

Building Customer Loyalty

By Douglas Gantenbein

It's easy to talk about building customer loyalty. But actually providing the exceptional customer service experience that creates loyalty is another matter. To offer that customer experience requires employees who can respond quickly and personally to customer requests, whether it's for product information, a transaction history, or changes to a pending order. Microsoft is working to provide the technology that helps a company create them.

A company that provides great customer service can gain a competitive edge. Many studies show that customers today aren't happy with the way they're treated. This has led to declines in customer satisfaction in a wide range of industries, from retail to healthcare to travel.

It doesn't help that customers today have more choices than ever before, whether it's seeking merchants on the Internet, demanding greater customization, or wanting answers to questions around the clock.

Clearly, offering superb customer service confers enormous benefits on a company. The right technology can create a pathway to great customer service by empowering employees to fully focus on the customer rather than spending their customer contact time looking up records or asking other employees for help. With information about a customer or a company's products at their fingertips, employees can put to work their experience and desire to succeed for any company that relies on satisfied customers. And satisfied customers become what a company really needs: loyal customers.