



Service Management and the Reception Desk

Call it a Reception Desk, Reservation counter, Concierge, Help Desk, Service Desk, Teller, Retail counter, or whatever, the main service management processes still apply. This 'Desk' is the point where your staff must service your customers. The face-to-face encounter. There's no escaping it.

Your staff will need to deal with requests, enquiries, complaints, purchases, returns and more. And deal with all of these in an efficient and friendly manner. Regardless of what the customer wants, it must result in a positive customer experience (CX). Your organisation's reputation depends on it.

To be able to achieve this, at least in the majority of occasions, your staff must be adequately supported. Having a **Service Management tool/application**, that can allow them to track every interaction is a must. It must be easy (minimum key strokes) and intuitive (easy to find what they need) to use. This tool must provide answers to common issues 'at the touch of a button'.

Your 'front-office' staff must have back-office staff, able to perform investigations and fix issues (**Incident and Problem Management**), and keep them informed of progress at all times.

They must have up-to-date and accurate information (**Configuration Management**) for them to be able to rely on, so they can be trusted by your customers. This information must go beyond your enterprise, to any area that your customers may ask about, relative to your services.

And most importantly, your staff must have the management that delegates, trusts and supports them. (See Adaptive Leadership). Allow guided autonomy, which allows them to experiment with how best to deliver the services.

No matter what industry you are in, you must deliver on the most important of all services – customer support. Without it, you will lose customers and soon be out of business.

You may well have a **Service Desk** which appears to be operating well. But how well is that? Are you exceeding customer expectations, or doing "as good as our competitors"? Are you monitoring and managing, so that it is clear what the next set of improvements are? Are you listening to your customers, and your own staff, about how you can do even better?

That front desk is an invaluable source of information. Don't bother with customer surveys. If you are not recording and analysing every customer interaction, in a logical and systematic manner, then you are simply wasting money and not showing you are caring about you customers.

Service Management has tried and proven methods to maximise the benefits you can achieve through your reception area. Benefits for you, your staff, your customers, partners, suppliers and all. Services and processes based on a win-win approach.

We all understand that, for example, a reservation counter for an airline, is critical. The operator must be able to book flights, change flights, accommodate special needs, advise customers of their best options, check passengers in and more. (A unique form of **Configuration Management**)

They must also be able to handle the unexpected (**Continuity Management**). What to do if all flights are suddenly cancelled, for that airline, for that airport, or for the country! Try to make it a positive experience for passengers and your staff alike.

Tough as this is, all airlines analyse the data they collect at the reservation counter (in good times and bad) to drive for better services. They must, or they would be beaten by their competitors at the next counter.

Regardless of what industry, you must get the most benefit out of your reception desk and those brave souls that man it.

It is your shop window