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Photo by Clay Banks on Unsplash

Triggering growth in the pandemic crisis and post vaccine launch will depend a lot on building customer confidence back for most businesses. Building customer confidence and trust is the right path to positive cash flow and profitable growth. Whether it is a product or service, you need to either continue delivering what is promised or risk losing your business. In the case of products it could be the benefits, price, the right time of delivery or offers. In the case of services, it could be reliability, price, empathy, responsiveness or a combination of all of these, among other things.

As a way to building the customer confidence in your business, it is important for you to be able to find the optimum path to reach them and thus be able to satisfy their needs. For example, most customers want their orders shipped on time, they want them packaged properly, and they want their products to perform as promised. Order fulfillment is therefore an integral part of customer-driven businesses and it is the final part in your supply chain undoubtedly.

Let me enumerate a few pointers to cover the last mile in your business. Perhaps these tips might make your work easier and help you build up your customer confidence in these times when sensible people are not venturing out much for their needs.



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It's not just of transaction but more of interaction. What we should remember is that every sale is an interaction and moment of truth. The delivery of the product or service is the final interaction with your customer unless there is after sales service. If the experience your customer has with your company is positive till now, a bad packaging of the product leading to damage will ruin everything your company has built so far. Are you packing the product along with its brochure, or just an invoice when shipping? It might be a good idea to put the details of your other products or service inside along with a thank you letter from your CEO or the sales person. Anything nice and unexpected will be delightful to the customer. Try to make the final interaction the most delightful and you will have some positive bytes from that customer in her WhatsApp chatter.

Final pricing should be optimised. As individual customers, how many times have we moved to another company or website because of high shipping charges or final product cost even when we liked a product? Customers will move to a competitor if the price tag is too high. For completing the last mile, identify a good shipping company depending on your product delivery requirements.



The Speed Post Service tend to be cheaper than a Safe Express or BlueDart but then the delivery experience may not be great either for your company or for your customer. Perhaps a second rung shipping services like Professional might be optimum. The other option is to work out a long-term deal with India Post with special high-level intervention.

Leave an impression. Compare the products that you receive from other companies against the ones you send out. What do you

appreciate in their products and packaging? What materials have they used for packaging? Shouldn't you be looking for materials that protect your product from damages while shipping and handling? It is not a good idea to look for cheapest packing materials because while it may save you a little money, it will take away the future prospects. Consider all of the different types of packing material from bubble wrap to foam in order to find a good price and a nice material to protect your products. While at it, look for sustainable models for the near-future regulation.

Publicise your guarantee. It is important to protect your reputation at any cost when it comes to



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product quality. Heard of the Nordstrom, the US- based upscale department store, story? They are famous for their customer service. There is the story of a woman trying to return a set of tyres she was convinced she had purchased at Nordstrom. Despite the fact that Nordstrom didn't sell tyres, and never had, they took back the tyres and cheerfully refunded the full amount she claimed to have paid even without an invoice. (That the marketing director did this as a gimmick to build a good PR is another story!) Guarantee your word and stand behind it even if it hurts.

Make it easy for your customers to reach you. Provide easily accessible phone numbers, feedback email access, the usual social media handles and any other ways you can think of for customers to notify you when there is a problem. The longer it takes to resolve an issue, the more the bad news in social media against you.

Think outsourcing. Remember the Dell model of business? Have a strategic outsourcing deal with a leading shipping and forwarding agency that will pack and deliver your products to your customers. Depending on the quantity and frequency, the deal and agreement could be formulated. This will help you deliver the best possible service to your customers, as the core business of a shipping services company is timely deliveries. By outsourcing you will be able to concentrate more on your core strengths of product development and marketing. Here are some of the things outsourced services can provide: Labels, barcodes, tape, packing material, boxes, storage, packing and shipping services. A good shipping firm will also manage product returns so you will not have to bear the two way shipping costs. Having an outsourced facility will work well for you if you deal with a large number of orders each month. Such firms can handle higher volumes compared to your facility and this will allow you to deliver products to customers faster.

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