

# Customer Loyalty—Waiting Program

# Purchased, pleased, waited.

When a customer decides to buy your product or service, it sometimes takes a long time after the contract has been signed until they can use their purchase. Sometimes, the delivery date is delayed—but even if this is not the case, the fact is that customers do not like waiting, even for a short time.

The impact this has on the perception of the brand is substantial:

- Not fulfilling customers' requirements as regards information and service during the waiting period has demonstrably negative effects on customer satisfaction and brand loyalty. As such, the waiting period is a measurable quantifier of (customer) profitability.
- Research shows that early negative experiences with a product have an adverse impact on the subsequent stages of product usage. This means that if a customer—when waiting for his car, for example—feels that he has not been provided with sufficient information or has not been suitably treated, he will appear less willing to tolerate errors in customer service (e.g. at the garage) at a later point in time. Therefore, early product and brand perception should be positively influenced without fail.
- Matters are complicated further by the fact that negative experiences, for example due to delays in delivery, remain in a person's memory longer than positive ones. Customers' experiences with the company or product brand should therefore be made as positive as possible by the company concerned, even in these situations.

Further challenges arise for companies that do not distribute directly to their end customers, but through distribution organizations or reseller structures. They must make a particular point of maintaining direct, structured contact with end customers, including during the sensitive waiting period.

## Waiting isn't just waiting.

The way customers react to waiting times, and what goes on in their heads while they're waiting, has been subject to plenty of research (e.g. waiting in the waiting room at the doctor's). As well as the time that is passing objectively, there is also a felt perception that feeds significantly into wait satisfaction.

Customers perceive waiting times ...

- as being shorter when they are "kept occupied."
- as being longer when they are indefinite, i.e. do not have a foreseeable end.
- as being shorter when they are waiting "in groups."
- as being unbearable when they are worried that they have been forgotten about.

You should therefore actively exploit this time for the purposes of customer relationship management (CRM), with a waiting program that straightaway ensures the satisfaction of your customer at an early stage.

Make waiting times all the sweeter for your customers.

Companies that understand how their customers perceive waiting times can actively influence these customers, be it by passing on targeted information, offering free-of-charge/ low-cost services or consciously organizing the waiting environment.

The job of a waiting program is to maintain structured communication with the customer during the waiting period, i.e. geared toward the respective information or service requirements. As such, the customer receives reassurance on his purchase decision, feels well looked after, and can at the same time develop a stronger affiliation with the brand.

Ideally, a waiting program is linked seamlessly with the process and the measures taken to support interested parties and/or acquire customers, and carries over to ongoing marketing activities for existing customers (CRM measures).

# What waiting programs can do.

Keep your customers happy during the sensitive waiting period and use this time to develop long-term customer loyalty. Waiting programs can help you to create this solidarity.

An overview of the advantages of this:

- Waiting programs that are sensibly configured ensure positive brand perception by reassuring the customer of his purchase decision.
- The cost-benefit factor is correct—the benefits produced by waiting programs by marketing additional services and brand effects are greater than the production costs.
- They ensure consistent communication over the entire lifecycle of the customer—good use is made of waiting times to strengthen customer loyalty.
- Psychological factor by means of individualized mechanisms: the customer feels understood and well looked after between purchasing and receiving the product.

With Pepper, waiting becomes part of the brand experience.

Pepper has many years' experience in designing and implementing targeted, integrated customer communication activities, and brings together all relevant disciplines under one roof. As such, we can:

- Generate knowledge of the customer: By determining the experiences customers have had when waiting and how satisfied or dissatisfied they are with the current waiting situation.
- Design appropriate waiting program proposals: As part of the existing marketing and communication (infra)structure, we develop appropriate waiting measures and implement these cost-efficiently.
- Implement creative and production services: We also clarify which communication measures should be specifically aimed at customers, whether communication comes directly from the manufacturer or indirectly via its distribution partner.

In all Pepper projects, the focus is on initiating measures that appreciably feed into your marketing and communication objectives. Our approach is always specific, pragmatic and results oriented, as well as being closely linked with implementation and adapted to your existing communication channels.

See for yourself and let us show you how you can use your customers' waiting times to strengthen your brand and customer relations.

# Answers to your questions.

As an agency with offices all over the world, Pepper can also provide you with a contact partner with a high level of experience in customer loyalty waiting programs in close proximity to where you are located. In other words, we are waiting for your call anywhere in the world, and your specific requirements can be met on a regional, national or even international basis. Give us a try.

## Your contacts at Pepper:

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