

Sales and Service Excellence

Volume 8 Number 8

The Magazine of Team Leadership

August 2008

MANAGEMENT/ENGAGEMENT

SERVICE/CCO

Chief Customer Officers

They facilitate growth and loyalty.



by Curtis N. Bingham

IF YOU WANT TO GROW YOUR business while increasing customer loyalty, the Chief Customer Officer (CCO) might be the solution. The CCO assumes executive *accountability* for customer relationships. This role can help you in five ways:

1. Grow revenue. CCOs can help grow revenue from existing customers as they drive repurchase (service contracts) and by identifying cross-sell and up-sell opportunities. By establishing customer value metrics, they can identify the most valuable customers and help marketing and sales find more prime prospects. They can help acquire the most desirable new customers and prospects—and balance marketing and sales strategies so that new customers are not acquired at the expense of existing ones.

2. Increase customer profitability. Managers must know which customers are most valuable and deserve the greatest attention and service. With a CCO's breadth of customer insight, he or she can create customer value metrics and prioritize resources to profitably nurture valuable customers.

3. Increase customer loyalty and retention. The CCO is in a unique position to ensure that the most valuable

customers are not only retained—but converted into loyal customers—who will not just use but actively promote your products and services. Because of the CCOs' regular interaction with customers, consistent "health measurements," and early warning system, they are uniquely capable of identifying customer dissatisfaction and potential for defection. Once these problems are identified, the CCO helps fix them and ensures they never happen again.

4. Develop sustainable competitive advantage. You must know your customers better than they know themselves. This insight must be gathered from every channel. CCOs drive customer-centric change and instill strong customer focus by bringing customers in to visit with executives, developers, and even noncustomer-facing employees so everyone can hear customer success stories and learn of customer "pain points."

5. Decrease costs. The CCO determines levels of support and attention given to customers according to customer value metrics. The CCO also settles disputes surrounding resource allocation and sets priorities for product/service development. Decisions and priorities are more likely to maximize customer value to the company.

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ACTION: *Appoint a chief customer officer.*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Curtis N. Bingham, President of The Predictive Consulting Group, helps organizations dramatically increase customer acquisition, retention, & profitability. For more information about Customer Strategy, his new Customer Experience Audit, or Chief Customer Officers, visit his website at <http://www.predictiveconsulting.com> or his blog at <http://www.curtisbingham.com>.

