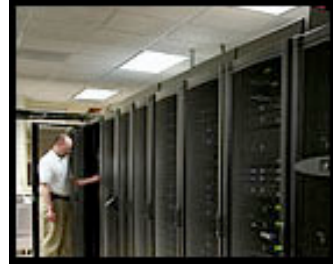




Customer or Business Partner?



Defining the differences between a valued customer and business partner

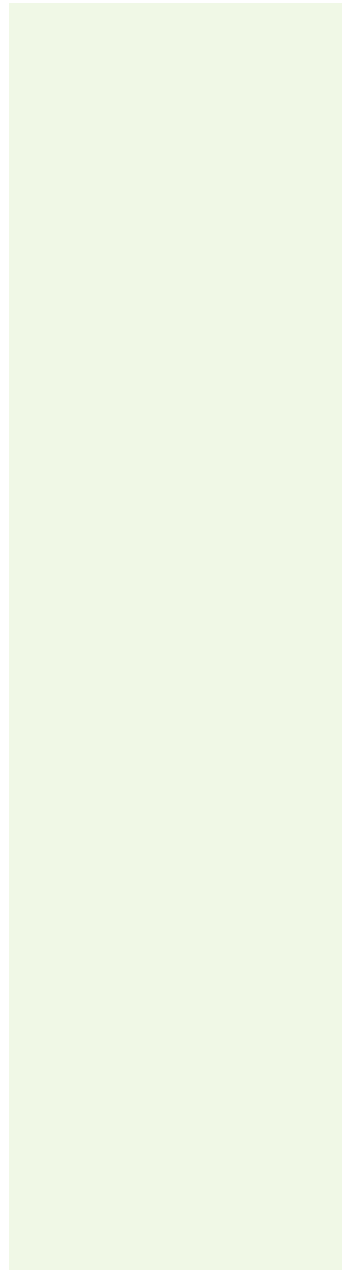


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Defining Valued Customers

Definitions

Webster's dictionary defines "customer" as "one that purchases a commodity or service".

Outline

Every business needs customers, caters to customers and values customers, or at least they should in principle. A business would not exist if not for customers, and the obviousness of that point cannot go unnoticed for long if you are a small business in growth mode.

In a typical business transaction, a good or service is transferred from business to customer and payment from customer to business. Once the transaction is completed; the customer and business part ways until there is need for another transaction. That transaction can either be a sales or a support transaction.

The dependencies on a successful business transaction are usually defined at the following stages:

- Point-of-sale
 - A clear definition of what is provided after sale
 - Delivering the goods or services as sold
- Support
 - Giving customer services as defined in the point-of-sale post sale where needed

While the impact of customers to a business is profound, their defined relationship is one of intermediate transactions without daily dependencies other than the transactions on a one-to-one basis.

So how can a customer be a business partner? Let's find out.

Defining Business Partners

Definitions

A “business partner” is a term used to denote a “commercial entity with which another commercial entity has some form of alliance. This relationship may be a highly contractual, exclusive bond in which both entities commit to provide goods or services mutually to each other.”

Outline

In the context of this white paper, specifically in the Managed IT Services industry; a business partner differs from a customer in many ways, primarily in the form of daily dependencies. The relationship is ongoing, with services provided daily and a dependency to deliver that good or service in good standing. Failure to do will damage the business partnership and put both businesses at risk. The level of risk is usually equal to the level of partnership; taking into consideration, type of partnership and level of goods or services provided.

In Managed IT Services, the business providing the service becomes the customer’s business partner. The business partnership is one based on a mutually assured delivery of services for payment. Typical services provided are:

- Managed Information Technology, such as desktop support
- Specific IT functionality
 - Security Solutions
 - Backup Solutions and Disaster Recovery
 - Compliancy, such as HIPAA
 - Website maintenance
 - eCommerce maintenance
- Data Center Technologies, such as hosting and email
- Programming Projects, such as application development

While a customer can have many one-to-one business transactions, a business partner who is a customer engages in a long-term business transaction with the business providing the goods or service.

The success is a shared venture and the mindset is generally as such, hopefully insuring a success business venture.

About 85under and PCnet

85 Under is a state-of-the-art data center offering secure data storage, data backups, leased hardware and collocation services to businesses throughout the country. Operating out of Springfield, Missouri in the Springfield Underground, 85 Under offers clients one of the most secure and unique facilities available anywhere in the U.S.

PC Net, Inc. has been providing best-in-class IT services to the Springfield community for more than 20 years. The company's new Pulse IT Management offers growing businesses a cost-effective yet highly responsive way to outsource IT services that feel like they're in-house.

For more information, contact us at 877-85UNDER(86337) or visit us online at www.85under.com, and www.pcnetinc.com locally at (417) 831-1700.

Conclusion

In today's world, specifically in the Managed IT Services industry; customers ARE business partners. The benefit to this is ten-fold, the growth of both businesses is highly dependent on the business partnership and mutual care is given to insure the success of the business partnership.

If the Web-Hosting business has taught the IT industry anything in the past 8 years; it is that all customers are business partners and that success is mutually based, you cannot have one without the other.