



PROJEXUNLIMITED

SUPPORTING YOUR TEAM TO ACHIEVE GREAT RESULTS

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Welcome ...

Soon is good, Now is better!
 Are you giving your customers
 the most timely service?

Timeliness makes the service world go round. We expect our superb takeaway coffee to be good to go in five minutes. We expect our car to be fully repaired in time for us to take off to the bach for the weekend. We expect our money to be transferred overnight to pay for that mint collector's edition of Deep Purple's Greatest Hits on vinyl. We want to receive our products or services on time every time or (better still) earlier.



And boy, do we notice it when service is not timely! To be kept waiting has to be one of the most exasperating experiences on the planet. It's just as frustrating when an organisation assumes that we (their customers) will fit in with their organisational timeframes as Helen recently discovered:

Helen bought her top of the range specs two and a half years ago. Helen recently noticed that her lenses were badly scratched, so she emailed her optician to ask for advice. Two weeks later, Helen was still waiting for a reply, so she emailed the optician again. Another two weeks went by with no response, so Helen visited her optician. The receptionist explained to Helen that the optician was the only one who could help her and as he was out of town, Helen would have to come back. When Helen saw her optician a week later, he explained that the very expensive coating on her lenses was faulty and that her lenses would need to be replaced. Helen would have to pay for this because the two year warranty on her lenses had expired.

Helen was asked to bring her specs to the optician's so that a technician could fit her new lenses. As she needed her specs for work, and her lunch break was the only time that she could do without them, Helen faced a dilemma. This was also the time that the technician took lunch. Helen's optician is open on Saturdays, but the technician doesn't refit lenses on Saturdays. Helen swapped the time of her lunch break with a colleague so that she could get her lenses fitted during the lunch hour.

Do you think that this company responded to Helen as quickly as they could? Did they promptly deliver what she needed? If we shone a spotlight on our own service, how well would it stack up? Do our customers receive the service that they need from

us at the most suitable time for them, or do we make them comply with our organisation's timeframes?

With the holiday season upon us, now is a great time to put your service processes under the microscope to see if you are really meeting your customers' needs in the most timely manner. This may sound simple, but it involves careful planning and robust process improvement on your part. It is also vital for you to encourage your staff to visualise how service feels from their customers' perspective, and to act promptly on the feedback that they receive.

It is time for you to contact the Projex Team for a thorough service check up? Let us take your organisation's service pulse and advise you on how you could improve the timeliness of your service. We always have time for you, so email us anytime at info@projexunlimited.co.nz.

FAQ

How can we deliver timely service to our customers?

Some organisations have established and measurable timeframes for the delivery of customer service, while others don't specify when customers can expect to receive service. As customers, we want to buy from organisations that we can depend on to deliver what they say they will deliver, when they say they will deliver it. *We don't like to wait*, and we have little patience for organisations that make us wait.

Put yourself in your customers' shoes. If you were them, what would you want to know and when would you need to know it in terms of the services that you offer them? Timeliness is near and dear to every customer's heart.

Timeliness is not about:

- Corresponding with customers when you acknowledge their initial enquiry and corresponding again when you have delivered the service they need.

Timeliness is about:

- creating a great experience for your customer throughout their entire customer journey until they receive the service that they need from you.
- ensuring that your customer feels well informed and cared for at every stage of that journey.

You need to engage with your customers during each and every interaction that they have with your organisation. You also need to be monitoring the quality of their customer experience.

In the mindmap on page 3 we share some ideas about how you could address and improve your customer service timeliness.

Timeliness is not a customer satisfaction issue that can be swept under the carpet. It is rated as one of the single most important factors for your customers alongside service quality. Organisations that are serious about being the best service providers will take time to focus on consistently delivering the most timely service.

Our mindmap highlights a couple of scenarios that involve timeliness: 'responding to a customer's request for a service' and 'a customer buying a product'. There are many other types of customer interactions that depend on timeliness, and you need to consider these, for example, when is the best time to:

- update your customers about new services
- call your customers for feedback about a service that they've requested from your organisation
- contact your customers when you haven't heard from them
- obtain your customers' feedback about a new service that you are designing
- advise your customers about a change that you've made to a service etc.

We welcome you to contact the Projex Team for any guidance and support that you might need for improving the timeliness of your service. We can help you create a great customer experience for your customers every time they connect with your organisation.



2012 is chock-full of wonderful opportunities for your organisation to

- gain more knowledge and skills and,
- recognize and reward exceptional customer service.

If you are committed to engaging with your customers and delivering the very best service experiences to them, then read on for more inspiration.

Top Timeliness Tips:

- **Acknowledge** your customers as soon as possible, no matter which channel they use to make contact with you.
- **People First.** Serve your customers and not your business systems. Never let your business systems dictate how you do business
- **Feel Their Pain.** Walk a mile in your customers' shoes.
- **Promptness Pays Off.** Dispatch the product the same day that you receive the order.
- **Be The One.** One stop shopping is best practice. Where possible avoid transferring your customers' calls and emails.
- **React swiftly** to satisfying your customers' needs and then continuously use their precious feedback to innovate your products, services and customer service processes. Remember that if you solicit feedback, you need to be prepared to respond to it in a timely manner.
- **Use electronic tools.** Utilise your request management system. Set up timeframes to manage your requests within your customers' timeframes. Automate regular communication to customers and follow-ups to staff.
- **Resolve problems** as soon as is humanly possible. Sometimes all it takes is a bit of TLC to transform your biggest protestors into your biggest advocates.
- **When using social media,** make it as simple and intuitive as possible for customers to reach out to you and get the attention they deserve. Respond immediately, even if it's just an acknowledgement of their request.



Circle these dates and events on your 2012 calendar:

Leadership Week 2012

22 – 29 June 2012

www.sirpeterblaketrust.org

ALGIM Customer Service Symposium 2012

10 – 11 September (Auckland)

www.algim.org.nz

New Zealand National Customer Service Week 2012

1 – 7 October 2012

www.customerserviceweek.co.nz

International Project Management Day

1 November 2012

Check out other inspiring events on the Projex 2012 Events Calendar at www.projexunlimited.co.nz/events.htm

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