



Four important productivity characteristics of Customer Service teams

Understanding how to harness and maximise the full potential of your people and help them thrive and consistently produce the results you want will result in happier, more engaged teams and increased productivity.

People thrive when they believe they need to take ownership and responsibility in their roles, when they are solution-focused and always looking for the best way forward in any situation, when they value the views and feedback of others, believe this is reciprocated and have a genuine understanding that each member of the team truly makes a significant difference to your levels of customer service.

People who have a clear understanding of their capabilities and the best use of their time are more productive because they are less likely to be distracted by things they are not able to influence or control and can therefore move on more quickly to the things they can progress and achieve. When they are solution-focused, and they recognise the value of others they can leverage the power of the team to collaborate effectively and produce excellent results together.

1. People are equipped to quickly assess situations and know what they can take ownership and responsibility for

Having a framework in place to assess any situation and see what is possible in that situation is central to being able to take ownership and responsibility for as many customer interactions as possible. In our experience, equipping people with the ability to understand what they can take ownership of and where they need to involve others is an important productivity tool. Coaching people to calmly assess each situation they encounter to determine if they can take ownership and responsibility to find a way forward themselves, whether they need to influence others to find the solution or whether it is outside of their control or influence enables customer service professionals to quickly develop an effective plan.

Giving team members a framework for this assessment and a set of straightforward questions to ask so that they have a go-to strategy in any situation to work out what they can do, enhances their effectiveness, the speed of resolution of the customer's issues and builds confidence and capability. These questions could include what is my goal, what is my customer's goal, what can I do, what else can I do, who can I influence, when should I influence, is this truly outside of my control or influence? These questions help focus on what is possible in any situation.

Our second characteristic, the ability to find solutions, options or alternatives to meet customer needs and to communicate this to customers first, is central to being able to take ownership in any situation.

2. Be solution-focused from the outset

Do you believe that your customer service team members have the knowledge and skills to communicate solutions first, regardless of the situation? An organisation where people focus their time and energy on what can be done first has a head start in driving productivity! Finding alternatives, options and a way forward and communicating this to customers first is an essential characteristic of highly productive service. When we listen to customer service team members talking with customers it is often true that they spend time telling customers what is not possible first before moving onto what can be done. The customer can be dissatisfied or disappointed. Even in situations where you need to give disappointing news or say 'no' to a customer, focusing on alternatives or what is possible first can help you avoid lengthy, dissatisfying interactions and get to a compromise or sometimes an even better solution faster.

3. Knowing when and how to move on

In any organisation there are things that people would like to be possible however for good reasons they are not. In our work with customer service team members, we find that there are issues that team members are concerned about, feel should be possible or should change and they can spend a lot of time discussing these and with great sincerity can agonise over the issues they present. Building on point 1 - having a framework to assess situations and what can be done - it is important that team members are confident to recognise when things are outside of their control or influence. When people repeatedly talk about things that are not possible to deliver or that they are not able to change, influence or control, it consumes time and energy and is a distraction. If this situation is completely beyond our control, even if only temporarily, it is helpful to recognise that, recognise the negative impact continuing to discuss or agonise over it is having and work to move on quickly and redirect our energies to something more productive and achievable. It is important to equip your team to focus on what is possible and communicate that to customers and be really clear about what is not possible focusing back on what is so that everyone can move forward.

4. The ability to self-assess and take a pause if needed

Ensuring our people are in the best position to deliver great service will enhance productivity. Encourage your people to check in with themselves on a regular basis to see if they're thinking clearly and in a good position to deliver excellent service or whether they need to take action to remain in a positive productive state. Giving people the opportunity to press the pause button, take a time out or ask for help from others in the team or a manager will pay dividends in terms of productivity, employee wellbeing and satisfaction, as well as safeguarding the service offering to your customers.

MGI's proven and unique Mindset, Language & Actions Toolkit can harness the power of productivity to help your teams achieve their goals and yield outstanding outcomes and results.

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To find out more about how we can help you to achieve your goals for successful, long-lasting training through our Mindset, Language & Actions Toolkit, or to book a chat with us, you can:

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