

I was recently asked, "What is customer service in the heavy duty aftermarket?"

This is a service industry. Plain and simple. We buy products from a manufacturer, sometimes those products are routed through a wholesaler before getting down to the distributor level and we distributors, the grunts of the industry, carry those products the final mile. It's Simple..but it's not easy. There are a lot of steps along the way. A lot of handoffs and a lot of potential points of failure, right? This is why I believe the former CFS concept of Consistent Responsive Service is a great definition of customer service in the heavy duty aftermarket.

So what is Consistent Responsive Service?

By the book, CFS described Consistent Responsive Service as:

- Get the right products
- To the right place
- In the correct quantities
- On time
- In a suitable form for resale
- And of course, complete the transaction without error!

If you're a heavy duty distributor and you can execute these six things every single time, every single day, there's nobody in this business that will beat you. You will own your market place.

Of course we're all human and mistakes happen. Those catchy bullet points are spot-on, but to some can oversimplify a process that as mentioned, has a lot of handoffs, a lot of moving pieces. So if we break it down a little further, you can see Consistent Responsive Service is simply performing the fundamentals of your job well and consistently performing them well day-in and day-out.

What are some of the fundamentals?

- It's the Delivery Driver who double-checks the product loaded for delivery against the invoices to be delivered before heading out on a delivery. Why is this fundamental important? Because you don't want to find out you're missing something after you've arrived at a customer's facility. That definitely does not equate to customer service. At the same time, always having the right product, in the correct quantities delivered on time and in a suitable form for resale every time you make a delivery to a customer builds a reputation of executing these essential functions. That in itself is the definition of customer service in the heavy duty aftermarket. Am I right?
- It's the Branch Manager who instills an obsession within the branch team to answer the phones quickly and conducting themselves in a friendly manner which portrays a confidence to solve the customer challenge at hand.

These are just a few of the fundamentals which make up Consistent Responsive Service but the main point is just performing these fundamentals is not enough. We need to obsess over these seemingly small details. We need to perform them so consistently that they become a part of who we are. To the point where performing these fundamentals better than the competitor is not just our reputation, it's engrained in our company's soul, our brand.

I'd go further to say there are branch locations and full operational areas within FleetPride where Consistent Responsive Service lives. However, achieving Consistent Responsive Service companywide takes discipline, discipline through all ranks and departments, not just at the branch level. It takes the universal understanding of who the boss is. The boss's position -- starts with a "C" and I'll give you a hint, it's not CEO. Consistent Responsive Service starts with the realization that everything we do is because of the Customer. It takes the organizational-wide realization that there IS a Customer waiting at the end of every chain of activities we perform. Whether you're a Counter Sales Rep, a Category Manager or a Clerk in the AP department, every function of your job is part of a chain of events which delivers something to our Customers. Inconsistencies and

unresponsiveness, no matter how seemingly small, will negatively impact a Customer somewhere, to some degree.

So where does one start implementing Consistent Responsive Service? No matter where you are or what your title is, we all start at the same place. It's simply a choice we make. At the start of every day each one of us is presented with a simple choice. The choice to perform our job to the best of our ability - or - to do something else. Sure, everyone wants to do well, everyone wants to win, but as Lou Holtz said it's not the will to win that matters. Everyone has that. It's the will to prepare to win, the willingness to put forth the effort to practice and perfect the minor details. That's what delivers Consistent Responsive Service and that's what sets one distributor apart from the rest in the heavy duty aftermarket.

On an individual level, it's also what takes a job – And turns it into a career. Across the our company there are managers, directors, VPs, even owners that sold their company to FleetPride whom started their careers as delivery drivers. How did they rise to these positions? Consistent Responsive Service. Among other things, these people consistently performed the core fundamentals of their job well and not only built a reputation of such for their team, but for themselves as well.

Consistent Responsive Service, it's what will set you and your company apart in this business.



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