

Do You Need a CCO? Assessment Two

Consider each of the following eleven statements and determine whether it applies to your company.

1. There is someone in our company who clarifies what we are to accomplish with customers.

- Yes there is
- No there is not

Implementation Tip: These agreements need to be established in partnership with the functional owners across the organization. It is really important to make sure that the CCO or executive leadership does not do this in a vacuum and then try to “throw the brick over the wall” to the leaders to rubber-stamp.

2. There is a clear process to drive alignment for what will be accomplished.

- Yes there is
- No there is not

Implementation Tip: The best leaders I’ve worked with drive people into discussion by going around the table and asking each to state his or her commitment or dissent. These leaders make it okay to disagree if someone is not comfortable with what’s being proposed.

3. We have a roadmap for the customer work and know where progress will be measured.

- Yes we do
- No we do not

Implementation Tip: This needs to be a group effort. Bring together a team of people with at least one person from every operational area. This group needs to get into the ramifications and work involved in getting the priorities done.

4. Clear metrics exist for measuring progress that everyone agrees to use.

- Yes they do
- No they do not

Implementation Tip: Pick a few key metrics that everyone understands, knows their roles in and can follow. The large score cards we have all created have become almost meaningless because they are filled with so much data.

5. There is real clarity of everyone’s roles and responsibilities.

- Yes there is
- No there is not

Implementation Tip: This is about the handoffs between the silos. Make sure that there is a task list that clearly states which parts of the organization must come together to get the priorities accomplished. Too often these goals are kept lofty and high, and people aren’t made accountable for their completion.

6. People really participate and care about the customer work.

- Yes they do
- No they do not

Implementation Tip: You need to get a commitment from each operational area leader on the number of headcount and the amount of staff time they will contribute. Create a formalized team where 25 to 50 percent of people's time from areas throughout the company is dedicated to the customer work.

7. Appropriate resources are allocated to make a real difference to customers.

- Yes they are
- No they are not

Implementation Tip: Hand waving without investment won't get you anywhere. The key here is to have an organized annual planning approach that dedicates time to the customer objectives and customer investment. The chief executive needs to be personally involved. To achieve success, specific actions with defined parameters of what needs to be accomplished must be identified.

8. There is an understandable process for people to work together.

- Yes there is
- No there is not

Implementation Tip: This work is as clear as mud. It starts with a high-level frenzy that in the blink of an eye has people going back to business as usual. The process for how the work will be defined, reviewed, executed, and rewarded has got to be laid out clearly.

9. The work is considered attainable.

- Yes it is
- No it is not

Implementation Tip: Our frenzied enthusiasm gets away from us, and we talk about the end "nirvana" state rather than the steps to get there. What I learned is not to abandon strategy but to dole it out in bite-size pieces. You need to know the end game. But then you need to bridge the gap between strategy and execution so people can work it into budgets, priorities, and planning."

10. A process exists for marketing achievements to customers and internally.

- Yes it does
- No it does not

Implementation Tip: When you don't tell people internally what's going on with the customer, it's all white noise to them. No report equals no action. You must make a point of marketing back to both your customers and internally inside the organization.

11. Recognition and reward are wired to motivate customer work.

- Yes they are
- No they are not

Implementation Tip: The customer work is not going to seem important until people start to be publicly commended and rewarded for it. Make every company gathering an opportunity to call out customer achievements and reward people for them.

Summary of Implementation Tips

1. Create a straw man of the options for defining the priorities for the work
2. Drive people into discussion by going around the table and asking each to state his or her commitment or dissent. Make it okay to disagree if someone is not comfortable with what's being proposed.
3. Establish a team with at least one person from every operational area.
4. Pick a few key metrics that everyone understands, knows their roles in, and can follow.
5. Ensure there is a task list that clearly states which parts of the organization must come together to get the priorities accomplished.
6. Get a commitment from each operational area leader on the number of staff and the amount of staff time they will contribute.
7. Have an organized annual planning approach that dedicates time to the customer objectives and customer investment
8. Clearly lay out the process for how people will work together and the work will be defined, reviewed, executed, and rewarded.
9. Dole out the work in bite-size pieces.
10. Make a point of marketing back to your customers and inside the organization.
11. Make every company gathering an opportunity to call out customer achievements and reward people for them.

About the Author

Jeanne Bliss is the founder of CustomerBLISS (www.customerbliss.com); a consulting and coaching company helping corporations connect their efforts to yield improved customer growth. She is a world-wide speaker on the subject. Jeanne spent twenty-five years at Lands' End, Microsoft, Allstate, Coldwell Banker, and Mazda corporations as the leader for driving customer focus and customer growth. Her best-selling books are; Chief Customer Officer: Getting Past Lip Service to Passionate Action, and I Love You More than My Dog: Five Decisions for Extreme Customer Loyalty in Good Times and Bad.