

A note from publishers

In the past few issues, we have been talking about various aspects of CRM and its status in India. And one constant feedback received by us is that in India, companies are still not focussed on the customer, primarily because of the availability of a very large market.

The question that we asked ourselves was - Is there really a large market out there? Can Indian companies continue to ignore the needs of the customer? Can the Indian customer continue to be treated shabbily as is being done right now?

These are a few of the questions that India CRM News will attempt to answer, by talking to the leaders of the corporate world, in the next few issues. If you wish to send us your comments, please do write to us.

With best wishes,

Turab Lakdawala.

Think About it

Would you rather your spouse be just 'satisfied' or would you prefer 'loyal'?

● Jeffrey Gitomer, *Customer Satisfaction is Worthless – Customer Loyalty is Priceless* (P-53)

Is it not true of your customers too?

HOW DOES ONE BEGIN A CRM EXERCISE ?

Customer Relations Management is not a software product which can be bought from a vendor, implemented across the company and presto the company is now CRM enabled!

CRM is all about attitude. One Chief Executive of a very large telecom company, while discussing CRM with a consultant, very rightly said "I am not interested in the software part of the CRM exercise. What I am interested in, is a change in the way my employees across different levels and functions think. I want them to realize that maintaining healthy customer relations is not the responsibility of just the Customer Service department, but that of each and every employee of the company".

A sensible way of starting a CRM exercise, specially for companies already in business is to undertake a CRM audit of each and every department of the company. Even though a CRM audit is new to India and the world at large, it is not something that is absolutely new to corporates. Its actually very similar to the financial audit that every company undertakes almost every year (Isn't it surprising that corporates have ignored auditing how well they are serving their customer, while all the time focussing on systems which make them more efficient internally?).

As mentioned in the previous issues of *India CRM News*, a CRM exercise can only succeed if the top management is committed to customer service and not just paying lip service, because it is today fashionable to say so! Hence the first hurdle for any audit to cross, commence, and succeed is the willingness of the top management to commit themselves to making their organization CRM focussed.

In order to ensure the commitment of each and every employee, the vision and mission statement of the company should be redrafted (if necessary) to reflect the company's customer focus. And it is not sufficient to include customer focus in one's vision and mission statement. You also need to communicate the same to the employees of the company.

Followed by the top management audit, audits of various other departments' functioning need to be undertaken. This audit could start from the way the telephone operator/receptionist/security personnel deal with a customer, to the way an operator on the packaging machine understands his role in managing customer relationship, and to the way the product is delivered to the final consumer of the product. *The audit would include all departments - from sales to marketing to production to finance.*

After all, all these departments were created to serve the customer and they better realize it before their competitor does !