wanna do more of something, make the friction less. If you wanna do less of something, make the friction more." — Jeff Bezos

Amazon has overcome challenge after challenge by adhering to Bezos' mission: To be earth's most customer-centric company; to build a place where people can come to find and discover anything they might want to buy online.

Speed involves using tools and techniques to dramatically reduce the time needed to complete a task while still placing a high importance on the level of quality. Remember, customers will reciprocate your helpful actions.

When you resolve situations quickly and effectively, and then respond to their need, most customers will pay you back with continued or increased loyalty, goodwill and even repurchasing. Keep in mind, there's nobody more valuable than the customer.

Just ask Apple. They are known worldwide for service and speed. They take care of questions, problems and concerns faster than competitors. Apple has elevated customer service into a science. Today, the company stands shoulders above the competition when it comes to alleviating the stresses customer's experience. There's no outsourcing as they specialize in fixing Apple products and making a stressful situation more manageable. They make it easy and fast.

Apple's secret weapon is incredible customer service. The most recent earnings report listed Apple as the most valuable company on the planet at a mind blowing \$775 billion with a staggering \$261.5 billion cash balance. Written out, that is "\$261,500,000,000.00."

"We're very simple people at Apple. We focus on making the world's best products and enriching people's lives." Tim Cook.

In my book *Empowerment a Way of Life*, I illustrate four challenges that all businesses face. They are:

1st: Many executives don't trust the customer. They believe the customer is trying to take advantage of them. Employees feel the same way.

2nd: We don't trust employees. We pay them as little as we can and have even less confidence in their ability to make

decisions. We have a belief that our lying, cheating customers are going to take advantage of our incompetent employees.

3rd: With Empowerment you don't need as many managers and supervisors. They're not overly excited about losing their perceived power, nor are they thrilled about the potential of losing their jobs.

4th: Very few employees are on their knees at night praying for Empowerment. It's just too risky.

I stress that empowerment means every employee has to make fast decisions in favor of the customer. It's important that we are honest and sincere in our efforts to service our customers. The only way we can do that is by empowering employees to satisfy the customer quickly and to their satisfaction.

Satisfying customers quickly benefits everyone. A company's success lies in empowered employees. It is important to train employees and make sure they have trust in what empowerment will bring to a company. Moreover, happy, empowered, fulfilled employees are the key to creating "over-happy customers" for your company. When employees are empowered and given responsibility, they use their talents and skills to maximize the opportunities and as you can see by the most successful companies in the world, empowered, responsible employees that know the value of speed, contributes greatly to your bottom line.

"Speed is making fast decisions, on the spot, in favor of customers." John Tschohl