

Is your team prepared to excel with customers?

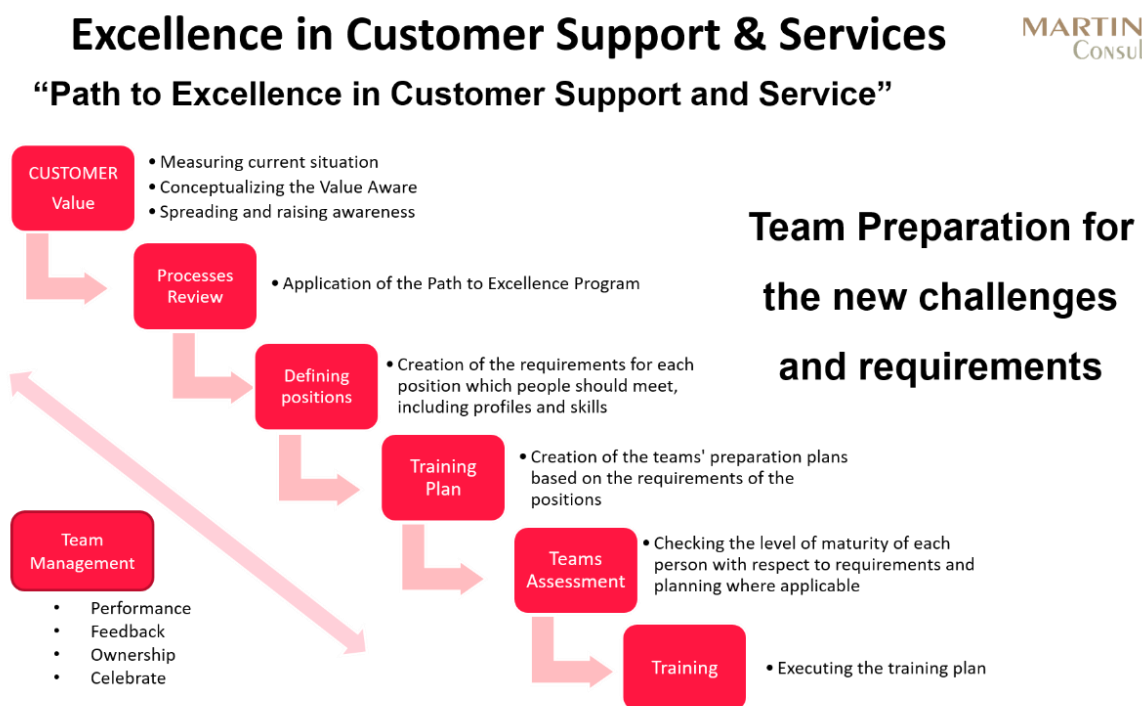
To guarantee the path to excellence in CSS (Customer Support & Services) we must assess key elements of the business:

- Processes
- Policies
- Tools
- Culture, Company's value
- People

They are all created and managed by People, who will also interface with your customers in real moments of truth.

This introduction places this topic on the right level of importance. Don't you agree?

Let me suggest some steps, which will support building a solid foundation to such a paramount aspect creating the organization and environment to elevate your team to excellence levels:



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1. COMPANY CULTURE

I would not recommend to start any project if you have not guaranteed that the workforce is absolutely buying the company value, in our case here, having CUSTOMER in the center of the organization, being part of each and every process, identifying its importance, relevance in all phases of the development, manufacturing, support and services. Creating opportunities to insert customer' s needs and focus into the organization.

This is a very important phase and shall be done carefully, thoroughly.

If well accomplished, meaning, if the workforce has had a "DNA change" ([see article about it](#)) the company will naturally be able to prepare the people, develop the policies, processes and tools needed to excel with customers.

2. PROCESSES REVIEW

Once you guaranteed that the CUSTOMER is a truly company' s value then is the time to review your processes.

We will not go into details how to review the processes. This will be a subject for another insight.

3. ORGANIZATION / TEAMS DEVELOPMENT

Knowing the roles & responsibilities needed to run the processes and organizations teams and positions will be reviewed. At this stage we shall have defined what we expect from each position of the organization, such as profiles, education, experience, skills, seniority, decision making level, etc. Such requirements will be used to attract, develop and retain people (either from inside or outside).

4. NECESSARY COMPETENCES

The requirements shall assess important groups such as technical, language, processes and behavioral skills.

Mindset, technical, language and processes skills are important, as they allow the person to navigate thru the processes and cases with more confidence, they are the minimum expected, the basics, which anybody shall comply.

The behavioral set of skills will leverage the team to the excellence level, which will allow flexibility, the sense of importance and decision making to boost the customer experience with your company.

The list is quite extensive and shall be treated with all the professionalism and focus as they tend to be subjective. Let me list some examples what you would like to expect from the team:

- | | |
|--|------------------------------|
| • Able to concentrate on tasks over extended periods of time | • Capable of multitasking |
| • Able to flex do different personality types | • Communicates Confidently |
| • Able to handle high-pressure situations (not burn out) | • Creative |
| • Advocates for the customer | • Curious |
| | • Empathetic |
| | • Has customer service ethic |
| | • Persuasive |
| | • Resilient |

On the same token, CSS leadership plays an important role to manage the teams and results. The main characteristics you may expect from them are:

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| • Communication | • Flexibility |
| • Listening | • Honesty |
| • Empathy | • Organization |
| • Delegation | • Strategy |
| • Motivation | • Approachable |
| • Trustworthy | • Innovative |
| • Humility | • Forward-thinking |
| • Positivity | • Caring |
| • Commitment | • Decision-Making |

5. TRAINING PLAN

Finding solutions to each requirement gap will be a challenge.

Collaborating with Human Resources team to identify best solutions (in house or not) is recommended.

Critical phase, as the quality of the plan will directly affect the performance of the team. Focus and belief on what you need to accomplish are key in this phase.

6. PEOPLE ASSESSMENT

First thing to realize is that you will not only focus on customer support & services teams. If you do so, you will certainly “die at the beach” .

The CSS teams depend on almost everyone in the organization. Everybody is accountable to deliver excellence, and if one fails, it will be enough to fall behind.

So, your focus, in terms of people preparation, will be every team who somehow is a player in CSS processes. Ideally even your suppliers' teams as well (quite difficult task).

With the positions requirements available and the team, the next step is "team assessment" . Let us understand the level of adhesion of the teams in relation to the requirements.

With this exercise, you will be able to identify the individual gaps.

Knowing the individual gaps, you will be able to produce individual training plans, which shall be implemented according to the targets established during business follow-up analysis.

7. PEOPLE FROM OTHER AREAS or CONTRACTED

In this same exercise you can use the requirements for each position to select people from other areas or from outside the company. The catch here is to hire people with minimum gaps from what you need (less training requirements), as you know what you want.

8. PEOPLE MANAGEMENT

Just like any activity, PEOPLE MANAGEMENT is endless, needing adjustments, reviews as people evolves, leaves, do not evolve and business also is dynamic and might change the demands over people. Make sure you run this program continuously, validating all steps from time to time. It is quite important to know and follow your team members' performance to guarantee good results and prepare your successors.

Important aspects:

- Establish targets and monitor performance and productivity
- Guarantee proper working conditions and tools
- Allow ownership, decision making
- Establish connections with other areas, suppliers to enlarge the team capability of solving customer issues
- Have 2-way feedback sessions regularly, listen, coach and improve based on their experience
- Have a clear view of their importance and their career path
- Review results with the team and motivate to share experiences
- Implement a knowledge base program
- Celebrate

People who shares a same CUSTOMER value, knows the business, have the right sense of importance and delivers in excellent levels will be the ones to criticize the status quo and regularly review processes, policies, tools, being the center and motivator of a continuous improvement and the path to excellence in CSS.

Is your team prepared to excel with customers?

Martini Consulting can help you understand where you stand and what needs to be done.

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