

SLISM Magazine | Second Issue | 2021 Edition

SERVICE MANAGER



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The 2020-2021 Council of the Institute of Service Management



Seated from left:

Prof. Gamini Gunawardena, Nelson Nagasinghe, Yasa Karunaratne,
Thilak Karunaratne, Pathum Waas, Dr. Nilakshi Galahitiyawa

Standing from left:

Nisal Gunawardena, Thilina Karunanayake, Dr. Dinesh Samarasinghe,
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About Us

Sri Lanka Institute of Service Management was inaugurated in January 2018 and is a corporation registered under the Companies Act. The Institute's main focus is improving education, research and practice in the service management. These are to be achieved by conducting professional examinations, seminars/workshops, conferences, training programs, research and management guidance publications.

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WELCOME!

Welcome to the second edition of our Magazine, The Service Manager.

Since our last edition we have seen unprecedented changes in how companies have adapted to cope with the new business environment.

And if one thing is for certain it's been the service process that has had to adapt at the speed of light.

With lockdowns and area isolations, the entire process of the delivery of goods and services had to be rethought very, very quickly.

But adapt we all did. From grocery to banking and telco's, every industry changed how it interacted with its customers.

But what of the future?

We're not ones to speculate in such a changing environment, but one thing is certain.

If companies understand the role and value of the service process, they will be better able to manage the further changes that are inevitably on the horizon.

And to earn a qualification in Service Management puts you in an enviable position of being able to guide companies in the entire process rather than them just witness them undertaking a knee-jerk reaction.

In this edition you'll find articles from Ernst & Young, Glomark, and Otara Gunawardane together with a major review from the 2019 Service Management conference at the Shangri-La hotel. So don't delay – start reading today!



“I DIDN'T HAVE A STRATEGY!” – OTARA GUNEWARDANE



In conversation with
Ian Ramsden

What management philosophy and strategy adopted by you, do you think, contributed to Odel becoming the leading retail business in Sri Lanka?

I didn't have a strategy! I didn't really know how to start a business or run one.

I was driven by my heart and my passion to give customers in Sri Lanka a good shopping experience and provide them with products that were stylish, reasonable and sold in a good environment and with good service. It's what I was always focusing on. I wanted to create interest.

In the early days I was the equivalent of Amazon where I delivered the products myself!

It was after the business had grown that I started the small store.

I was wholesaling factory overruns to other stores in Colombo so I always had a car full of clothes. The customer deliveries actually grew out of the wholesale side.

Customer interest was very high and that was the catalyst for opening the first store.

I could actually see how the customer reacted;

what clothes they wanted; what they liked and didn't like.

I think it was always about customer satisfaction and making sure they had a good experience both from my delivery and then in the store.

Did that contribute to Odel's customer focus philosophy and what you did in store?

Definitely. Because I had a feel of what people liked and how they wanted to be looked after as I was very hands on, not just at the beginning, but right throughout. It's really important to be connected with your customer and see their reactions and the experience they're having in the store.

What did you do to get customer feedback on their experiences?

Right from the beginning I invested in customer surveys which I had printed for customers to fill out to give feedback on their experience, what they would like to see and so on.

I did this right through the business and on email when that arrived.

Of course, it meant a lot of time invested, but unless you know where your service delivery is failing, you can't do anything to correct it. And the faster you are with that, the better it is for the company, the customer and the brand.

Did you have any formalised complaint structure in place?

Yes, we did. Before email and social media, people could write to us with good or bad comments. Every store also had a big book for customers to write their comments in and I read them every week as there were some good ideas!

How important were the staff skills and customer orientation?

Oh, very important. Critical in fact. How they speak, how they promote all contributed to the overall customer experience.

There was a lot of effort put into training



including English classes, retail skills training, etiquette and grooming.

They had to be passionate; have a willingness to learn, energy and a positive attitude.

Most were recruited through ads but word of mouth took over because we were seen as a very good place to work. People actually wanted to work for us and would make a real effort to do well at the interview.

Did you recognise employees for their contribution to the business?

We had employee of the month and employee of the year and eventually the latter became a very big event. We also had a staff reward scheme based on sales and other attributes because it all added up to part of the staff experience at Odel.

As a result, staff turnover was very low and most of the loss was when staff went overseas to work. Our training almost guaranteed them the job.

It's always a pleasure when I'm overseas and someone comes up to me and says they are a Group Retail Manager and received their initial training and experience with Odel.

Are there any other areas that contributed to Odels success?

I definitely think there are 3 areas. Strong Marketing. Strong customer communications. Strong visuals. This was especially true at Christmas when we were a destination rather than just a store to buy your gifts.

In the main store it was a journey of discovery for the customers because there were small rooms, nooks and crannies that just begged to be explored - especially if a staff member introduced you to them. You felt you were being let into a secret. That was all part of the experience.

On a global level, how do you see the future of on-line buying in the retail sector in Sri Lanka?

It will definitely grow as it is world-wide - especially this last 12 months.

Consumers have changed a lot. From wanting more eco-friendly products to wanting their purchases delivered the same day. Also, to supporting small businesses who, perhaps, sell more specialised products.

We're not seeing it yet that much here, but it's only a matter of time before on-line buying for a sector of the population to become embedded as part of their normal lifestyle.

The pandemic didn't bring e-commerce, but it definitely rushed it forward.

Do you have any advice to offer on-line sales management in their transference from bricks-and-mortar?

When I started my on-line store, www.whoweare.lk, I was used to having physical stores but I don't feel the need for those any more. There's so much cost and detail, but on-line it's so easy to reach anywhere and everywhere in the country. Your brand can travel so much further but, to succeed, you still have to offer service, albeit in a different form.

Product selection, packing, delivery, returns handling, customer communications are even more important than they used to be because customer expectations have become more demanding as there's more choice.

What are your thoughts on improving Service Management in the country?

It's really important to go the extra mile because good service can only enhance your reputation. It's the small things that make the big difference.

Sometimes you have to take a loss in order to satisfy the customer. Looking for the things that could go wrong before they actually do and planning the response and action in advance can only enhance the management of how you serve customers in the long term.

Giving a customer a good on-line experience means, not only will they come back but they'll tell others how good you are.

It's a win-win, but it still has to be enacted here.

MODERN PRACTICES IN CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE MANAGEMENT IN THE DIGITAL ERA



Rekha Weerasooriya
Dialog Axiata PLC

Sri Lanka Institute of Service Management held the First International Conference on Digital Customer Experience on April 4, 2019 at the Colombo Shangri La Hotel.

Introduction

The debate on the importance of customer experience (CX) is over, as it is now a top priority for most organizations.

This article focusses on how customer experience management (CXM) is changing to meet customer expectations and behaviour in the digital era.

It discusses the emergence of the digital customer and the concept of digital customer experience (DCX) and presents 3 Case Studies from selected experiences in digital customer experience management (DCXM) from international companies.

In the Harvard Business Review article *"Know the Difference between Customer Service and Customer Experience"*, Disney Institute's senior programming director, Bruce Jones, stated:

"Customer experience is about much more than just customer service. It is about fostering employee engagement. It is about truly understanding your customer, architecting a plan for delivering exceptional customer service, and then empowering employees to deliver it."
(Lee, 2018).

Dixon et al., 2010 state:

"Fully 80% of customer service organizations use customer satisfaction (CSAT) scores as the primary metric for gauging the customer's experience. And managers often assume that the more satisfied customers are, the more loyal they will be. But, like others before us (most notably Fred Reichheld), we find little relationship between satisfaction and loyalty. Twenty percent of the "satisfied" customers in our study said they intended to leave the company in question; 28% of the "dissatisfied" customers intended to stay."

What is Customer Experience (CX)?

CX is the total journey of a customer's interactions with a brand.

Customer experience is the sum of all contacts. From first discovering and researching a product through shopping and purchasing to actually using the product and following up with the brand afterwards.

Customer experience measures how customers feel about a company overall and includes the emotional, physical, psychological connection customers have with a brand.

It isn't a one-off interaction, but rather includes the entire customer lifecycle and every touchpoint a customer has with a product or service. (Forbes, 2018).

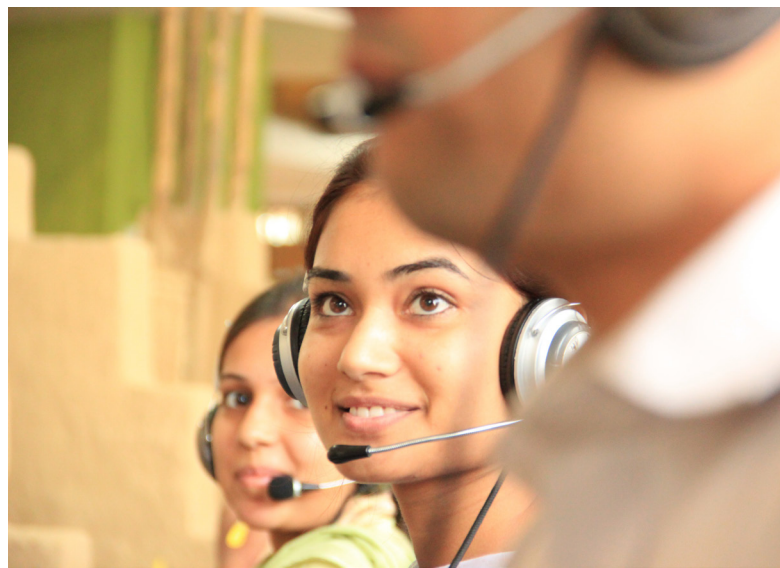
The Modern Day Digital Customer Experience.

The modern customer focuses on the use of digital devices such as a computer, tablet or smartphone to interact with the company.

Researching a product online, using a mobile app to find stores nearby, searching for tech support information on a smartphone are examples of digital customer experiences.

In Asia too, this transformation is visible.

In banking services, physical branches have been the traditional customer engagement channel, but there is a clear shift in Asia towards digital channels for daily transactions.



Bank branches now account for only 12% - 21% of monthly transactions.

Customers prefer digital platforms for simple, routine transactions such as checking their balance, peer-to-peer transfers, or bill payments.

Overall customer engagement has grown from an average of 12.7 to 14.9 monthly transactions in Developed Asia, and from 6.0 to 8.1 in Emerging Asia, with increased smartphone usage driving growth in each case (McKinsey & Co, 2018).

Digital transformation is the future of customer experience, and companies that don't embrace changing technology could get left behind.

Digital Transformations are not instant. They are a long-term strategy of the company.

It takes:

- Adoption of appropriate technology.
- Personalized customer experiences.
- Customer-centric design of customer journeys.
- A seamless multi-channel experience.

Today's consumers are not tied to a single channel.

They browse in-store, shop online, share feedback through mobile apps and ask questions for your support team on social media networks.

Tying all of these interactions together allows you to create a single digital profile every time a customer interacts with your business (Lund, 2019).

- Acquire data to gain a single view of the customer.
- Personalize and deliver on every promise.
- Bring digital (=first business models) to market.

These ensure superior customer experience which can counteract competitors.

MG Motors in India is an example of providing connected and frictionless business experience using SAP platforms.

Car ownership in India is not an easy experience. It consists of:

- Multiple phone calls (30+)
- SPAM attacks
- Impersonal interactions ("Have we met before?")
- Service nightmares
- Delivery deficiencies/delays
- Lack of trust and transparency

The SAP Integrated Technology Platform connects customer/car owner with the dealer at all stages:

- While the customer searches for the ideal car by web, social media, email, digital media and reviews.
- While the customer is buying the selected car: digitally assisted discovery, digital test drive management, custom quotes and offers, purchase, handover, and real time delivery updates.
- A continued relationship with the customer during ownership of the car
- Real time vehicle insights, customer apps, service booking through the app, service advisor apps, personalized services, real time service status updates, and loyalty programmes.

These digitally managed components provide the customer with a predictable and transparent service experience.

Case Study 1: SAP India

Reimagining the Business Experience for a Customer Experience that Wins.

(Summarized from a presentation by Krishnan Chatterjee at the conference).

Customer Experience is the largest development initiative in SAP accounting to an investment of USD10 billion.

How is this achieved?

Case Study 2:

Shaping Intelligent Customer Experiences (CX) at Avaya.

(Summarized from a presentation by Nilesch Marathe at the conference).

The average life span of a publically listed company over the past 50 years has dropped from 60 years to 18.

Today, innovation means “Staying Relevant.”

Shaping CX in today’s digital world involves...

- The Digital Marketplace. Where context & insight replaces data.
- Human & machines working together. Available to best resource
- Voice & Messaging interfaces with the customer
- The ‘New’ User Interface
- AI that empowers, NOT replaces
- Back Office enabling the customer journey.

Some observations on the new Conversational User Interface include:

- **71%** of consumers would like to bypass identification & verification questions by using voice biometrics
- **2 in 3** consumers say ‘chatbots’ should be like Google - type in (or say) question to organization and the right answer comes back straightaway.
- **50%** of consumers would like to use their smart phones/speaker to get customer service.

Artificial Intelligence is the future of CX management.

AI empowers; NOT replaces CX management.

Present practices will be replaced in the future by:

- Effortless Self-Service;
- Conversational Self-service;
- Smart Routing resulting in behavioural pairing;
- Agent Augmentation with AI driven guidance;
- Interaction Insights (Intent, Behaviour, Motivation)

The current Omnichannel strategy will consolidate to a “single” channel.

These digital customer experience strategies result in,

- Improving revenue conversion rates by increased tele-sales, improved customer retention;

- More cross-sell and up-sell opportunities;
- Reducing costs by optimizing the time the customers spend on calls;
- Improved operational efficiency and increased conversion effectiveness.
- Enhancement of customer and agent satisfaction by boosting CSAT and NPS;
- Reducing agent turnover and increasing agent tenure.

The Customer Experience may be only as good as the back-office.

In surveys on factors important for overall experience of making insurance claims

- The insurer kept you informed during the claim process (59%)
- The process of claiming was online (32%)
- If applicable, the loss adjuster kept you informed (14%)
- You could send photos and videos relevant to the claim (25%)
- They paid out within 2 days of the claim being approved (14%)
- You felt you were compensated fairly for the loss (28%)
- You had a dedicated account manager for the claim (12%)
- If applicable, the car repairer or builder kept you updated (18%)

The overall experience of making insurance claims: **81% of consumers would like to be able to speak to delivery drivers.**

Case Study 3:

Deloitte - Changing Face of Customer Experience in the Digital Era.

(Summary of a presentation by Deepthi Sagar at the conference).

Every ten-year cycle brings 10 times the connected devices and sensors. It is estimated that by 1970 there were 1 million such devices.

Estimates for every decade since then are.

1980: 10 million
1990: 100 million
2000: 500 million
2010: 10 billion

2020: 70 billion
 2030: 1 trillion
 (Includes Internet of Things)

Nine times more data has been created within the last two years.

Companies that cannot keep up with this growth will fade out. In fact, it is estimated that in the next 10 years, 40% of the current Fortune 500 companies will be gone.

Developments in digital technology and customer adoption of such technology has required companies to identify how customers seek to satisfy certain needs/expectations using digital media.

How to interact with customers will be top of the agenda.

The table below shows how some companies have adopted digital solutions to evolving customer expectations.

The industry trend is to move from generalized, natural language-based communications to personalized user-specific responses and then to artificial intelligence (AI) emulating human conversations using bots/chatbots.

Current estimates are that industry will realize about a 90% savings in digitalizing customer calls and that 85% of customer relationships will be handled by AI.

Customer friendly digital service models do not spring instantly to mind though.

They take a long evolutionary pattern as follows:

- Rule based procedures: *These processes lead to automation.*

- Judge intelligence: *Mimicking human actions.*
- Anticipatory intelligence: *Augments human judgment.*
- Adaptive intelligence: *Augments human intelligence.*
- Human like intelligence: *Mimics human intelligence. (This is the highest level of AI application.)*

Advantages of such transition to digitally driven customer experience management are:

- Higher quality customer interactions
- Mega personalization
- Accurate decision making
- Faster decision making
- Reduced call handling time, cost and error rate.

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Customer expectations	Company starts providing	Company
Personalization Economically rational	Personalized recommendations Transparent pricing that changes in real time	Netflix Amazon
Convenience driven	A ride anytime anywhere. arriving with a few clicks on a mobile device	Uber
Digitally connected	Digital payments	Paytm

SERVICE MANAGEMENT IN THE GROCERY SECTOR DURING THE PANDEMIC



Andrew Dalby

CEO - Glomark Supermarkets

Without question, 2020 was a testing year for every business, but perhaps none more so than the grocery trade which has to supply most of the nation's food that isn't grown at home.

Certainly no business could have planned for this pandemic, nor the lockdown that was a result.

We, like others, have 3 stakeholders. Customers, Suppliers and Staff.

Each one is part of the supply chain, and it was vital that a service management process was put into place that ensured that goods reached customers quickly.

The problems faced.

Suppliers had to be able to get to their goods and then get permission to deliver them to our warehouse and in many cases to every store. (If suppliers couldn't get staff because of lockdown we obviously couldn't get those goods)

We needed to tell customers we were open, had goods and were able to deliver.

We needed staff to pick and pack the goods.

We needed a last mile delivery solution to get the goods from store to customers.

We needed a financial solution to ensure the

correct price was charged to customers.

We needed our accounts teams to get to the offices and function so that suppliers could be paid on time as cash is critical to all stakeholders in the system, and particularly at these critical times.

And, in every case, we had to ensure that we were complying with all legal requirements AND ensuring the health & safety of all concerned.

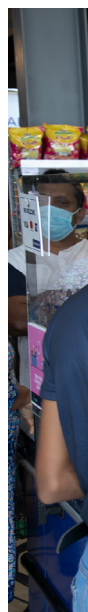
We initially had product in our stores and warehouses – which bought us some precious planning time in replenishing stocks from suppliers - and we had customers making orders via our online platform but, like many businesses, our first challenge was finding staff. There's no point taking orders if they can't be fulfilled.

Getting everyone involved.

Over 40% of staff had returned to their homes leaving us with precious few to fulfil orders. We are fortunate to be part of a large Group so we were able to call upon other businesses in the Group to second their staff who were also not allowed to go to their normal workplace. It was all hands on deck – even Group and Company Directors devoted their time to filling orders at the stores and stacking shelves. There was no discrimination between titles and it was empowering to witness.

Then we turned our attention to customer deliveries. How to deliver so many orders. The whole supermarket industry had its trading model turned upside down overnight. Taking the shopping cart to the car park was a piece of recent history, and now we needed partners to help deliver thousands of goods every day. But for how long? Nobody knew.

What we didn't anticipate was the sheer volume of orders that simply overwhelmed both the supply chain and deliveries. Fortunately, our servers were cloud based and coped with the sudden demand, others simply had too much and had literal meltdowns with the sudden demand. It was one thing the order system working but the execution and delivery system was not designed for the sudden expansion and it took a few days to get the process moving.





In hindsight it should have been anticipated, but because no-one at that time knew how long the lockdown would really last and, like many other countries, there was a justifiable element of panic buying then when systems were stretched in every way.

Whilst everyone was busy packing orders, our warehouses and stores were being rapidly emptied.

In short order, we found that limited stocks of most major provisions were available, and our supply chain staff had to work extremely hard to keep stocks available, switching from suppliers and brands to keep the essentials moving.



Whilst the pick & pack was ongoing, we turned to our suppliers and offered support both in financial value and sometimes transport to get their product to our stores. We even helped them get travel permits on several occasions

The Curfew Pass

The curfew pass system was, like everything else at the time, not designed to cope with this sudden countrywide event, and in the early days we experienced fragmented decision making from local authorities as they too struggled to cope with the changes.

Thankfully the initial chaos calmed and we soon settled into a somewhat more organised chaos.

Having to arrange the release of our warehouse manager who had been arrested, despite having valid curfew documents, was something I don't recall being on the job description, but those were very strange days indeed.

We also knew that if a staff member contracted the virus that store would need to be closed and the staff quarantined, so we were constantly sanitizing all our stores, testing staff, providing masks and PPE equipment, getting travel permits for essential staff (basically all of them!) and drawing up duty rosters.

I can't thank and praise the staff enough for sticking with us during that lockdown period. They were unbelievable, it was truly humbling to lead the team who rose to this challenge, and I will remember those days and the memories for the rest of my career.

There were some upsides the stress and walking diet for thirty days of 15-18 hour days and walking about 20,000 steps a day (as my phone friend was telling me) meant that I lost 7kg in a month. However, before everyone thinks this is a good idea, it's not for the faint hearted believe me.

Head Office staff who were working from home were allocated specific responsibilities across all stores including staff safety, supplier liaison, deliveries, communications and finance. Think of it as "Mission Control" at Houston in preparation for a rocket launch. That's certainly what it felt like.

The iconic "Houston we have a problem" message from Apollo 13 seemed to be crossing the desk on a regular basis. The 'desk'? Well, that was really a very mobile affair and I think we all realised just how important our mobile phones were and just how much we could work from almost any location with a laptop and a dongle.

The role of social media

Of course there were teething problems. You can't mount a service process of this magnitude overnight without getting some things wrong.

As customers who suffered delivery delays were

quick to point out on social media. This meant we had to immediately draw on Group technical staff online and who could work from home to explain the issues to customers in the large grocery related pages as well as our own pages.

The stock availability issue was always an issue and particularly with fresh vegetable products where cross district delivery was a constant problem. Suppliers were either late, or not able to come at all because of curfew pass issues, and as such customers could not receive what they ordered. The result was refunds to be processed but even the banks were short staffed so like many things during those days, we all had to be patient and try to understand why.

The communication via social media was of critical importance if a lack of knowledge on what was happening was not to spread in a negative manner.

What have we learned for the future?

Murphy's Law states that "Whatever can go wrong, will go wrong".

What will help overcome this is Service Planning. No, we can't foresee every eventuality but thinking ahead and playing the "What if....?" scenario just as most military do when they practice War Games will remove a huge amount of uncertainty.

Everything has a cause and effect so if we can identify the issues that are likely to become problems, we can plan for how to solve them. We've also realised that a great deal of Service Management is based on relationships.

With customers, suppliers and staff.

If there's no relationship, then no-one will step forward when a crisis arises.

Transparency, honesty and care stood us in good stead during the first lockdown and we were able to capitalise on these attributes during the last one.

We now have a written plan where everyone knows their roles and responsibilities should we face a similar situation in the future.

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION FROM 5,000 MILES AWAY. CAN IT BE DONE?



Shehani Seneviratne

COO - 99x

When launching a product or service, a lot is said about the importance of targeting international markets to drive long-term success. The wave of digitisation across industries makes procuring sales globally a lot more possible than it used to be.

Yet, something that is often overlooked is the importance of retaining your customers. Working with globally distributed teams over the past 15 years in the ICT landscape has shown me the importance of customer retention and building long-term relationships. In my current role, we primarily deal with Scandinavian software vendors (B2B) and with the current restrictions



on travel, our engagements are 100% digital. So, can customer satisfaction be achieved from 5,000 miles away? The answer to that is a resounding yes.

Continuous feedback

Derive customer feedback in a systematic manner. It's also important not to overdo it – with our long-term partners, we conduct a customer satisfaction survey twice a year.

After many years of doing this via an emailed form, we recently switched to a quick face-to-face video chat, which has sped up the process, creates a stronger relationship between ourselves and our overseas partner and helps us gather smaller yet vital details. Taking corrective and preventive actions, making necessary improvements and most importantly, closing the feedback loop, is what is required.

Choose the right markets

Especially when offering services, choosing the right markets to operate in can be a game changer. Working in selected geographies over a period will allow you to understand your customer-base better, enabling your organisation to offer a more value-added, high-end offering in the long-run, bringing about greater chances of customer delight.

Processes to achieve excellence

Well-established product engineering processes that have evolved over time contribute to achieving quality and predictability. Delivering in short iterations allows teams to make changes to the process between each iteration. This allows valuable lessons to be learnt on time and be implemented throughout the execution process.

Identifying and meeting standards creates further customer buy-in. While adhering to such international standards can take some effort, they are a stringent requirement in certain industries and even where they are not a must-have, it can set you apart from other competitors in the marketplace.

Create self-organising teams

Empowering your people to take on leadership roles despite what their designation may be, what we now call 'leaders without titles', by creating a workplace that creates opportunities for them to do so can reap many benefits, for the team as well as the organisation.

Always build your teams to be proactive, engaging and to become domain experts, so that they can take decisions with a deep understanding of the product or service. A team's direct engagement with customers goes a long way in this process. Customers in turn are impressed by teams that can understand their domain, and innovate and challenge, to deliver the best outcomes.

A foundation of ethics and trust

The bedrock of any business, especially one that is based thousands of miles away from its customers, is trust. A great place to work is where you can trust the management, trust your colleagues whom you work with and enjoy the work you do (Trust triangle). We add another dimension to it, which is the relationship of trust we have with our customers.

It's all about constant improvement

The above points have been some of my learnings over the past years and are valid for a business of any size or maturity. It's always a process of continuous learning to keep improving customer satisfaction and stay ahead of your competition in the global marketplace.

Shehani Seneviratne has been an integral part of the 99x journey and currently plays the role of its COO. Her core competencies are in project/delivery management, product engineering, continuous process transformation, process consulting, and people and operations management. She is a Board Member of SLASSCOM, the local industry body for the IT/BPM sector, and is Board Lead for the SLASSCOM HR and Women Technopreneurs Forums. She is also a founding Board member of the Women's Chamber for Digital, Sri Lanka.

This is an extract of an article originally published in the DailyFT on 4th May 2021.



PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION FRAMEWORK AND THE SRI LANKAN FINANCIAL SERVICES INDUSTRY.



Sanduni Wickramasinghe
& Yasith Fernando

There are big changes on the near horizon regarding Data Privacy that are too important to ignore. Whilst this article has been written from a financial organisation's viewpoint, it will have a profound effect on every organisation which holds customer data.

How will your Service Management processes and offerings change or be limited by the law? What will you now have to do? Will Service Management change?

Data is often referred to as the new oil of the digital era, providing an opportunity for companies to achieve tangible bottom-line growth by analysing and applying advanced analytics techniques on data. Although not formally placed on the balance sheet of an organisation, data is in fact a valuable corporate asset.

This notation of monetising data has not only spurred responses from anti-trust regulators and competition policy makers world around, but it has also created a considerable debate over the adequacy and application of rules to regulate the use of personal data.

For the purpose of this article, we will look at why personal data matters in the financial services sector in Sri Lanka, what it means in the face of

new laws to regulate its use and the impact it will likely have on Service Management.

How personal data in the financial services sector is used

For any developing economy like Sri Lanka, the financial services sector plays a pivotal role. Entities such as banks, insurance companies, finance companies and leasing providers constantly feed on the collection, creation, use and dissemination of a variety of personal data to serve their customers.

Personal data is collected and processed not only to meet regulatory requirements such as "Know-Your-Customer" and "Customer-Due-Diligence" purposes, but also to provide customers with enhanced services and assess their creditworthiness in the case of providing lending products.

As the financial services industry rapidly goes through a digitalisation journey, the accumulation of personal data is on the rise. Steering ahead from mere regulatory requirements, the sector has realized the potential of data analytics in achieving strategic and operational goals.

This has aggravated the need to find newer sources of data to obtain more perspectives of



the customers and their behavioural patterns.

Gaining deeper understanding of customers through analysis of personal data and applications of advanced analytics assists in providing more customized services, enabling cross-sell and up-sell and improving customer retention.

Entities that do not fully use data for competitive advantage run the risk of becoming an insignificant player in the industry. However, despite its potential, processing personal data for purposes that lead to monetisation is not without legal constraints.

What is Personal Data?

Following global standards, Sri Lanka's draft personal data protection bill, which is nearing enactment and available at www.icta.lk defines personal data as any information that can identify a data subject (an identified or identifiable natural person, alive or deceased) directly or indirectly, by reference to:

“(a) an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data or an online identifier, or

(b) one or more factors specific to

the physical, physiological, genetic, psychological, economic, cultural or social identity of that individual or natural person.”

Accordingly, information such as someone's name, address, phone number, location data, bank account number, IP address, photograph or biometrics will amount to personal data.

In addition, the draft bill defines “financial data” which comes within the scope of special categories of personal data, as *“any alphanumeric identifier or other personal data which can identify an account opened by a data subject, or card or payment instrument issued by a financial institution to a data subject or any personal data regarding the relationship between a financial institution and a data subject including financial status and credit history”*.

A personal data protection regime essentially provides the means to realise a person's rights over their information and having a say over what information is disclosed and to what extent they are processed.

However, information privacy is not an absolute right and therefore is subject to other competing rights and interests which can be public, economical, business, financial, health or





security in nature.

Therefore, the need is to ensure people are afforded privacy of their information whilst ensuring the businesses are not inhibited from using personal data to gauge customer and business intelligence.

Regulating for the protection of personal data

There are primarily two ways personal data processing can be regulated. (1) self-regulation and (2) regulation by law.

(1) self-regulation:

Where there is limited or no legal/regulatory framework, self-regulation can realise data protection objectives. Voluntary adoption of international standards and best practices into the internal policies and procedures will lead to ensuring that the processing of personal data takes place in a transparent and accountable manner whilst upholding the rights of the customers. Self-regulation generally stems from the realization of the importance of consumer trust in a business.

(2) Regulation by law:

The present Sri Lankan legal system on financial services specifies that financial institutions must ensure strict confidentiality of the personal data that they process. However, the existing framework places limited emphasis on the extent the customer data can be used for the commercial benefit of the financial institution concerned.

For example, processing personal data to gain deeper insight of customers, to deploy predictive analytics techniques and to use automated decision making are some of the actions that remain largely unregulated at present.

This sectoral approach, as often witnessed globally, leads to fragmented protection which leads to the essence of privacy and data protection not being met.

What will the new law cover?

However, once the proposed personal data protection bill comes into play, it will harmonise the laws relating to personal data protection by introducing sweeping provisions that apply to both government and private sector in equal



vigour.

The law applies, in certain circumstances, even to persons who are not located in Sri Lanka. The draft bill intends to introduce the following principles which will require compliance from entities known as “controllers” who decide on the intents and purposes of processing:

- **Lawfulness** – complying with at least one of the legal basis in Schedule 1 or if it is special category of data like financial data, a ground in Schedule 2 of the draft bill.
- **Purpose specification** - process only for a specified, explicit, and legitimate purpose
- **Purpose limitation** – processing must be adequate, relevant, and proportionate to the purpose
- **Accuracy** – the data must be accurate and up to date
- **Retention limitation** – not to retain data once the purpose is fulfilled
- **Integrity & confidentiality** – deploy appropriate technical and organisational measures (i.e., encryption, pseudonymisation, access controls etc.)
- **Transparency** – ensure that the processing is conducted in a transparent manner
- **Accountability** – implement data protection

management programs and other controls and procedures to meet the compliance objectives under the bill

It further introduces a host of individual rights which attempt to empower individuals with regards to the data that concerns them, including right to access, rectification, erasure, withdrawal of consent and object to automated decision making.

To effectively comply with the requirements, a controller will be required to:

- a. Carry out data protection impact assessments according to the risk of the processing
- b. Implement a data breach management programme to assess and respond to breaches
- c. Devise a data subject request management programme
- d. Implement data governance framework that corresponds to the regulatory requirements
- e. Ensure that the persons who conduct processing activities on a controller’s behalf, known as “processors”, are capable of assisting the controller to meet the legal

- requirements
- f. Implement strategies such as privacy by design/default techniques, adopt privacy enhancing technologies and build a data protection management team to assess, protect, sustain, and respond to the data protection obligations.
- g. Use of consent management procedures for the purpose of communication services

Beyond Compliance

The proposed law will apply to all existing data and future data. The draft bill does not carry a grace period, and it is left open for the subject Minister to determine the effective date. In addition to that, there are certain penalties that may be imposed on persons violating the law not exceeding Rs. 10 million for each non-compliance.

However, it is not the threat of penalty or seemingly cumbersome compliance requirements that sets the stage for the data protection law. It is important to highlight the following benefits that can be reaped from being compliant:

(i) Cultivate and retain customer trust through transparency and accountability - In a digital economy where customers demand trustworthy services, a controller must not be seen as susceptible to data breaches or as indifferent to data subjects' rights.

Higher consumer trust would result in higher customer engagement, leading to higher sales. Therefore, for businesses that run on personal data, cultivating sustainable consumer trust is essential. This presents an opportunity to Service Management professionals to be a catalyst in helping their organisations gain a competitive advantage with consumer trust.

(ii) By compelling a controller to review existing data management and governance strategies, the law assists the controller to understand the data assets in possession - where and how they are used. This will help to reduce and later eliminate duplication of data gathering and processing.

(iii) Benefit from the erasure requirement by streamlining data retention practices and getting

rid of data that so far had been archived for no apparent reason. Adherence to purpose specification and accuracy principles will facilitate data analysis and profiling in an effective and efficient manner.

The last word.

The future of financial services and their management in Sri Lanka may expect an overhaul in the regulatory and legal landscape with the operationalisation of the prospective personal data protection law. This would also have an impact on service management practices such as communications across all platforms.

The law should not only be viewed from compliance perspective, but it must also be seen as an opportunity to gain consumer trust which would be a competitive advantage.

The sooner one starts on its data protection compliance journey, the sooner it will be able to reap the benefits, reduce the regulatory and legal exposure, and make well planned technology changes and investments.

It is time to have this discussion in the upper echelons of the organisation and ensure that there is management buy-in, funding allocated, teams empowered, and policies implemented, so that by the time this new law comes into action you, as a financial services provider, will be at a distinct advantage.

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“Make a customer, not a sale.”
– Katherine Barchetti

SOCIAL MEDIA REPUTATION MANAGEMENT: HOW TO DO IT RIGHT



Chamara Peiris

Founder & CEO
Next Digital Innovation

Social media reputation management is beneficial to businesses of all sizes and industries because whether online or offline, the service you offer to customers is the service you're judged by.

This is particularly true these days, as customers rely on the Internet for critical information and base their purchasing decisions more on a company's online credibility than on advertisements, direct sales messages or promotional material.

They may still buy in store but they are researching on-line and if you fail to answer questions, respond to queries or acknowledge them it's likely you'll lose the sale.

Keep in mind that your company's online image isn't solely shaped by the quality of your website or your own marketing communications. Content from sources other than your primary online properties, such as social media, may also have an effect on your service reputation – and your sales.

And it's Service Management that's appearing time and time again as people go online anywhere they can to make a noise when direct communications appear to have failed. Telephones not answered, deliveries promised that fail to materialise, emails or letters not responded to or guarantees not supported. These are but a few of the myriad service management issues that are raised.

What is Social Media Reputation Management?

Traditionally, social media reputation management has been described as the process of posting strategic social media material, monitoring social media platforms (such as Facebook and Instagram), and interacting with customers who talk about your company or brand on social media.

Online review pages, local business directories and business discovery applications are also used in social media reputation management. These are all digital spaces where consumers can express themselves about their interactions with a company.

How did the company resolve disputes? Was their delivery cycle effective? How was their returns and refund policy? Did it meet the standards they said it would?

The aim remains the same, though: to positively influence customer perceptions of your brand or company through the delivery of a response. ie Service Marketing. However, there's one single point that's critical. If you talk about it but don't deliver it, you're heading for the biggest bombshell you've ever seen.

Social Media Reputation Management: 7 Keys to Success

Read on for your keys to success and some important points to remember if you're just getting started with how your company handles its Service Management social media reputation.

1. Resolve Issues that Have an Effect on Your Reputation

Not all of the feedback you get is positive. If customers complain about you on social media or via online review sites, make sure you fix the situation and react.

Remember, you're not talking to just one person. You're addressing all the people on that page, possibly tens of thousands who all have an interest in your response.

Be as specific as possible about the customer's experience when reacting to negative reviews and social media comments, and convey any changes or enhancements you've made as a result of their feedback.

And don't use the same stock phrase answer to each Service complaint.

Customers can smell a fake a mile off and all it does is leave the issue unresolved and shred your reputation even further.

If someone complains about an aspect of delivery and you recognise the problem and then fix it, don't hesitate to respond quickly but also make a point of telling customers what the problem was and what you did to fix it. It shows you're listening to your customers AND responding to their service issues.

2. Post Engaging, Relevant Content

It's important not to let the social media accounts go dull in unpredictable times like the recent COVID-19 pandemic. Build up your pages by posting relevant content and updates such as news, announcements, special deals, photographs, videos, and links on a regular basis.

It cost you a lot of money to get those customers in the first place so don't squander that hard earned cash by ignoring them.

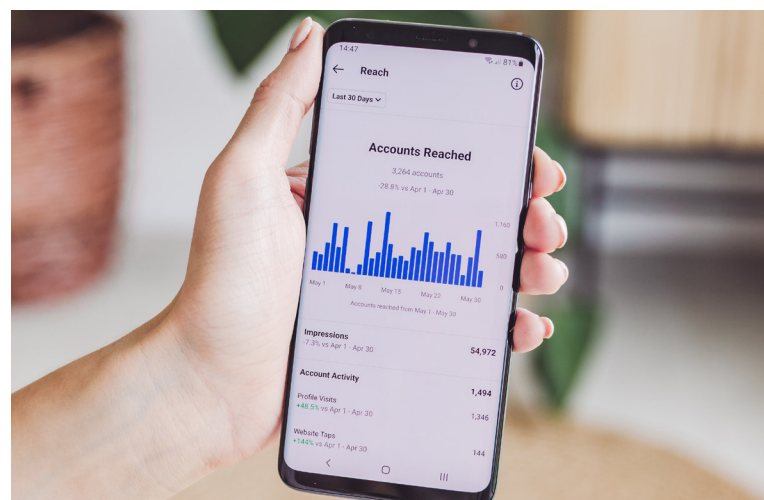
Avoid being too self-promotional when doing so.

People want to know how your service offerings can benefit THEM. They're not interested in the fact that you've installed a new payment system unless you can tell about the time and money it will save the customers.

That's Service Management in action.

Using user-generated content to your benefit can have a significant positive effect on how people perceive your service elements.

Also, by liking, commenting on and reacting to your fans' and followers' behaviour on your pages, you will demonstrate your willingness to





connect with them.

Ultimately, you want your customer to move up the loyalty ladder from a single purchase to being a brand ambassador who will go out of their way to sing your praises.

3. Make Use of a Social Listening Tool

It can be difficult to keep track of every single conversation about your company that occurs on every social media site, particularly if you have multiple locations.

Investing in a social listening platform will help you save a significant amount of time and effort. You can use it to schedule posts, track interactions and mentions, control online feedback, and even create personalized streams to effectively listen to your customers on social media.

What might start on an insignificant social media outpost can quickly gain significant traction as it moves up the rankings. And all the while you may be unaware of the damage being done to your service reputation.

There are many social listening tools available. Hubspot, Social Sprout and Falcon.io are but 3.

4. Increase reviews rather than likes and followers

We're not suggesting you remove your Facebook profile for your local business or stop monitoring people's behaviour, @mentions, and DMs.

Continue to manage your social media presence and connect with new and current customers as much as possible.

A solid social media strategy will also help you boost your search engine rankings and give you more power about what people are saying about your company online.

At the same time, give your online feedback the same amount of consideration. Make sure you pay attention to what consumers are saying about your company on review sites like Google, Facebook Yelp, TrustPilot and TripAdvisor as part of your social media reputation management



efforts.

Don't you read the Trip Advisor reviews when you were looking for that week-end getaway? Of course you do! And if any part of the service process was criticised you might have thought twice about booking.

Invest in efforts that produce more feedback and ratings, rather than simply increasing your likes, hearts, and followers, aside from tracking reviews.

If someone is prepared to write a review about you, they're signaling they already have a rapport with your business.

Anyone can click like and then forget about you. In an instant.

5. Keep a close eye on Google and Facebook

Google and Facebook are two of the most common places for consumers to leave online reviews.

Especially on some of the large group pages covering Grocery, Finance and hospitality.

Google is the online review site where users read the most reviews, according to the Online Reviews Survey. Before visiting a company, 63.6 percent of customers read reviews on Google.

Although it's important to focus on as many social media outlets as possible, Google and Facebook are the two sites where the majority of customers read and post comments about your business.

6. Use social media to share the best reviews

If you regularly earn five-star ratings and glowing feedback for your Service process on review sites, don't be shy about displaying them. Share the best reviews on social media sites like Facebook and Instagram, as well as your company's blog.

People want reassurance from their peers that companies are delivering a high value service

process and the better you do this, the better your reviews will be.

Remember, user-generated content has a stronger and more successful impact than noisy sales notifications or promotional brand content. Sharing positive reviews on social media drowns out negative feedback and can even boost the search visibility.

7. Data from social media can be transformed into insights

In order to gain insights into the consumer experience, savvy marketers are collecting information from social media feedback and customer-generated reviews.

You will support the goals of your social media reputation management plan and make good business decisions that will win the confidence of potential and current customers by tapping into your valuable social media data.

The most popular brands in the world use their data to get a more accurate picture of the consumer experience. They will understand — in seconds and at scale — what consumers actually mean when they express their feelings in their own words thanks to customer experience analytics.

Imagine how those reviews could transform your service process and offerings!

Final Thoughts

Well-managed online credibility on social media will make or break your business's ability to attract customers. Receiving poor reviews or complaints about your service management may be business critical, but they do give you a unique opportunity to act on areas that are of deep and personal concern to people.

You can extend your reach on channels that matter, drive interaction with your group of fans and customers, and build long-term relationships that benefit your bottom line if you have a successful social media credibility management plan in place.



HOW TO CALM A DIFFICULT CUSTOMER.



Ian Ramsden

Direct Solutions Int. Ltd.

Being intimidated by difficult customers, ignoring their behaviour or tiptoeing around the situation is not healthy or productive for either party and, in most cases, it doesn't even lead to customer satisfaction or an issue resolution.

Here are 7 things that all call centre operators can do to diffuse a difficult situation.

1. The "on hold" music.

All too often the on-hold music is set up by young IT people who install the system. They install the modern music they like without realising that music has an effect on our temperament. Quieter, slower music has a calming effect and helps the irate customer become calmer and leads to a more rational conversation.

2. Apologise

An apology makes an angry customer feel heard and understood. It starts to diffuse anger and allows the operator to start establishing trust. It doesn't matter where the fault lies. However, it shouldn't sound like its being read from a script by a bored voice. It has to be carefully scripted.

"Please accept my sincere and unreserved apology for any inconvenience this may have caused you" is one starting point, but each

company can, and should, create their own.

3. Use Diplomacy.

Diplomacy is the cornerstone of negotiations. *"Clearly, we've upset you and resolving your problem is just as important to me as it is to you."*

By personalising the response, the operator is signalling they are taking ownership of it rather than a more anonymous company and anger begins to dissipate. The Operator has addressed the anger directly and non-defensively and the operator hasn't been pulled into the drama of an attack.

4. Go into computer mode.

In computer mode the operator removes all the formalities and doesn't take the bait the angry or frustrated customer is throwing. The operator should remove the emotion from their own voice and sound calm and collected.

There's no point raising their voice as this only throws fuel on the fire. The words, tone and attitude should be totally impersonal. This computer mode response deflects, diffuses and disarms angry customers – who at the beginning of the call are looking for an emotional reaction.

It places the operator back in control and increases their own confidence.

5. "Have I done something to personally upset you?"

Of course, the answer is NO but it forces the angry customer to stop and think about their behaviour towards the operator. More often than not the customer will shift from right brain thinking to left brain when they can begin to listen and rationalise.

6. Show empathy

Empathy can be a powerful tool to disarm an irate customer and show that the operator genuinely cares about the inconvenience the customer has experienced. It helps the operator see the problem from the customer's point of view AND helps them stay calm.

By letting customers know you understand why they are upset, the operator builds a bridge of rapport.

"That must have been very frustrating for you,"

"I realise the wait you encountered was an inconvenience"

"If I were in your shoes, I'm sure I would feel just as you do"

7. Show appreciation

Finally, be appreciative of what the customer has told you. The operator can interject at appropriate points in the conversation to thank the customer for their feedback. And whilst saying Thank You costs nothing, it's regarded as one of the most powerful phrases in the customer relationship.

Here's a few examples.

"Thank you for taking the time to let us know how you feel."

"Thank you for being so honest. Without this information we can't improve our service to other customers like yourself"

"We appreciate customers who tell us when things aren't right"

The reason why showing appreciation works so well is that the last thing an angry customer expects is for the operator to respond with kindness and encouragement.

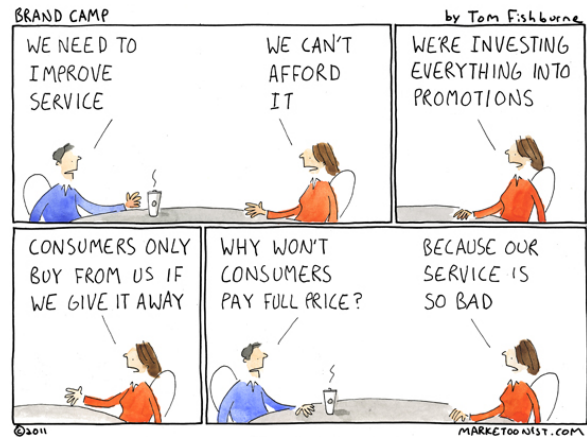
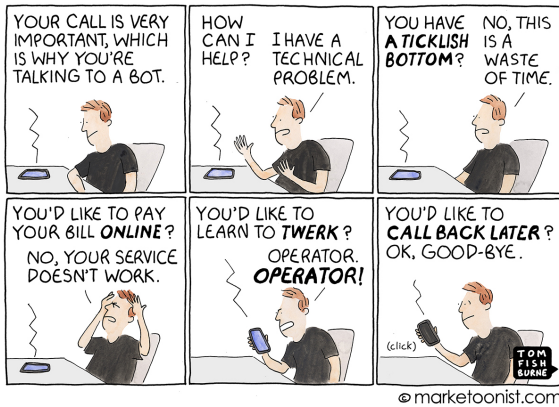
It's a shock factor!

Whilst many of the larger companies in Sri Lanka have the above strategy as part of their service management toolbox, it's the actual operator who is viewed by the customer as the real voice of the company and, unfortunately, all too often they try and get rid of the irate customer instead of taking ownership of their problem.

Reverse this and companies will increase their Net Promotor Score for customer service.

"Your most unhappy customers are your greatest source of learning."
– Bill Gates

A WRY SMILE OF RECOGNITION



The Ultimate Internal Customer Service Attitude



The last impression leaves a lasting impression!

Perfect Customer Service Is a Goal. Excellent Customer Service Is a Reality.





INTERNATIONAL: WHO'S CHANGING SERVICE MANAGEMENT?

IBM establishes IT Service Management system for Lotte Hotels & Resorts Worldwide

IBM's Global Technology Services unit has established standardized IT service policies and processes for each of the 140 service requirements it identified throughout the 43 hotel chain.

With this deployment, employees can easily request appropriate IT services via web or mobile when IT-related problems occur such as check-in or card key issuance failures or when IT devices are needed. On the other hand, IT managers can better manage tasks and can also check the status of IT devices and assets such as PC, servers, and Kiosks scattered in each hotel chain, and manage them more transparently.

Service Management platforms drive efficiency

Industry leaders showcased how enterprise workflow management is solving government's toughest challenges and making an impact beyond IT at ServiceNow's 2021 Federal Forum. Bill McDermott, president and CEO at ServiceNow, cited that over the next three years, another \$7.4 trillion will be invested in digital Transformation.

"There's a tremendous need to move to the cloud," McDermott said "Everyone is coalescing around gorgeous, consumer-grade user experiences that give people what they need."

Think about the Army as an example," he said. Earlier this year, the U.S. Army launched a maintenance application using ServiceNow to

streamline work orders and manage housing issues. When there is a maintenance issue, employees can take a picture, upload it to a workflow, and immediately remediate the issue, he said

As a response to the pandemic, ServiceNow rolled out emergency response applications and the Safe Workplace application suite. These tools help organizations manage the complex workflows required to keep employees healthy and workplaces safe – including management of testing procedures, social distancing, PPE inventory, and office configuration.

"We're making an impact on not just the way that people work, but the way that people live."



Cloud IT Service Management Market worth USD 15.65 Billion by 2027

The global cloud IT service Management size is expected to reach USD 15.65 billion by 2027 while exhibiting a stellar annual growth of 18.2% between 2021 and 2027.

This is attributable to the increasing focus on integrating advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) with cloud IT service management (ITSM) solutions across the globe. The Fortune Business Insights™ report observes that the market stood at USD4.15 billion in 2019 and is projected to gain momentum in the forthcoming years.

Personalized Service Is More Powerful Than Personalized Marketing

Shep Hyken

Contributor - Forbes Magazine

The recent Gladly 2020 Customer Expectations Report surveyed more than 1,500 adults in the U.S. to provide us with the latest information on what customers expect from the brands they do business with.

79% say personalized service is more important than personalized marketing.

In other words, creating groups of customers who have similar interests.

Personalized service is different. This takes it from marketing and sales to the individual level. You're no longer communicating with a large group of customers. You are talking to one customer at a time, giving each one an experience that is unique and personal. And, what customers want you to know about them is fairly common sense. They want you to know who they are—by name. They want you to have access to their previous conversations with you and use those to your mutual benefit. And, they want you to know their purchase history.

Create Lifelong Conversations with Your Customers

The report goes on to talk about one “lifelong conversation.” This means you have one journey or experience with your customer. Each time they buy from you isn't a new or different experience, but a continuation of the prior one.

Personalized Service Pays

The result of the lifelong conversation concept is that customers feel as if they are known, heard and appreciated. And, according to the Report, it pays to do this right. 84% of customers will “go out of their way” to spend more money to get a great experience. That represents huge opportunities, one of which is that you may not have to worry about being the lowest price. The value you provide your customer, in the form of a personalized experience, helps makes price less important than other benefits.

Bad Service Costs

Of course, if an organization provides unacceptable service, the customer will eventually walk. Sure, you already knew this, but what you may not know is just how quickly they will walk—51% of people will switch brands after just one or two bad experiences. Would you do business with a company or brand that treated you poorly and didn't make you feel valued as a customer? Of course not!

Personalized Service Creates Customer Evangelists

The personalized experience pays off in more than just repeat business. It also creates evangelists, customers who are willing to praise and recommend you to their family members, friends and colleagues. 77% of customers would recommend you to friends and family, and 52% would recommend you on social media. Keep in mind that this type of recommendation is your best marketing. It doesn't get better than having clients sing your praises to other potential customers.

So, get to know your customers. Make it personal. Hire and train employees you can count on to deliver the one-on-one experience customers want, and take advantage of technology, too. There are systems to track customer purchases and preferences, as well as recall information

from previous phone interactions. The technology lays the foundation for your employees to relate to customers on a personal level, giving them the human connection they crave. And as you build relationships, you're building your brand right along with them.

White Castle burger chain revamps Valentine's Day event with drive-in, in-car delivery service.

Courtesy of White Castle

White Castle switched up a long-running Valentine's Day event that let people book a romantic dinner given COVID-19 concerns. With restrictions on indoor dining, the chain transformed about 300 of its locations into "classic drive-ins, complete with in-car delivery service.

Customers booked a time for a socially distanced Valentine's Day date at the burger chain via the OpenTable website or app. Once guests arrived, the restaurant directed them to a parking space where a White Castle employee took their order and delivered it to their cars.

White Castle's revamped Valentine's Day activation is another sign of how brands have responded to the pandemic with operational changes that maintain a sense of continuity for consumers.

The concept proved to be popular and enduring, with bookings last year growing 14% to more than 30,000 at White Castle locations in 14 states.

A Tailored Learning Solution for Starbucks Worldwide

The Problem

With more than 20,000 locations worldwide, Starbucks is the world's largest chain of coffee houses. As expected from an organisation the size of Starbucks, the knowledge of its staff members needs to be up-to-date.

The problem was there was no clear training plan and there were 30 different suppliers

The Solution

Build a portal that could host the existing suite of training programmes as well as new ones and make them accessible to training managers worldwide who could book sessions, evaluate staff and compare the results against other outlets.

The portal also allowed training budgets to be managed far more effectively and staff members to select their own courses based on what they have already completed

Customer Benefits

- Quality of training improved
- Clear overview of the entire training portfolio
- More manageable training budgets
- Cost and time savings due to automation of back office
- Increased productivity and efficiency





EVERYDAY QUESTIONS IN SERVICE MANAGEMENT

Q. Are there any companies who can put a Service Management programme into my company?

A. Not currently, but all council members are available for consultation. In addition, Dr. Gamini Gunawardene's excellent book, *"Service Management in Sri Lanka"* should be on every corporate bookshelf.

It's packed with all the processes required to instil a service management culture in all types of organisation including many case studies, references, flow charts and diagrams. A MUST for anyone who wants to understand Service culture and install it in their company.

Q. Are there any video tutorials on Service Management available?

A. There are some on You Tube, but they are mostly of US origin and geared towards the IT industry. We can't, in all honesty, recommend them for general consumption for, say, a hotel group as the corporate structure won't be in parallel.

Q. Should I make one of my staff a Service Management 'Champion'?

A. Definitely. Service Management has 3 main stakeholders: Customers, staff and suppliers and it's important to be able to provide the easiest and quickest process of communication, delivery of goods and payment to each of them.

To have someone with complete knowledge of how the company operates with these 3 stakeholders will give you an immense advantage in customer and staff loyalty.

Q. Is Service Management expensive to implement?

A. Not necessarily. It's principally a time based process although some software may be needed. What's discovered in the process analysis that needs a budget should be viewed as an investment and not a cost.

Q. I only sell to other businesses. How will Service Management benefit me?

A. You're likely to have competitors and all customers want easy supply. By working with your B2B clients and finding out how they want their orders fulfilled; how the payment structure should be set up and how they want to be communicated with, you'll go a long way to satisfying their own service management structure.

Don't forget, Service Management is a 2-way street. To get the best from it in a B2B relationship requires a mutual understanding of each other's needs.

Q. My business is online only. I never see customers. Is there a need for Service Management?

A. In the new economy, Service Management is critical. If you don't get the order taking, pricing and delivery right first time, there's plenty of social media pages that people will voice their complaints on.

You might want to appoint someone just to monitor these pages because you're not just answering one complaint, you're advising every page fan what you've done to put the problem right. You'll also discover what are the main shortfalls of your process that can lead to customer dis-satisfaction.

Q. How can I discover what my customer service problems are?

A. Ask them! If you're online only then set up an online survey. If, you're face-to-face, such as in a hotel, then a very short questionnaire guests can complete at their leisure will work wonders. By monitoring the responses you'll be able to find which areas need attention to improve the service flow. Then you can broadcast what you've done because you listen to your customers.



SLISM MEMBERSHIP BRINGS SO MANY BENEFITS.

Today is the new normal and we all accept that life is not going to return to what we all knew pre-Covid.

And, during this recent rapid transition to a digital world, we all accept there have been issues with service management. But when you're making such a rapid transition it's to be accepted there WILL be problems. No company can make such jumps without making mistakes and adapt so quickly to an accelerated learning curve.

But there's one thing that has remained a constant.

How we deal with the processes of interacting with people. For it is people who buy goods and services from people. No matter whether it's a

physical or digital store, there are people and processes behind it.

And if people don't adapt because they don't have the knowledge then the business isn't going to prosper. And their jobs and careers might be shorter than they hoped.

But that can be changed.

Membership of SLISM offers a multitude of benefits including access to knowledge and information, seminars, a journal and magazines as well as an annual General Meeting where you can interact with all the attending members from both universities and the corporate world.

If the future is to be driven by service processes, it's those people who have an understanding of what's involved and how to use it who will be the winners.

Why not join us today by applying for membership on the **www.slism.lk** website?

There are levels available for virtually everyone from the A level student to the seasoned practitioner with over 10 years' experience.



Are YOU ready to WIN in Service Management with a professional qualification?

Would YOU like to put MISM after YOUR name?

You can when you qualify with the Sri Lanka Institute of Service Management.

The Service Industries are growing.

In a post Covid-19 future, the service industries are likely to contribute more than 60% of the national economy.

Hotels, airlines, telco's, banking, insurance and retail to name just a few.

Whilst jobs will rebound, it will be those people with professional qualifications who will be at the head of the queue.

Do YOU want to be at the head of the queue?

You can be when you join the Sri Lanka Institute of Service Management.

Created in 2018 to bring service industry knowledge and qualifications to people in the service industries as well as those who want to work in them, SLISM is the ONLY professional institute in the country that provides both a qualification AND practical experience in service management.

Why YOU should apply for membership.

Membership brings many benefits.

- ⇒ Members are eligible to use MISM after their names.
- ⇒ Special rates for seminars, conferences, workshops, training programmes and events organised by SLISM.
- ⇒ Members will get the opportunity to interact with leaders and professionals in the service sector.
- ⇒ Annual journals and publications of SLISM.

Who can apply?

There are 3 levels of membership.

Member

For those with a degree or professional qualification

Associate Member

Graduate and 1 year experience at Executive level

Student Member

Post A-level students who are studying for a qualification containing Service Management or Management in any industry.

Visit our website TODAY

www.slism.lk/index.php/membership

to download the application form that will be submitted to the Council for approval.



General Secretary, Sri Lanka Institute of Service Management
450/38, Thimbirigasyaya Road, Colombo 05.
Telephone: 077 776 0821



WHY THE PEN IS MIGHTIER THAN THE SWORD.



Ian Ramsden

Direct Solutions Int. Ltd.

Way back in time, (actually 1988), I bought my mother a gold Cross pen for Christmas. Being in a well-paid job it was the best I could find and she used it to write all her notes to milkmen, neighbours, the bank and even birthday cards to her friends.

When she died in 2014 the pen was one of the family treasures I inherited and it duly made its way back to Sri Lanka firmly lodged in my glasses case.

One day, whilst visiting a hospital my glasses case disappeared and you can only imagine my despair at losing a precious link with my Mum. Whilst it wouldn't be the same, I resolved to buy a replacement no matter what the cost.

My first call was to the shop I bought it from (who were still in business!), but, despite being as helpful as they could be, all they could suggest was to call Cross themselves.

I wasn't hopeful after 30 years.

BUT, the first chap I spoke – who I subsequently discovered was called George - to said he had one in the stores. Not only did he have one but it was the last one!

After telling him what had happened to the original I asked for the cost.

There would be no charge as they were not offering that model for sale anymore.

My appreciation knew no bounds for this was unparalleled customer service beyond anything I had experienced before.

In return I posted the story on every Linked in and FB page that was relevant and received many commendations for Cross.

But the best is yet to come.

2 weeks ago I recommended to a client that they broaden their jewellery range into other products and one of those was a pen.

Of course I called Cross first!

And spoke to George who did me such a favour 5 years ago.

Whilst we're waiting to hear of their interest, the point is this: By empowering staff to take decisions without resorting to upper management decisions the company gained a customer for life; they received more positive reviews of their actions than a substantial budget could have paid for and there's the opportunity of developing new products.

And all because one man recognised the value of service.

