

Comparing Companies, Churches & Clubs

The following is an excerpt from 'The Service Gauntlet' handbook on strategic planning and club operational thinking

The Corporate Dilemma - Customers Versus Investors

Companies have a relationship with its investors. This relationship is based on the expectations of a return on investment. Some investors want an immediate profit. Others are willing to forgo short-term profit for longer, more stable returns.

Many times companies make decisions to the benefit of the investor, or the customer, to the detriment of the other. These strategy decisions can pay dividends or backfire on the company leadership, depending on the success or failure of the decisions and the company's ability to reason their way or sell their decision to both investors and customers.

In cases where companies are focused on the primary mission, goal, objective and strategy, progress is normally the result. By interchanging satisfaction for the profit, the primary template can be changed to represent corporations. The primary mission is the profit motive. The primary goal, objective and strategy remain the same.

Primary Template - Corporations

Value, provided by quality products and services, based on effective product/service delivery systems, promotes the primary mission of profit in companies and primary mission of satisfaction in clubs.

It is simple to see that, when a company damages its customer relations for short-term gains, it can damage its long-term success. It is also well documented that, when a company forgets about its primary mission of delivering a return on investment, present and future investors will take their investments elsewhere.

The key element in business is the principle that decisions affecting both the investor and the customer lie with the company management. Most of the time, decisions are made with no input from those that are most affected by the decisions.

Church Templates and Gauntlets

A church is at the opposite end of the spectrum. The customers and investors are the same people. Investment is voluntary. The church must have a good product that delivers a high level of satisfaction or the customer/investor will not support the church or invest either money or time in its success.

When a church is providing a high level of value and satisfaction, the customer/investor will gladly take on the added responsibility of becoming the advertising, sales and marketing arm of the church. They will proudly encourage others to join and make voluntary contributions.

For a church to be successful, it must stay focused on the primary template of its existence. Obviously, religious organizations have a subjective draw with the fundamental principles they may represent. A church may believe it has its own primary template based on these principles. However, its real primary template is the same as the one introduced here. Satisfaction - Value - Service - Service Delivery Systems.

For the church to stay on mission, it must continually use gauntlets to test ideas against this template. A member must get satisfaction from being spiritually feed. When the church strays from its primary template, growth and financial progress will be affected.

The success of the church, in its ability to satisfy the customer and investor simultaneously, is also the pattern for corporate success. The benefit for the company is excellent word of mouth advertising, which will breed continued growth.

Success for Clubs

The goal of a club should be more like that of a church. A club also has investors/customers in the form of members. The initial investment is voluntary. Future investments are mandatory if one is to retain membership and protect his or her original investment.

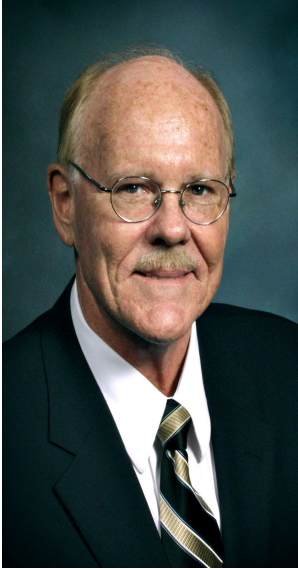
Remember, when members continue to use the club, buy products, and pay dues, they are making purchasing decisions. In clubs, progress can be measured by the level of a member's willingness to continue doing business with the club. Success in the club industry requires that the club continue to reinforce the fact that, by supporting the club, the member made a wise decision based on receiving good value for the investment.

A corporate decision may have a positive impact on either the customer or the investor to the detriment of the other. In both churches and clubs, decisions must have a positive effect on the customer (member)/investor. Therefore, the need for communication between the leadership and a church (or club) constituency is enhanced over that required by a corporation.

A club should examine this principle and understand the benefit of staying focused on its primary template and continuing to test new ideas against it by using gauntlet thinking. As satisfaction and value grow within the membership the result will be similar to that experienced in a church. The members will readily accept the role of salesperson.

As long as a member is getting a high level of satisfaction and good value, based on the excellent service received, they will be happy to advertise, market, promote and sell the club to their friends and business associates. The club membership roles will remain full and long-term success should be a direct result.

About the Author



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