

perspectives

CELEBRATING YOUR ROLE IN OUR SUCCESS

WHAT DO CUSTOMERS *Really Want?*

What do customers really want? It's a question top-performing companies can answer with precision. Smart, successful organizations have perfected their ability to know and understand their customers and can even anticipate future needs.

Consider amazon.com's online strategy of recommending additional items based on past purchasing preferences, or Nordstrom, known for sending reminders to loyal customers so they don't miss an important birthday or anniversary.

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InSights



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BlueCross BlueShield
of Florida
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Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

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"Understanding different segments of customers and what their preferences are can make all the difference when it comes to earning their loyalty," says David Pizzo, vice president of Enterprise Marketing. The keys, he says, are discovering what is most important to targeted customers, making improvements based on those findings and focusing on establishing and maintaining long-term relationships.

To fine-tune our approach to better knowing customers, meeting their needs and exceeding their expectations, the company created a new area within Enterprise Marketing dedicated to customer understanding, says John Kaegi, group vice president, Enterprise Marketing.

Why customer understanding matters

A thorough understanding of customers is critical in today's consumer-driven health care environment. "Consumers expect the same level of service and convenience from us that they get from other industries," says Kaegi. Factors such as self-service, choice and control are high on the list of consumer expectations.

In addition, says Kaegi, customer understanding will help BCBSF differentiate itself among increased competition. "When it comes to health care, consumers have a lot of choices and easy access to a tremendous amount of information," he explains. "Understanding what is important to customers and delivering on those 'satisfiers' will help distinguish Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida (BCBSF)."

The power of the individual consumer is increasing when it comes to health care. Decisions about health benefits, once dictated largely by employers, are being shifted to employees.

"As employers carry less of the costs related to health benefits and employees absorb more, the individual employee plays a more significant role in deciding how their health dollars are spent," explains Brian Mickley, director, customer relationship governance.

This trend is causing many companies, including BCBSF, to zero in on individual consumers who are expected to spend significantly more on health care in the next decade. "As employer-sponsored benefits decrease, employees are more likely to purchase products that fit their unique health care needs," explains Mickley.

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The Institute of the Future predicts by the end of 2010, the health market will be an innovative economy demanding nontraditional offerings — such as wellness, cosmetics, fashion, health information and even biosecurity. This will only increase as the population ages.

"We believe our customers will be delighted for us to offer a broader range of services, but first we need to understand what they want," says Kaegi. "We want to provide value, which means 'you have what I need and the price is okay.'"

To do that, says Kaegi, we need to understand how customers look at their health, their attitudes toward health and the experiences they have when getting health care services. "The more we know and understand, the better solutions we can develop to solve their health needs," he continues.

Building a wealth of customer information

To get to the heart of customers' needs and preferences, the customer understanding team is going straight to the source.

"We're interviewing customers, agents and business administrators to find out what attributes are most important to them when

interacting with us," explains Kaegi. These in-depth interviews, followed by quantitative surveys in which participants prioritize and rate these attributes, will help the company build a wealth of customer information.

Results from interviews with members, called "Voice of the Customer," reveal that customer needs fit into seven basic categories (listed in order of importance): affordable care; quality doctors; consistent coverage; caring and flexible insurance company; good customer service; billing, claims and paperwork; and enrollment and information.

Within these categories, 25 distinct needs (such as being able to choose doctors and treatments options) are being tracked to understand customer satisfaction. "We are working to identify metrics in relation to these satisfiers so we can determine what the impacts are and make changes accordingly," explains Kaegi.

The customer understanding team is also putting our satisfaction scores in competitive

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context to see how we compare to other health companies. "A strong customer understanding capability also requires an understanding of the competition, the economy and changes in the marketplace to provide us with a complete picture," says Kaegi.

In addition to conducting surveys, the customer understanding team is analyzing customer contact data, claims data and purchase patterns. This helps the company to identify key customer segments.

BCBSF is also collecting information to gain a better understanding of agents, brokers, consultants, employers, physicians, other providers and the general public. In the second quarter of

2004, BCBSF will unveil a redesigned website with "communities" and self-service tools designed specifically for each stakeholder.

Kaegi explains that BCBSF has only scratched the surface when it comes to using information to better serve our members. "We've made strides in this area, but there is so much more we can do with deeper, richer customer information," he says. "Our goal is to use this information to produce better results and better experiences at all touchpoints for our customers and all of our key stakeholders."

Historical VIEWS

THE MEANING BEHIND THE BLUE CROSS AND BLUE SHIELD SYMBOLS

A company's mark or logo is a key part of its image. Much thought is given to create a design that is meaningful and memorable. The Blue Cross and Blue Shield symbols are no exception. As Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida (BCBSF) has changed through the years, so have our symbols.

As BCBSF celebrates its 60th anniversary this year, let's take a look back at the history of our signature. Every day each of us sees the Blue Cross and Blue Shield symbols — probably a dozen times — but we may not pay attention to its true significance.



The original Blue Cross symbol was very different than the one used today. It contained the emblem adopted from the American Hospital Association (AHA) in 1939. This symbol was chosen because

it illustrates the close working relationship between what eventually became the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association (BCBSA) and the community of physicians. The original symbol looked like this.

Here is a description of the parts that make up the AHA emblem used in the center of the original Blue Cross symbol:



The American Eagle symbolizes medical professionalism in the United States of America.



The Lorraine Cross has been the emblem of the relief to the unfortunate since medieval times.



The Maple Leaves are symbolic of the medical professionalism in the Dominion of Canada.



The Caduceus has symbolized the healing art for many thousands of years.

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