simplisys
SERVICE DESK

Briefing Paper

Are employees as important as customers?

Introduction

What is an Enterprise Service Desk and do you need one?

How often have you heard executives expose "Our people are our most valuable resource" or "What makes this company great is its employees" are these flippant statements or real beliefs that are carefully managed to form an intrinsic part of the culture, woven into the very fabric of an organisations being. Unfortunately, in most organisations, statements like these amount to hot air, the vast majority of company leaders worry first about pleasing their investors, second about making their customers happy and distant third supporting and enabling their employees.

Today the most successful companies are run by entrepreneurs who truly believe that happy employees are essential to creating a thriving successful business. We all know who the masters of the modern age are; Facebook, Google, Virgin to name but a few, Richard Branson of Virgin fame for example is reported as saying "Your employees are your company's real competitive advantage. They're the ones making the magic happen—so long as their needs are being met."

The logic is simple.., satisfied employees are more productive and more efficient, they tend to work harder, contribute more, and call in sick less. They feel empowered, appreciated, and therefore are more loyal and stay longer so companies don't have to spend as much time and money recruiting and training. Moreover happy employees tend to talk about their workplace, which can attract new talent.

Approach

Despite the obvious advantages of ensuring employee satisfaction, many organisations struggle with how to achieve that goal. According to a 2104 Aon Hewitt survey 61% of worldwide workers said they feel engaged at their jobs. Which begs the question, why are over a third of employees are dissatisfied with their employer?

This is probably because most business leaders haven't fully

committed to making the changes necessary to move focus on employee satisfaction. They probably still see workers as resources, rather than partners in its success and do not view them as deserving of the same levels of attention, dignity, and respect typically reserved for their highly valued customers.

A common approach to this might be treating your employees as if they are your internal customers. This means moving beyond cheesy motivational posters and half-hearted team meetings. One of the most important places to start implementing this approach is with technology. Organisations typically value their customers by investing in CRM (Customer Relationship Management) solutions; they see this as an essential part of growing the business. Workers are also consumers who have been conditioned in this internet age to expect 24/7 access to product information, service and support. But there is real difference, employees are not customers their requirements are subtly different; it is the organisation that understand the differences that are successful. What employees need most of all is to feel valued, this means that if they ask a question of another department maybe HR or Finance it is essential that they get the same answer as their colleague who asked the same question the day before.

Let's look at a typical scenario; two employees work side by side for a local authority, employee X discusses his need for short term finance over a tea break with employee Y, employee Y suggests that he should contact Finance and ask for an advance on his salary this month as Y had done the same the previous month to get over an issue. employee X agrees that this would be a good way forward and is very appreciative of his colleagues' suggestion and advice. X then makes the request with finance only to be told that it is not company policy and that there is no way he can get an advance on his salary. How does this make X feel? He most certainly does not feel valued. One of the key facets of employee satisfaction is consistency of response and this goes across all departments.

Considerations

One of the things an organisation needs to consider when building a technology platform for employees is the types of requests they can expect. The good news is that the types of cross departmental requests is alarmingly similar for many enterprises like corporate news feeds, payroll and benefit scheme registration etc.

Moreover employees have pretty much the same expectations about quick and convenient access to data in the workplace as they do as a customer in civilian life. The key is to deliver a platform that enables quick, concise and consistent responses to requests for information which probably includes a self-help portal accessible 24/7.

The next step is to decide on a technology platform. Typically an organisation has 2 options; modify the existing external facing CRM system or extend the reach of the internal facing ITSM helpdesk function and create an Enterprise Service Desk.

Both have their merits but there are clear benefits for going the IT route, as follows:

- It is a system designed and configured to support employees.
- Employees are probably already aware and use the support process.
- Employees are aware and experienced at using the self-service portal.
- The platform will already hold all employees in the contact database and probably be synced with the organisations Active Directory, if not some other HR system.
- Typically IT helpdesk solutions include knowledge management as standard.
- Modern systems are easily configured to accommodate change

One key consideration however is data security; clearly the platform must be secure and conform to standard security protocols. It does not stop there, it is also crucial that the content of requests that are logged in the system are secure and private, for example I do not want random employees seeing my personal requests regarding wages made with Finance. To this end it is essential that any platform has the ability to create Roles and Permissions in the solution.

Developing a culture where employees are truly appreciated and

satisfied is closer than you might think and can be achieved by simply extending the reach of your IT service desk and creating an Enterprise Service Desk. For more information on how to move an Enterprise Service culture please contact Peter Lench the founding Director at Simplisys Ltd the specialist in Service Management.

Simplisys Service Desk is designed, developed and supported by a team of dedicated staff at Simplisys Ltd based in Portishead, Bristol. Simplisys Ltd is an ISO 9001 registered company and delivers solutions to industry best practice and quality standards. Peter Lench said "Our approach to implementation is to work closely with our customers, understanding requirements and reasons for change and ensuring that projects exceed expectations".

For more information go to:
http://www.simplisys.co.uk/solutions/enterprise-service-desk/

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