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## Customer focus – individuals

This self-assessment will define your orientation towards customers – both internal and external to your organization. The results will tell you how you may be perceived by your customers.

# Individual customer focus self-assessment

Read the following statements and circle a score according to how strongly you agree or disagree. The more honest you are the more accurate the picture you will obtain. There are no right or wrong answers.

Choose from the following scores where:

- 5 = Agree strongly
- 4 = Agree somewhat
- 3 = Neither agree nor disagree
- 2 = Disagree somewhat
- 1 = Disagree strongly.

1	I go out of my way to satisfy my customers	5	4	3	2	1
2	If I answer a colleague's phone, I tell the caller to ring back rather than involve myself in dealing with the query	5	4	3	2	1
3	I often make promises I can't keep	5	4	3	2	1
4	When dealing with an angry customer, I often fight back	5	4	3	2	1
5	When talking to customers, I project a professional approach	5	4	3	2	1
6	My job would be all right if it wasn't for interruptions by customers	5	4	3	2	1
7	I tend to put things off until the last minute	5	4	3	2	1
8	I love gossiping about other departments	5	4	3	2	1
9	I always return customers' calls when I say I will	5	4	3	2	1
10	I often can't be bothered to reply to internal memos	5	4	3	2	1
11	I agree that customer care is a good thing but I find it hard to deliver	5	4	3	2	1
12	I tend to blame other people when things go wrong	5	4	3	2	1
13	I remain calm and friendly when tackling difficult situations	5	4	3	2	1
14	I see working in my organization purely as a means to an ends – a way of paying the bills	5	4	3	2	1

15	I find it difficult to say no to other people's requests	5	4	3	2	1
16	I blame management	5	4	3	2	1
17	I always help my team members when I see them over-burdened with work	5	4	3	2	1
18	I do the minimum I need to satisfy the customer	5	4	3	2	1
19	I have a tendency to miss deadlines	5	4	3	2	1
20	I often criticize the company at work	5	4	3	2	1
21	I refer to my customers by name	5	4	3	2	1
22	I do the minimum I need to see me through the day	5	4	3	2	1
23	If I have a problem with somebody, I'll talk to other people in the hope that they'll tell them	5	4	3	2	1
24	Nobody acknowledges my effort	5	4	3	2	1
25	I let people in other departments know if my work will affect them	5	4	3	2	1
26	I expect to take my lunch break at the time I want	5	4	3	2	1
27	I involve myself in a number of things and then pull out	5	4	3	2	1
28	I feel life was better a year ago	5	4	3	2	1
29	I see problems through to the end	5	4	3	2	1
30	I believe I have no influence to change anything	5	4	3	2	1
31	Even if I believe strongly in something, I don't take the risk	5	4	3	2	1
32	I do what I think is right even if my manager says something else	5	4	3	2	1
33	I let people know in good time if I can't keep deadlines	5	4	3	2	1
34	I am not interested in how the business I'm working in is doing	5	4	3	2	1
35	I tend to tell my manager what he or she wants to hear	5	4	3	2	1
36	I only pass on information if it benefits me or my department	5	4	3	2	1

37	I recognize my colleagues' efforts over and above their jobs with appropriate thanks or praise	5	4	3	2	1
38	I count the hours until home-time each day	5	4	3	2	1
39	I have some good ideas, but I rarely put them forward	5	4	3	2	1
40	I don't think it's worth exceeding customers' expectations as they'll only want more next time	5	4	3	2	1

## How to score

Enter the score that you have given to each statement in the appropriate boxes on the following grid. Then total each column.

1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28
29	30	31	32
33	34	35	36
37	38	39	40
<i>Total</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Total</i>
W	WD	S	C

Transfer the total score for each column into the following grid. Put a cross in the appropriate box corresponding to your scores. Join up the crosses to produce a graph.

	<i>W</i>	<i>WD</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>C</i>
45–50				
41–45				
36–40				
31–35				
26–30				
21–25				
16–20				
11–15				
6–10				
0–5				

## How to interpret your score

The self-assessment that you have undertaken allows you to determine two dimensions which fashion the way that customers perceive you:

- your underlying attitude towards the customer – be it positive or negative
- the energy that you bring to the tasks you undertake for customers – be it high or low.

Research shows that the behaviours which customers see you demonstrate reflect your attitude and energy. Customers form impressions of you based on your behaviour towards them.

Typically you can categorize how customers may perceive your behaviour towards them in one of four quadrants. Called the Energy and Attitude Model, this matrix has attitude and energy at its axes. Each quadrant is given a label which typifies the behaviours people demonstrate here towards the customer.

Look at the initial over the column with your highest score – *W*, *WD*, *S*, or *C*. This letter denotes the most common way that customers, internal or external perceive you.

Look at your second highest scores. This is your back-up style.

If you have two or three equally high scores this means:

either you have scored the questions incorrectly, or your adding up is suspect! – go back and check your scores

Energy and attitude model

Positive Attitude	<p>SPECTATOR (S)</p> <p>Positive attitude</p> <p>Low energy</p>	<p>WINNERS (W)</p> <p>Positive attitude</p> <p>High energy</p>
Negative Attitude	<p>WALKING DEAD (WD)</p> <p>Negative attitude</p> <p>Low energy</p>	<p>CYNICS and TERRORISTS (C)</p> <p>Negative attitude</p> <p>High energy</p>
	<p>Low Energy</p>	<p>High Energy</p>

or you may be perceived in different ways by different customers. Think of occasions when this may be and the reasons why.

Which quadrant do you fall into?

***Winner (W)***

Research shows that customers want to deal with ‘Winners’, people with a positive attitude and high energy. They are typified by their attitude of wanting to do the best for their customers and by having the energy to see things through to the end. The resultant behaviours are those which ensure customer retention and loyalty.

***Walking dead (WD)***

People who are perceived as ‘Walking Dead’ have a poor attitude towards the customer and a low level of energy. For them, customers are a nuisance and they undertake the tasks that they have to do for customers with reluctance. In truth, they would rather be doing another job in another place.

***Spectator (S)***

A spectator is someone with good intentions; they have a positive attitude towards the customer, but their energy levels are low. Typically people who fall into this category may say the right things, but they find it hard to follow through. This can manifest itself to the customer in broken promises and missed deadlines.

## *Cynic (C)*

Cynics, or terrorists as some people call them, have high levels of energy which are not focused on satisfying customer needs; their attitude towards the customer is negative. Typically cynics have their own agenda which is not customer driven. Cynics' high levels of energy mean that they can be outspoken in their opinions and their attitude can be summed up as 'that will never work'.

## Further action

When you have discovered which style is typical of you, ask yourself:

- What does this tell you about how customers may perceive you?
- Do you agree with your highest score?  
(If not, do you wish to revise the way you have scored each statement? Go back to the statements. Look for scores of 3 – this probably means that you were 'sitting on the fence'. Score the relevant statement again avoiding a 3, then total your scores once more.)
- What does your highest score tell you about yourself?
- What reasons could there be for you to act in this way?
- What is the effect on the customer?

Then look at your second highest score. Often this is a sign of how you may be perceived on an 'off-day' or when you are under pressure or stress.

- What does your second highest score tell you about yourself?
- What reasons might there be for you to act in this way?
- Think of an occasion when you demonstrated this style. What was the effect on the customer?

If your second highest score is similar for two or more categories this means:

either you have scored the questions incorrectly, or your adding up is suspect! – go back and check your scores

or you may be perceived in different ways by different customers. Think of occasions when this may be and the reasons why.

## RECOMMENDED READING

Cook, Sarah (1997) *Customer Care*, Kogan Page, London