

## **THE INTERNAL CUSTOMER**

We all forget who our customers are at times. Yes, we have the External Customer which is the end user. Hopefully you have enough that they pay your bills. But there are many other customers that we as sales people must deal with in our day to day endeavors. Everything that we do to satisfy the External Customer has an effect on our Internal Customer.

Yes, that's right, Internal Customer. Mike, you mean to tell me that we have to satisfy our co-workers? Yep! An Internal Customer is one that will have an affect on the results needed to take care of our External Customers. The old GIGO acronym takes effect here: Garbage In, Garbage Out! For instance, every new account that is added on has an effect on everything that is done in your operation. From purchasing, to transportation, accounting, warehousing, customer service, sales, and it goes on and on to each individual in each department. Think about it, every time that you personally do not inform a coworker on a need for your customer, the end result is that another customer or your customer is going to have a negative experience.

When I was in the restaurant business, I would always work on training my staff to satisfy the Internal Customer. If a waitress gave the kitchen the wrong order, then the kitchen now provided the wrong product to be served. If the dish person was not watching for spotted or dirty dishes, then the staff was serving product on dishware that was unacceptable. In sales, if a salesperson fails to inform purchasing of the top items for a new account, then within a few weeks, you will see out of stocks on those items. Other External Customers become upset because they always purchase those items, now you don't have them. This cause now affects not just the salesperson and their account, but other salespeople and their accounts as well. Your customer service is now affected because they have to spend their time on the phone for out of stocks. The driver, because he always hears everything negative from the end user. All of your management personnel, like they have nothing else to do. Other buyers, because your company had to dip into their inventory to satisfy all of the out of stocks. And the cycle keeps going!

This is just one example of how one mistake causes problems for many people. There are thousands of situations that go on in a day that affect your company. If you personally do not inform each of your internal customers who will be affected by a change in the environment, then you will be setting your company up for issues. Take care of your co-workers and provide them with all the needed information so they can do their

jobs and your External Customers will be nothing but satisfied with you and your company.

Remember you are a representative and integral part of your company no matter what job you perform. Everything you do may have a positive or negative effect on your Internal and External Customers. Make it a positive one!

Great Selling!

Mike Popella

