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START WITH THE END IN MIND

When you've reached the pinnacle of creation for your product, customer service becomes the true differentiator and your opportunity to truly shine

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa – 12 February, 2018: There was a time when there simply wasn't much choice of products to buy or services to use. You used the local doctor, shopped at the greengrocer or butcher, milk was milk, and if you look all the way back to the year 1908, the only car on offer was a Ford Model T. As the world becomes a village and purchases can be made in cyberspace from anywhere in the world, not only do products have to stand out from the crowd, but customer service must be exceptional.

Digital communication may have changed communication in many ways, but it has also taken the customer experience back to the good old days when a handshake and a smile closed a deal or smoothed ruffled feathers – but with a twist. With the advent of social media platforms like Twitter or Facebook, it's far easier for consumers to make their voice heard, instantly and very publicly. Now all interactions are out there in full colour; whether it's a complaint or a compliment, customers can air their opinions and experiences to simply everyone. Social media has made customers more confident and has changed the balance of power between brands and customers. This, coupled with the Always-On culture of today's world, demands that companies stay on their toes and have quick come-backs and exceptional customer service plans. As Generation Y'ers and Millennials grow up and their buying power escalates, there's even more pressure on companies to stay ahead of the game, because these market segments are not only highly proficient with digital communication, they also believe that experience trumps material possessions.

The experiences they want don't just come to the fore after a customer has purchased a product or used a service – the journey begins with the customer's need or desire. It starts with a presence in the right place at the right time with a promise that can be backed-up. Customers no longer simply pick the first product they see that seems to meet their needs. Before making a decision, they check – is the promise true, what have other people's experiences have been, is this excellent value for money?

A brief social media post saying, 'Hey I'm thinking about buying a new phone,' will yield numerous responses which will detail peer opinions, recommendations and warnings. It doesn't matter if the opinions are skewed or even wrong – they will be the potential customer's primary decision-making foundation. U.S. Research and advisory company Gartner indicates that by 2020, customers will manage 85% of the relationship with an enterprise without interacting with a human.

Richard Chetty, Director of Services at Samsung South Africa, says, "In a space where opinions can be shared at the click of a button, it's imperative to ensure customer service is exceptional. No company or product will ever be perfect, but if you efficiently and effectively address imperfections or customers' pain points, you'll be able to retain them and gain others. The true experience of a brand happens when customer service is called upon to perform."

Studies indicate that the perceived quality of a product only accounts for 13% of the decision to engage with a company – a whopping 69% of people stop doing business with a company because of bad service. Additionally, 88% of customers prefer dealing with a company with strong customer service as opposed to a company with the latest, most innovative products.ⁱ

"As a leading technology company, Samsung offers the very latest in innovation – and it is vital that our customer service matches that, as well as our brand promise that strives to make customers' lives better. We are consistently creating new and innovative ways to ensure our customers can enjoy seamless use from our products," concludes Chetty.

The bottom line is that it doesn't matter how brilliant your product is, if you aren't able to engage with your customers, they'll stop buying from you. Whether your customers are complaining or complimenting, they expect to be heard, recognised and have their opinions addressed.

About Samsung Electronics Co., Ltd.

Samsung inspires the world and shapes the future with transformative ideas and technologies. The company is redefining the worlds of TVs, smartphones, wearable devices, tablets, digital appliances, network systems and memory, system LSI, foundry and LED solutions. For the latest news, please visit the Samsung Newsroom at <http://news.samsung.com/za/>

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ⁱ <https://www.ameyo.com/blog/customer-experience-statistics>