

- Making your Customer Experience a Reality – - Service Basics and Service Brand – - By [Gareth English](#) -

In the article on [Customer Experience](#) we looked at designing the experience that you want your customers to have. This article will describe the next step in making that experience a reality: attending to the Service Basics and the Service Brand. It will help to address the following commercial questions:

- Why do apparently satisfied customers leave?
- Why do my customers leave when I haven't done anything wrong?
- How can I use my customer service to differentiate myself from the competition?

The key point that I would like to get across is that not only do you need to prevent your customers from being unhappy, but there are different actions that you need to take to ensure that they're feeling good.

How exactly do happy customers benefit your business?

There are three key customer behaviours at stake here and each of them impacts on your bottom line.

Loyalty. Customers who are positively engaged with your brand are more likely to repurchase and to resist overtures from your competitors. This repurchasing includes up-selling and cross-selling opportunities.

Recommendation. When your customers are asked about your service, you want them to say positive things about you. The more engagement they have with your service brand, the more likely this is. For example if a friend needed a solicitor and asked my advice I might tell them about the firm that I used recently and was pleased with.

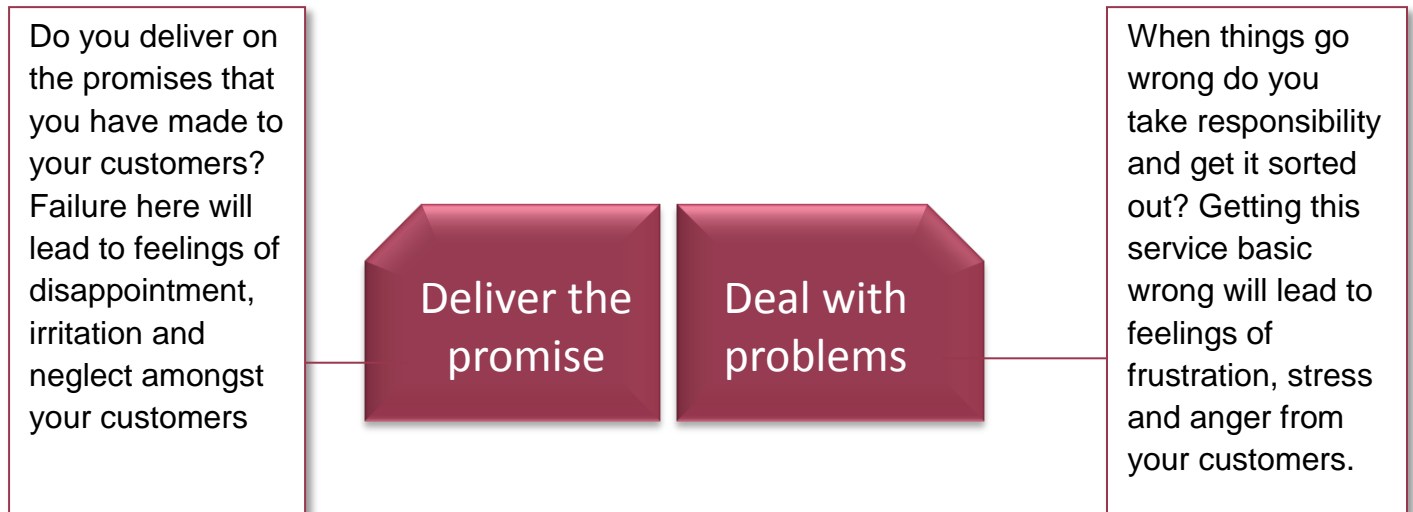
Advocacy. When we feel really positive about an experience we have had we tend to tell other people about it spontaneously. Rather than waiting for someone to ask me, I go out of my way to tell them about it: "I've been working with this fantastic firm; they've already saved me a fortune in the last six months. You should really talk to them about how they could help you".

So if these are the behaviours that you want from your customers, the big question is how to elicit them. The first step to this is to ensure that your customers are satisfied although as we will see, that's not the whole picture.



How to satisfy your customers

Research has found that most industries share two common 'Service Basics': foundation stones of building customer satisfaction. The Service Basics are to deliver the promise and to deal appropriately with problems.



When organisations get these Service Basics wrong they leave their customers with negative feelings, as shown in the side boxes above. Customers who experience these negative emotions spend less and are more likely to leave.

Getting these basics right leads to customers who are satisfied, but that's not enough to get the maximum payoff for your business. Your satisfied customers may not be going looking for an alternative supplier, but if something better, cheaper, or more exciting comes along they are likely to disappear. To protect your business and ensure *loyalty* you need customer *engagement* and achieving this means appealing to your customers' positive emotions³.

How do I go beyond the basics?

If you would like to read a longer version of this article, or would like to find out how Customer Psychology can help you to get the most from your customers, then contact us at <mailto:info@customer-psychology.com>.

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