

BTEC UNIT Seventeen: Marketing Intelligence

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CUSTOMER CARE

- * Customer care is at the heart of all successful companies. It can help you develop a loyal customer base and improve relationships with your customers.
- * In a competitive market, it can be tempting to chase new business. However, to boost revenue and profitability in your business, your best bet is to focus on customer retention and [build up customer loyalty](#).
- * Loyal customers come back time and again; they will also promote your business through [word-of-mouth recommendation](#). By building a long-term customer base, you can reduce the costs of looking for new customers and improve your bottom line.
- * Good service helps turn customers into ambassadors for your business - they will buy your products and services regularly and give you [valuable feedback](#) on your performance as well as supporting you through good times and bad.
- * To turn a satisfied customer into an enthusiast you need to offer great service based on a deep [understanding of your customers' needs](#). Price and product are important but it is service that gives you the edge over your competitors.

Customer Loyalty

- * Better customer care means that current customers are more likely to think well of the company, and will be more inclined to return. This creates a strong customer base that can help the company through financially difficult periods and gives them leeway in terms of price control and product development. A company that can keep customers also tends to have a higher market share than its competitors.

Leveraging Marketing Opportunities

- * Customer care usually works its way back around and acts as advertising through the company, generally by word of mouth from satisfied customers. The more impressed a customer is with the service and care provided, the more likely they will be to recommend the business and mention its virtues to friends and family, increasing the customer pool through indirect advertising.

Goal Cohesion

- * Most customer care strategies are part of a larger customer service plan and can help focus this plan and any parts of the business involved in it. This can be especially useful for large companies that may be struggling to find a customer service focus. Care strategies integrate company goals with differentiation to develop easy ways to apply customer service in various situations. This can create much more efficient and productive customer service departments.

Pre-emptive Troubleshooting

- * Many businesses use customer care strategies to minimize the effects of malfunctioning items or service problems. If the customer is already made aware of the ways the company is willing to help and already has access to phone numbers and other contact information in case of a problem, they are less likely to be frustrated when something does go wrong. The best companies teach their customers what to do if problems do arise so they can be more self-sufficient.

Online Presence

- * Modern customer care strategies involve a strong online presence, which helps companies develop their websites and integrate customer-related applications and pages with their product information. This is usually very beneficial to companies with websites, since consumers tend to find websites with easy customer service options--such as phone numbers, email for questions, and FAQs--more attractive and are likely to be more impressed with the company as a result.

Customer satisfaction

- * Good customer service is about managing the perceptions of your customers and giving them a positive experience of doing business with you. Are your staff friendly and professional? Are your products and services up to scratch? Do you deliver what you promise?
- * Getting this right is vital. To create satisfied customers, you need to establish a relationship with them based on understanding their needs. Then you need to exceed their expectations at every turn.
- * Every business makes promises to its customers, whether tacit or implied. Make sure you are delivering results. A good rule of thumb is to under-promise and over-deliver.
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Customer relationships

- * Even the smallest business needs to plan and control its [customer communications](#). [Customer relationship management \(CRM\)](#) is not the preserve of big corporations. To succeed, every business needs to take a customer-centric approach and build good relationships with their customers based on trust.
- * You have to work at customer relationships. Never take your best customers for granted. Keep communicating with them so you can respond as their needs change and [reward them for their loyalty](#).
- * Customers don't usually complain; most just go elsewhere. Others not only complain, but demand action and possibly compensation. Most businesses handle complaints badly. Set up a [customer complaints procedure](#) and respond promptly. Resolve the issue so that you don't make the same mistake twice and tell the customer how you have dealt with it.
- * At the same time, don't wait until someone complains. Encourage continuous feedback and be prepared to make improvements. Regular customer contact is vital and [customer satisfaction surveys](#) are a good way to find out how your business is seen by others. Regular surveys should elicit real responses, so ensure they can tell you in words as well as tick boxes.
- * [Loyalty schemes](#) allow you to focus on your best customers. These customers buy more and are more profitable than those who may only respond to discounts. What's more, highly satisfied customers are more receptive to [cross-selling and up-selling](#)

REFERENCES

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