

The Customer Service Management Process

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Overview

In the customer service management process, managers administer the product and service agreements (PSAs) developed by customer teams as part of the customer relationship management process.¹ The key differentiating factor between the traditional customer service activity and the customer service management process is that the process is primarily proactive. Successful implementation requires the development of triggers and signals to identify situations that may become problems and take the appropriate action before they affect the customer so that the promises made in the PSA can be achieved without interruption. Standardized response procedures are developed to respond to recurring events and coordination mechanisms are put in place to deal with irregular events. Information systems are developed to provide visibility to the triggers and signals that identify events requiring a response. In this chapter, we describe the customer service management process in detail to show how it can be implemented and managed.

Introduction

In a competitive business environment, management needs to implement the customer service management process in order to proactively respond to situations before they negatively impact the customer.

In a competitive business environment, management needs to implement the customer service management process in order to proactively respond to situations before they negatively impact the customer. It is this proactive perspective that makes the customer service management process different from the customer service activity in logistics. The customer service group in logistics is where customers might call in to place orders; to inquire about an order that has not arrived as scheduled; to complain about damaged products, invoice errors, products shipped in error; and/or to change an order. It might be argued that the greater the number of calls to the customer service group, the more service failures customers are experiencing and thus a more appropriate name might be customer non-service group.

In contrast, the role of customer service managers within the customer service management process is to monitor the PSAs for customers, and intervene on their behalf to solve problems before they are affected. For example, a customer has planned a large promotion. When do the advertising materials need to be received

¹ This chapter is adapted from Yemisi A. Bolumole, A. Michael Knemeyer and Douglas M. Lambert, "The Customer Service Management Process," *The International Journal of Logistics Management*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (2003), pp. 15-31.