



TOOLS

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THE  
CUSTOMERS'  
REAL NEEDS

## The customers' REAL needs

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### The Customer's REAL Needs

Customers are unpredictable and can be hard to manage. They all have different needs.

There is, however some very good news:

- While they have different physical needs
- They have similar emotional needs

**You are always delivering an emotional need through a physical service.**

So you need to stop and think deeply: what's the real emotional need for the customer in my business? What is a customer REALLY needing from my product or service? What feeling does my customer REALLY want from interacting with me? What would they WANT to say about a perfect supplier they are seeking, to their friends? What's the critically important factors of my offer that needs to be delivered above all else?

Here are some examples:

- If a customer goes to a hotel their real need is not a bedroom for the night and a meal, they expect that as a matter of course. What their real need is to 'feel looked after' (research shows that it's often a need close to being cared for by a parent or the even more ancient need of being accepted by a new tribe!).
- If a customer goes to an accountant, their real need is not to have their books done or to get a set of figures, they expect that as a matter of course. What their real need is to 'feel peace of mind and trust'.
- A B2B customer is not looking for a supplier, they are looking for a 'trusted partner' who will make their life easier and help them achieve their targets.

So you need to know what your customers' REAL needs are: why is it that they are choosing to spend their money with you rather than someone else? What emotional feeling specifically are they wanting?

We have broken these needs down into 3 basic emotions, to make life easier (otherwise this can be a real minefield), and we believe that every customer of every business or person wants a mix of these 3 things. What this mix is, is for you to determine, through your feedback and research (carefully listening, using open questions and peeling the onion to get to the core of the matter).

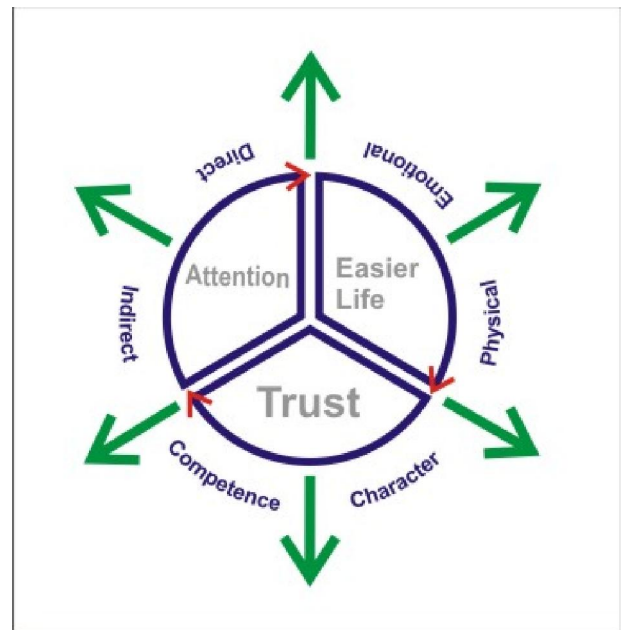
We suggest that every customer needs a mix of 3 things from you, and we've arranged these 3 things into a simple acronym: TEA. So you can remember: customers always want TEA from you!



- T = 'Trust': customers want to deal with people they trust
- E = 'Easier or better life': customers are paying to make their lives easier or better in this situation: there are no exceptions.
- A = 'Attention': customers want to feel like you do actually give a damn about them, individually.

These are further broken down as follows:

- **Trust:** trust is a mixture of
  - Competence (ability to do the job competently, and systems to make sure this is consistent at all levels)
  - and consideration (integrity, care, courage, compassion etc)
- **Easier/better life:** this is a mix of:
  - Physical: systems and processes to make the journey smooth and effortless for the customer
  - Emotional: training, mission and systems to ensure that you're aware of customers' emotional needs and your systems are also designed to smooth them
- **Attention:** this is made up of:
  - Direct: how you treat them, at every step and with every person
  - Indirect: how the systems and surrounding considerations treat them at every step.



Now, these sound like blindingly obvious common-sense principles of universal truth... because they are! But the real issue is that, just because they're obvious, doesn't mean they're easy to do.

In fact, they're hard to do, because our basic animal instincts urge us on to do the very opposite.

- **Trust:** building trust takes time, so instead we rush onwards with deals, offers, and short cuts... always pursuing the next deal.
- **Easier/better life:** this is quite often well considered when we're designing our marketing, but very often not considered enough at every step of the process, throughout the customer's experience. All too often our processes and systems are driven instead by 'efficiency' or the need to protect our profits in a myriad of ways: these rarely make the customer's life easier or better!
- **Attention:** the 'normal' situation with attention is that we design systems and offers that look like we're attentive up front, but when we're pushed, or the customer doesn't conform to the norm, or a member of our team who's not fully engaged

interacts with them, (and definitely after the sale), it just somehow never seems to happen as we'd really like it, and we fall on our face.

The answer seems easy and obvious: but, if it was, we'd see world class delivery of trust, easier life and attention in all our interactions: and, simply, we don't.

**This is good news:** as so few organisations are capable of delivering this: you have a huge opportunity to be remarkable and build sales organically at no cost, by getting this right. This is exactly what the principles, systems and tools of 'Slow Selling' will enable you to do: for both you as an individual and your team around you.

The process for addressing the customer's real needs is:

1. Get a 'customer focused mission' clear: you'll never be able to resist your animal instincts without an empowering, simple, powerful mission keeping you on the straight and narrow.
2. Gather feedback, peel the onion and start to clarify what your customers would see as 'trustworthy', 'making life easier or better' and 'attentive' in your market.
3. Work out which parts are more important than others: start with the most important parts.
4. Put systems in, inch by inch to stop you doing the annoying things and start doing the things to make you remarkable in the eyes of your customer.
5. Make sure they're win/win systems and that your people are engaged and empowered.
6. Make sure the systems have measures, so you can ensure you're all staying on the straight and narrow.
7. Keep checking your mission and gathering the feedback and keep this on a continuous improvement cycle: as soon as you've exceeded the customer's needs, they'll see this as 'normal', your competitors will catch up and you'll need to have moved on.

**So, the 'Slow Tip' is:**

- Work out what your customers are REALLY needing, in what proportion, and what words they use to describe this.
- Work on EVERYTHING, inch by inch (one inch at a time) to develop TEA at every step

**Action Point is:**

As a manager: Train all your team on this single point. Ask them for their opinions on the ideas above.

Make sure you have a professional and effective simple feedback system, so you're hearing these real needs: this needs to be from the customer direct and from your people (and suppliers).

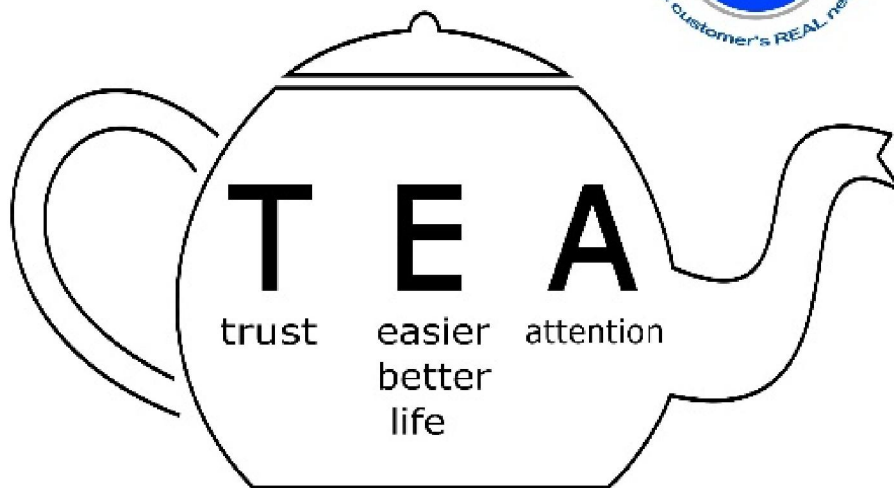
Make sure you have a 'Go the extra inch' continual improvement and development system in place to take effective, regular action on this.

Then keep referring all problems and processes through this 'filter': so, for example, if you get a complaint, stop first to ask: 'What is my customer's REAL need here?' Before trying to handle the complaint: and if you don't know, then ask great questions to find out!

You can even go a bit further and build these needs into your contracts of employment ...

As an individual: Use this tool to either set up your own system or constructively challenge (probably in small steps!) the existing one you're using (or being asked to use). The points are not exhaustive: start by thinking up questions (remember to use 'open' questions and use the words that customers would use about you).

**Remember the customer's REAL needs!**



# THE CUSTOMER'S REAL NEEDS