

You've all excelled; you've proven yourselves capable thinkers in looking at the Ford example, tossing what you know to the wind and coming up with some solutions that are unique, address the instant problem and are likely to add to both customer satisfaction and customer loyalty.

As several of you observed the nominal numbers were small, just over 100, and the nature of the vehicle, in the \$100,000 category, Ford knew that they had a vocal and influential audience. This is not the time you want to be training techs at various dealers to do a one-time job and hope for the best. I assume the cases, like pricey car sales were clustered on the coasts and that the initial cars were easy to find.

Ford dispatched vans with factory techs that arrived in Ford garb at an appointed time at the owner's house. There, using their own tools from the van, performed all the work to change the OEM factory aluminum front suspension wishbone and replace it with an updated unit.

I am, I confess, working from memory here and may have some of the "Ford knew" and "Ford thought" elements wrong, but the big picture is accurate and the salient message for us to take away is that the solution:

- Was honest
- Was polite
- Treated the customer as an "important individual" rather than just a member of a class.
- Allowed Ford to make and keep promises regarding times and so forth
- Was seen as a specific and unique solution dealing with a "special" customer's unique and unusual request.

As we move into today's chat listen closely for some terms related to justice, self-esteem and justice.

Moving on . . . . . the science of customer delight and outrage.

In this installment I am going to discuss some things that Schneider and Boman identified in their research published in the M.I.T. Sloan Management Journal in Fall of 1999. I bet much of this will sound familiar and I'll be offering some suggestions to relate some of the material to the Buell ownership experience.

There are about 4 levels customer can exist at. Most customers spend most their time within 2 standard deviations, center about a norm, of ambivalence. They are either "satisfied" or "dissatisfied". There are the folks who may have a small problem, go to their dealer, get it fixed and go about their business. Neither ownership, the problem or the interaction with the dealer do much to contribute to heighten emotion either good or bad. This is not a "bad thing" it's just where 90+% of owners exist.

For the purpose of understanding customer service that results in customer loyalty we need to examine the two other levels that flank the two ambivalent groups, On one extreme we have the “outraged” customer. This is the guy/gal who for whatever reason resulting from ownership, problems or dealer interaction is outraged to the point of defection. On the other end of the continuum is the “delighted” customer who, again resulting from ownership, problems or dealer interaction is so delighted as to nearly ensure a level of loyayty that will ignore the problems that would make an ambivalent cusomter dissatisfies and who, fueled by confidence in the product, firm and relationships, is nearly assured of being a customer for life.

I’m going to suggest, as we move ahead, that an investment in a new and innovative perception, coupled with some new procedures, that improving cusomter service can improve customer loyalty to a point that could allow a company to keep the delighted, convert the sastified and recover a significant number of dissatisfied customers. I dream of a customer service system that is seen as much as a purchase motivator and “customer keeper” as the product itself. Let’s discuss some specifics about these folks and how we intereact with them.

HOSEKEEPING CAVEAT: This is s Buell forum, I’m a Buell advocate and you are all Buell owners. We, little surprise, are going to be seeing all of this through “Buell eyes” and dreaming of “Buell-lutions”. I need to make clear that nothing I say should be construed as taking the folks at Buell Customer Service to task. Most of what I say will involve things to think about, ideas and there will be very little criticism and none directed at Buell. I read every bit of information I can get on customer service and have amassed somewhat of a research library. Buell and my personal fascination with the company have provided me with an avocation lust for innovation and imagination. This is intended to be an upbeat conversation meant to stimulate creative thought. Nuff said.

Think for a moment about our 4 groups of owners.

<b>Outraged</b>	<b>Dissatisfied</b>	<b>Satisfied</b>	<b>Delighted</b>
Defection	Ambivalent		Loyalty
Become “terrorists”			Become “apostles”

A look at this distribution can, I suggest, pretty well describe the Badweb community over the past 10 years, the CompuServe RIDE community prior to that and, I confess I’m simply guessing, perhaps the entire worldwide Buell ownership population. It, at the least, gives us a starting point to share ideas and how they may benefit Buell.

Terrorists, and I feel compelled to thank one contributor above, are those customers who as a result of some component of their, be it real or perceived, ownership experience become so outraged as to build website dedicated to moving other owners to defect, potential buyers to rethink and generally exhibit a level of emotion suggesting they’ve been personally singled out to be wronged. Having, over a period of 15+ years, dealt with Buell owners I suggest that once this level is reached that the company needs to invoke a “fix it and get them on their way” thinking. The “you can’t make all the people

happy all the time” saying applies. With 100,000+ owners worldwide I’m saddened, but not surprised, that there will from time to time be outraged owners less intent on resolving their own problems that shouting from the mountain tops how they have been wronged. In a few minutes I’ll be sharing thoughts on both justice and self-esteem but for the moment I’m suggesting that firms have a way of quantifying when reason dictates it’s time to simply cut a customer loose. Some marriages simply don’t work.

On the other end of the continuum lives the apostle, the customer who as a result of some component of the ownership experience has faith in the firm and spreads the good word through unsolicited advocacy. In our work today our challenge will be to suggest ideas whereby Buell Customer Service, Buell the company, Buell dealers and perhaps Badweb can reduce the number of terrorists and increase the number of apostles to the common benefit of everyone involved.

Let’s talk about ways Customer Service can lead to Customer Loyalty.

The science of customer service has a couple models they like to point to. We’ll not dwell here but see if you can see a few familiar elements in each.

The Met-Expectations Models suggest that folks have a specific expectations about their interaction with Buell. To the extent those expectation are met the customer is satisfied.

This model is where the concept of “customer delight” flows from in that when customer’s expectations are exceeded, rather than just “met”, that an element of “surprise” enters and evokes a feeling of “delight”. This can be seen, citing examples from the past 3 weeks, when a Buell owner needs a part that is on 2 month backorder and when an “Elf”, upon hearing about the owners plight, bends a few rules has the part flown from Austria to East Troy, comes in on Saturday repackages it and overnights it to Europe. Or last week when a customer needed a part for a saddlebag that is not sold as a replacement part and an “Elf” made arrangements to have the single part flown from Germany, delivered to the customer and allowed the bike to be fixed for a few dollars rather than a thousand dollars.

The greatest surprise, I maintain, is when someone posts a problem and within minutes their phone rings and they hear “how can we help?” Buell, as thousands can attest, is the master at delivering these surprises ranging from Erik sitting in a parking lot spending a couple hours, and missing an appearance, to get a bike just right to a “surprise” thousand dollars check in the mail and a note apologizing for an interrupted trip and the associated hotel and travel expenses. “Surprise” is one of the most amazing elements