

Right attitude signals best customer service

By Shawn Cumberbatch

Many things contribute to achieving the best customer experiences but having the right attitude is non-negotiable.

It is also vital that internal stakeholders not be neglected when individuals seek to provide the best service that they possibly can to clients.

These are among the areas that will be in focus when Caribbean Catalyst Inc. holds the last in a series of workshops on June 29.

The final one is titled **Extreme Customer Focus**. "Starting with self-reflection, participants learn how to positively impact organisational customer service delivery both internally and externally," is how the human resources advisory firm described the upcoming session.

Caribbean Catalyst Inc. director and workshop facilitator, Jacqueline Elias told **BARBADOS BUSINESS AUTHORITY** that the workshop would benefit "anybody in a customer serving roles, internal as well as external customers".

"For participants, the workshop starts with almost an evaluation of customer service within their company. So I let them look at what exists now within their companies, and then take them on that journey, putting themselves in the mind of the customer first," she said.

"They look at how they reflect on their own level of service delivery, and how their attitudes influence what they deliver, and how they deliver it. So we work on creating that action plan to improve the attitude opportunity."

She added: "Everybody has an aptitude opportunity, everybody has something that they need to improve, whether it be a body language or tone, or if they don't actively listen to persons, anything like that. Taking themselves through that journey is to understand what they can improve within their organisation as well, and what may be hindering how we can better serve our customers.

Improvement initiatives

"So maybe actually looking at the process [of] improvement initiatives, because the thinking is when they leave the workshop they are coming across with specific action items on things that they can improve themselves, and maybe help initiate or suggest within their organisation as well."

Elias said the reality was that "if a customer is upset, they are going to come across to you very angry, and almost sometimes they are in an abusive manner".

"How do you react to these things? We look at how do we better regulate our emotions when dealing with those difficult situations? How can we handle it better? Because persons are not angry at you, they are angry at the situation," she said.

"So how can we reach that resolution and taking them on that journey? It goes back to your attitude opportunity. If I have an attitude, then my reaction is going to be to get vex with you. So I either shut down or I find that resolution."

Elias observed that in this current era where social media dominated, there was a different, and potentially more damaging aspect, in the way customers responded to service delivery.

"In the space of social media, I can easily go and complain about you



Caribbean Catalyst Inc. director, Jacqueline Elias (FP)

service very quickly and start tagging not only the company but media, and there are even groups in social media that actually push and highlight these experiences," she said.

"So we have to be vigilant and we have to value our customers and make sure that their experience is good, because that word of mouth is more powerful than any other marketing campaign you could do. Especially with such a competitive environment, it's important to make sure that you value your customers and give them the best possible experience."

She pointed out the fact was "if you don't have customers you don't have a job because the business cannot function. So it's helping persons realise there's a connection and if they don't do what they have to do in the best way that they can, it affects their job, it affects their team members' jobs".

"Customers could get turned off very quickly and walk out the store and go somewhere else. You need to meet customers' needs and then provide the best solution, it is about making them feel valued and connected. This applies to every sector, every industry, and every business."

Negatively impact your experience

Elias continued: "If the security guard greets you with a smile, and you reach the cashier and everything is working well, but then you reach another person and you are not greeted, and they are not helpful, it can actually negatively impact your entire experience. So everybody has to feel it but it starts with you identifying your attitude opportunity.

"Sometimes people are not genuinely listening and making eye contact. That's something that is telling because if I'm trying to serve you, but I'm not connecting with you, that shows that I'm distracted, I am almost ignoring you.

"So it affects how you're going to serve that customer. It could be your body language, you may not even know that your eyes are rolling when you get upset. So it's to actually identify and have those discussions, because those things really, significantly impact the level of service that you provide."

Unhappy employees often do not make the best customer service providers, she said, adding that "if I am not engaged, and I am not happy at my work, that has a significant impact on the level of service that I will give".

"If you're really not happy, everybody has a choice to leave. Either you try to make the change or you leave. I know it's easier said than done, because obviously financially you might be staying in a job because you need it, but for you to be stuck and really and truly disengaged and unhappy, it's toxic to the environment, but also very hard on your health. It will eventually affect you in a significant way, in terms of your health, mentally, physically, as well," Elias argued.

She also stressed the importance of not taking internal customers for granted.

"It's helping persons to understand it's not about just trying to give a smile to an external customer, but it's also how we interact and support and assist our team members as well," the Caribbean Catalyst Inc. director said.