

Latest Company News

A legendary customer experience

Quad was founded almost 45 years ago with the philosophy that if we take care of the customer, the business will take care of itself. And we've done pretty well! Because of our rapid growth in recent years, we institutionalized this customer-first commitment as one of our five core business strategies and created the Customer Experience Group in 2014, which includes our customer service teams along with other key roles, to enhance customer experience.

“Putting our customers at the center of all we do, walking in their shoes, is a crucial business strategy to propel our company forward,” said Joel Quadracci, Chairman, President & CEO. “After all, if we don't have customers, we don't have a business. No matter what our job titles or responsibilities, each and every one of us at Quad is in the customer experience business.”

Moving to the top of the customer experience pyramid

In today's marketplace, a job well done isn't nearly enough to set us apart from our competitors. The quality and timeliness of our work, our skilled workforce, our manufacturing and distribution platform, our technology ... they are a must, but they meet only the bare minimum of our customers' expectations. Differentiation by price isn't sustainable. We need to move up the pyramid of customer experience. Did we make the process easy for our customers? And was the experience enjoyable? Are they looking forward to continuing the relationship? Very few companies achieve this highest level of the customer experience pyramid. Quad must continue to deliver and improve on customer experience if we want to stay ahead.

“In the very near future, companies will have to compete on the basis of customer experience. It is fast becoming the differentiator,” said Kent Brooks, Vice President of Customer Experience. “Most companies already are competing on this basis, whether they realize it or not.”



Customer service vs. customer experience: What's the difference?

Customer experience isn't a feel-good slogan or a sign tacked to the wall. It's not a flavor of the month – or even the flavor of the year. It's the way we do business, day in and day out. Customer experience goes well beyond customer *service*. It's not about what we do, but how we do it.

“Customer service is more transactional. It's about getting the job done correctly and out the door on time,” explained Greg Gaito, Plant Director in Chalfont. “But customer experience is holistic. It's how the customer perceives every interaction with us, from the first touchpoint to the last. It's not just about one job; it's about a customer's entire experience with us, individually and as a company. We want them to feel, ‘I know Quad has my best interests at heart.’”

Blake Weiss, Plant Director in Lufkin, views customer service as the role of sales,

plant leaders and customer service reps, who have frequent interaction with customers and troubleshoot complaints or head off problems. But customer experience, he emphasized, is everyone's responsibility.

"Customer experience is about building relationships and trust," he said. "Viewing things from the customers' perspective, really getting to know them and their business on an intimate level, understanding their needs and challenges now and in the future, and addressing their concerns before they become problems."

Even employees who don't have direct customer interaction impact the customer experience. "In the production process, anyone downstream from us is our internal customer," said Dan Frankowski, Plant Director, Saratoga Springs and Springfield. "Our internal customers have expectations of us in terms of the quality and speed of our work so they, in turn, can meet the expectations of the external customer. We have to be sure that each person in the process has what he or she needs to be successful."

Making customer experience a business discipline

Why put customers at the center of every thing we do? It's simple: The better the customer experience, the better our business results.

Tips to deliver outstanding customer experience

- View every interaction from the customer's perspective.
- Don't say no. Work together to find solutions that work for your customer.
- Treat the customer as you would like to be treated.
- Treat each customer as though it is our only customer.
- Remember that when you are helping your internal customer, you are impacting the end customer's experience.
- Take responsibility for any miscommunication.
- Be specific about what you plan to do and when.
- Smile and say thank you!

Customers who have a great experience come back again and again. They buy new products. And they rave about Quad to others, bringing us even more revenue opportunities.

"The customer-centered philosophy is nothing new at Quad. It's built into our DNA," said Kent. "But as we've acquired new companies, we've gained many new customers and employees. As we grow and become more diverse, we have to make customer experience a part of our business discipline. The customer perspective has to be consistently, proactively driven throughout every aspect of how our business operates."

Kent leads the Customer Experience Group, which is devoted to consistently discovering and addressing our customers' needs and challenges across our core business units.

"We can't assume we know what our customers want," said Brian Johnson, Customer Experience Strategy Manager. "We're implementing ways to get customer insight – to take their skin temperature – so we can make improvements that matter to them. What works for one customer might not work for the next, so we have to build our services around their individual needs. The customer drives our behavior."

Taking the skin temperature, then taking action

So just how do we walk in our customers' shoes? Quad is rolling out numerous methods to better understand the customers' perspective and make changes to improve their experience. We want our customers to be more than satisfied: we aren't satisfied unless *they* are delighted with their Quad experience. Some of these include:

- Integrating Smarttools across core product line facilities to provide customers with a consistent, efficient process.
- Creating a work environment that enables employees to deliver outstanding customer experience.
- Conducting an annual Quad Performance Client Survey to learn about our strengths, areas for improvement, and how customers perceive our brand.
- Gathering and analyzing unsolicited customer feedback and other relevant information to better understand the customer perspective.
- Using the internal input and expertise of our employees who work on the frontlines with our customers to learn customer "pain points" and work to eliminate them.
- Creating a consistent method to onboard new customers.
- Conducting periodic "360" reviews with customers to better understand their business, their needs and their experience with us at every touchpoint.
- Relaunching Camp Quad as an industry marketing thought-leader event.
- Launching the new QG.com to better support our expanding offering.


We use all these methods to gain feedback from customers, and then take action to improve customer experience. The first customer survey, conducted in fall 2013,

resulted in nine new initiatives to improve the customer experience. For example, we launched a project called Order-to-Cash to simplify the billing process – a major pain point for our customers. We also are simplifying how we invoice, report and communicate the value of our comail offering. The 2015 Quad Performance Client Survey will be conducted in January.

The Customer Experience Group has been in action for less than a year, but Kent reports tremendous response from employees. Plant directors are asking for help in implementing more customer-centered processes. Walking in the shoes of the customer is engaging, he notes, because we're all consumers ourselves. We've all had frustrating experiences and we know how it feels to have a great customer experience. What we want for ourselves, we want to ensure for our customers.

"Achieving outstanding customer experience is a journey, not a project," Joel said. "There is no finish line or end point. This is who we are, what we do and how we behave."

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