

# A Complaint Driven Culture?



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## **A Complaint-Driven Culture?**

Do you have a “complaint-driven” culture? If you are constantly being told that the “customer is always right”, chances are - you have a culture that is driven by customer complaints rather than value conviction. Think about it – if the customer is always right, then what value do you bring to the table? You are just merely executing on their wishes and demands and there is no value-add. The customer is leading your organization through a constant stream of complaints and demands rather than being a committed advocate.

It is your duty as the service provider to lead your customer with expert insights so that they realize what they don't know through what you know. Makes sense? In other words, you must be several steps ahead of your customers and **be driven by conviction** rather than complaints. Then there are reasons to keep coming back for more.

*What does it mean to be driven by conviction?*

A conviction is a standard of compliance that is non-negotiable. It is a set of principles that does not change with the whims and fancies of individuals – rather, it provides a plumbline by which all other customer-related activities are performed. For example, Kimray – an oil and gas company – will never manufacture a product that is not backward compatible i.e. customers will never be “forced” to upgrade for the sake of upgrading alone. Products manufactured in the 1950s are still compatible with those manufactured today. This is the conviction of “backward compatibility” and it permeates the entire product life-cycle in Kimray – from design, purchasing, manufacture and assembly.

How does one go about setting a culture of conviction?

### **Step 1 : Do what others are NOT doing.**

The law of averages are such that the majority of the companies out there are just doing what everybody else is doing. If the industry warranty is 3 years, then expect that almost everyone would offer 3 years. It becomes a conviction when you offer lifetime warranty! Leaders with conviction are those who would go out of their way to prove a claim that others do not have – be it quality, service level or product design, you know that that there is depth in their claims and not just mere promotion.

### **Step 2 : Design rather than advertise.**

The best form of advertisement is word-of-mouth. A product or service which is motivated by conviction rather than complaint takes on a “life” of its own – with almost a “cult-like” following of users. Think about the iPods and the iPhones – there is a conviction of simplicity in Apple's products that drives their design rather than just reacting to “market forces”.

### **Step 3 : Focus on character, not skills.**

In a market that is saturated with similar products, focus on *how* you sell rather than just *what* you sell. When you are serviced by people who are just merely doing their job, your needs may be met but your future loyalty is not procured. But when you are treated by people who walk and talk with enthusiasm, joyfulness and alertness – you develop a lasting *impression* which then leads to loyalty.

A culture driven by complaints is marked by constant stress whereas a culture built on a bedrock of principles and conviction creates an atmosphere of stability and security where people thrive in.

A follower is driven by complaints. A leader is driven by conviction.

Think about it.

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