

Foreword

by Dr Ian Brooks

Every now and then someone gets an idea that is so brilliant you think, “Gosh that idea is so simple, so true and so powerful!” This book is about such an idea.

We all know business is the activity of creating customer value and those who do this best are destined to get a competitive advantage. We also know that customer value does not just exist within the product and service but also within the experience customers get when they do business with us. As customers, we can all remember instances of where the high level of value in a great product was quickly destroyed by a very poor customer experience. Consequently, manufacturers of products and providers of services, and the sellers of those products and services work hard to build as much customer value into their offerings as they possibly can.

But what if customers do not know enough to be able to unlock and use the value someone has worked so hard to create? Very few of us, for example, got full value from our VCRs because we did not know how to use all of its functions. How many of the functions in your car, computer or music system go unused because nobody showed you how to use them? In these cases, all the time and effort the manufacturers invested to create that unused value has been wasted and the opportunity to gain a competitive advantage has been lost.

Knowing there is an opportunity and being able to take advantage of it are two different things, of course. Once you realise that you can create more value for your customers by showing them how to use the product or service you are offering, you have to know how to teach. As any educator can tell you, there is far more to teaching someone than simply talking to them. *Customers as Learners* will not only help you understand the opportunity you have to create more customer value, but it will show you how to teach your customers quickly and effectively so they get the most from the products and services they buy from you.

There is one more reason why you should learn how to help your customers learn: It will help you build a close and long-lasting relationship with your customers. Business is a social activity between human beings and that, as we all know, is why it is so important to build a relationship with your customers. The sales process is one opportunity to build a relationship with a customer but the after-sales process presents an even greater opportunity. Once the customer has bought, they will see anything you do to help them learn how to get

the most from their purchase as a sign of how much you are interested in them rather than in yourself. This is what builds goodwill and strong relationships.

Customers as Learners is written by a man who understands that it's about the customer always, and who has spent a lifetime understanding how people learn. It is a must read for anyone serious about providing superior customer value and wanting to establish a deep long-lasting relationship with their customers. I highly recommend it.

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