

Human Emotions Social Connections and Personal Well-Being

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Emotional Intelligence: Key to Quality Customer Service

Ahmad Ghazali Kidwai¹ and Prof. Adeel Maqbool²

Abstract

More and more people are realizing the importance of emotional intelligence (EI), or the capacity to recognize, understand, and control one's own emotions as well as those of others, in all spheres of life, but particularly in the workplace. When someone is having difficulties, those with strong emotional intelligence can relate to them. Strong social skills, particularly in the areas of communication and resolving the conflicts—two competencies that are essential in the workplace—coexist with high EI. Employees with emotional self-control are found to be able stop themselves from reacting to a situation which may lead to worst scenario, Rather they are able to make choice between options to act rationally (*Kalpna Srivasatava (2013)*). This chapter throws light on how improving emotional intelligence (EI) might improve customer service. We illustrate that strong emotional intelligence (EI) in customer service agents improves client satisfaction and loyalty by reviewing the literature.

Keywords: Emotional/ Intelligence/ Customer/ Service/Emotions.

Overview

In the modern world, emotional intelligence, or EI, is the newest subject receiving a lot of attention. The necessity of empathy and the capacity to comprehend what others are thinking is the reason for the growing significance. Because of this characteristic, EI has grown and is now

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present in every area of the modern world. Most notably, EI has a big influence on customer satisfaction and service quality in the field of customer service, since dealing with customers' emotions is a common part of interactions (*J.F. Majdalani, B.E. Maamari 2016*). With the hypothesis that higher EI correlates with better customer outcomes. It is necessary to explore the correlation between EI and customer service performance. In order to be an excellent customer service representative, one must first grasp the emotions of the consumer in order to develop emotional intelligence. Customer emotion is a measurement of level of satisfaction of the customer with overall business or a brand of a company that they have associated with (*Dr. Purvi Shah, 2020*). A customer may go through diverse emotions when they interact with a brand. The main aim of any customer service agent or the department of any organization is to make customers feel confident and positive about the product and services being offered or the brand itself.

Five key elements Emotional Intelligence (*Goleman, 1995*):

1. Self-awareness:

Self-awareness is the capacity to identify and understand the features of our identity, such as our behaviour, values, beliefs, emotions, and thoughts. In essence, it's a mental condition where the individual becomes the center of attention. Being self-aware is strength in customer service. It goes something like this “without a solid grasp of oneself, it is impossible to truly empathize with our customers.

Types of Self-Awareness

Additionally, self-awareness can manifest itself in a variety of ways and contexts. It has been categorized eminently between two categories of self-awareness: private and public by the psychiatrists.

Public Self-Awareness

If a person is always found to be conscious of his appearance and how others perceive him based on his/her looks, this is called Public Self Awareness. Situations where such people is in main focus of attention,

public self awareness displays itself. People with this self-awareness are very often forced to follow social protocol. In society it is expected from to move in a way that is acceptable and approved by the society. This happens when we know that we are being constantly assesses and observed.

Evaluation anxiety can also result from public self-awareness, wherein People start to feel upset, nervous, or concerned about what other people think of them. Two instances of how public self-awareness can occasionally result in worry and unhappiness about how others perceive us are performance anxiety and social anxiety.

Individual Self-Awareness

This kind occurs when people learn about certain facets of who they are, but only in a private sense. One form of private self-awareness is the ability to recognize oneself in the mirror, for instance. Develop a stronger sense of personal self-awareness by implementing specific tactics. We can increase our awareness of our inner thoughts, feelings, and sensations by journaling, meditating, and engaging in mindfulness exercises, for instance.

2. Self-control:

The ability to understand and control ones behaviour, as well as reciprocation to emotions and external incidents, is known as self-regulation. Self-control helps in avoiding from replying to negatively frustrated or dissatisfied remarks of the customer (*Jiahua Wei et.al, 2021*). As a customer service representative, we know our day can be a rollercoaster. One minute we are chatting with a happy customer, and the next, we are dealing with someone who's upset. That's where self-control comes in. It helps us stay cool, step back, and zero in on what the customer really needs. This skill not only calms the customer but also boosts our service game to meet their expectations (*Dr. P. S. Venkateswaran et.al, 2022*).

It has been seen that customer satisfaction improves drastically by practicing self-control, customer service representative or agents improve customer service by trying to resolve the customer's problem effectively with polite words and gestures. We need to remain focused, listen to what

the customer is saying, and not interrupt. This need in order ensures that we understand the customer's issue fully before offering a solution.

It includes being able to:

- Control one's own reactions to strong emotions like anger, enthusiasm, irritation and awkwardness
- Relax after something stimulating or disturbing
- Concentrate on a task
- Recast emphasis on a new task
- Control impulses
- Conduct in ways that helps us to be in harmony with other people.

3. **Motivation:**

Motivation is the inclination towards to act in a way which leads a person towards his goal. It's the pivotal part in setting our objectives and attaining them. It is one of the impulsion behind human behaviour. It brings competition and enhances social connection. A dissatisfied and unmotivated person is often found to be moving towards depression and mental diseases. It lits a light within a person to continue fighting for success in life and ultimately the person gets to know the meaning, purpose of his life (*Francis Walker, 2023*).

The industry of customer service is universally unpredictable and sometimes unexciting as well (*S. Chitra Devi.et.al, 2023*). A slight mistake in customer service can lead to a complex chain of events that starts small but grows very fast. The customer service agents play an important role in any organization as they are the people who are directly facing the customers. So, customer service agents should be motivated about their job profile and should enjoy doing it. This is the way to make a way to success. It also builds great work environment (*Salovey & Mayer, 1990*).The employees who have maximum work satisfaction and are happy with their job, are found to be motivated. They in turn give best customer service with a happy workplace and successful employees.

4. **Empathy:**

Empathy is the capability to realize and understand emotionally what other person feels and ability to put oneself in other person's situation and think accordingly. Basically, it is imagining oneself in someone else's situation and trying to understand what they are feeling. This improves customer and employee relationship which ultimately enhances customer service, builds loyalty in the minds of customers, and multiply the number of happy customers. Thus, good customer experience is created with empathy, especially after customer has gone through some bad experiences (*Dr. Catherine Prentice 2019*).

Types of Empathy

Empathy can come in different forms, depending on the situations. Some of the different types of empathy that we might experience are:

Affective Empathy

The ability to understand and respond correctly to feelings of another person is known as affective empathy. People with such emotional awareness are found to feel bad and bothered about well being of another person.

Somatic Empathy

Encounter anything physically as a reaction to another person's situation is known as somatic empathy. It is seen many times that some people can feel the emotions of other person. For example when we see someone bleeding or in pain, our face expressions change.

Cognitive Empathy

When a person is able to understand the mental condition of another person and can make out how he/she would react in a particular situation is known as cognitive empathy.

5. Social skills:

The abilities to being able to interact and communicate with other people are social skills. These skills are being used by us on daily basis and starts the moment we start communicating with others. They include both spoken and non-spoken forms of communication. Body language, gestures, facial expressions, and speech are counted in it. Social skills are important as they give an efficacious and systematic communication, this leads us to set up, support, and develop connections with other colleagues, customers, and slightly known people. It is crucial to sustain and keep improving these qualities irrespective of our part, field, or extent of experience. Strive for continuous improvement in these aspects held customer service representative or any staff dealing with the customers to understand the customers emotions and deal accordingly (*Shedrack Ezekiel Jamoet.al,2024*).

Individuals with high Emotional Intelligence have an ability to understand their emotions and realize how those feelings influence their way of behaving and that of others. It's more challenging to understand the emotions of other people as we cannot control their feelings and actions. However, we will be better able to understand where they are coming from and how to correspond to them if we are able to find out the emotions those are directing their behaviour. The person with this quality ends up becoming good sales person and is able to excel in the field of marketing (*Eko Tama Putra Saratian,et.Al ,2024*).

Customer service emotions

Emotions have a big impact on customer support encounters, satisfaction, and loyalty. The philosophical understanding of emotions can be used in the following ways:

1. Empathy and Understanding: In customer service, empathy is essential. It enables customer support workers to react appropriately and efficiently when they are aware of their emotional condition (*Xing'an Xu et.al, 2022*). This is consistent with cognitive theories of emotions, which hold that resolving a customer's worries requires a comprehension of their evaluative judgments.

2. Emotional Control: In order to remain professional, customer service representatives frequently need to control their own emotions. It is vitally important to have training in emotional intelligence, which encompasses discernment and controlling intrinsic emotions as and also of others (*Muhammad Usman Tariq, 2024*).

3. Ethical Aspects: Fair and respectful customer service is a requirement of ethical customer service. It's important to control emotions like rage and irritation to make sure they do not negatively impact the customer.

4. Emotional Contagion: Feelings have the potential to spread. Customer experiences and results can be improved when service workers are in a favorable emotional state. The non-cognitive parts of emotions, which allow for identical emotional reactions in others when others see similar physical expressions and tones, can explain this occurrence.

5. Feedback and Improvement: Customer feedback contains emotions that can be used to improve services (*Ginanggih et.al, 2023*). Realizing the feelings that lie beneath criticism or acclaim facilitates the implementation of significant adjustments.

Relevance in Practice

1. Training Programs: Customer service programs that include emotional intelligence training can improve staff members capacity to manage a range of emotional circumstances.

2. Customer Interaction Policies: Creating rules that prioritize ethical behavior, empathy, and appropriate emotional reactions guarantees a consistent and satisfying customer experience.

3. Support Systems: Employees in customer service can perform better and be more satisfied with their jobs if they receive emotional support in managing stress and preventing burnout. (*Zeidner, Matthews, & Roberts, 2004*).

Discussion

The results are consistent with previous research, highlighting the value of emotional intelligence in customer service. Representatives with high Emotional Intelligence are able to cater to the needs and demands of their customers in a better way and control their emotions, which improves service quality (*Sally K. 2005*). Enhancing emotional intelligence (EI) through training programs may help boost customer service output. A happy employee can only make a happy customer. It is eminent that an employee who is not happy in his workplace and is constantly keeps blaming his organization for his non performance can never bring in good customer service (*Dr. Desti Kannaiah, Dr. R. Shanthi 2015*). He will always be reacting instantly to the situations with customers. Training in Emotional Intelligence is must to improve and enhance the level of customer service. Business grows as we have more and more of happy customers. A happy customer brings many more customers to the organization through word of mouth. With increasing online shopping and emergence of more and more online trading companies, importance of good customer service had increased. BPO companies are best example of how to use emotional intelligence in customer service process (*Zahir, 2016*). Customer service representative with high emotional intelligence is able to handle the adverse situations with ease. He empathizes with an angry customer and listens to him first instead of arguing with him. This brings down the anger of the customer and he agrees to settle down on an agreement. Thus problem gets resolved (*Comarch Software house Publication, 2024*).

Conclusion

It can be concluded that emotional intelligence plays a critical role in providing excellent customer service. Through cultivating EI,

Organizations can improve their customer service capabilities through focused training and development initiatives, which will raise customer satisfaction and loyalty. Customers' needs and emotions can be better understood and addressed by customer care teams who possess excellent emotional intelligence abilities. This, in turn, improves client happiness and perceptions of business, as well as customer loyalty.

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