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## HOW CUSTOMER CENTRIC

# Are You?

BY BILL MILLS

**W**e all know we are supposed to lead customer centric organizations. The problem, as I see it, is that we evaluate our level of customer centricity through our feelings and not our actions.

Too many people feel wonderfully warm and grateful when asked if they are customer focused. "Of course, I am, I love our customers!" might even be their response. But I'm more concerned with actions.

Please take a moment and rate your organization against the activities, behaviors and beliefs on the next page. This assessment appears courtesy of author Howard

Hauser, and is used with permission.

If your score is between 84 and 92, you are a customer-centric business. If you scored between 74 and 83, then you are getting close to customer centric. If you scored between 64 and 73, you have lots of room to improve. If you scored 54-63, you are having difficulty competing. And if you scored below 54, you need help; without a change, your business is in jeopardy.

I don't have to ask if you're happy with your score. I've seen hundreds of people develop irritable bowel syndrome as they fill out this survey. What's often fascinating is that you can be a financially successful company and still score poorly. That just shows how low the customer service bar has been set and how great your opportunity to improve is. Notice also, that none of the activities of being customer centric are difficult or expensive. This is good news!

When you elevate the customer experience to a "must have differentiator" you and your people will find lots of ways to create it. As you build a line of sight connection between your people and your customers, you'll find your people will naturally find ways to improve their customers' experiences. It's fun to serve and contribute to other's happiness. It's fulfilling and paradoxically, I'm having a better work experience when I'm allowed the freedom to make my customers happy.

In the '80s the mantra was "Quality is Free" and now we need to be thinking "The Customer's Engagement is Free."

Bill Mills is the CEO of Executive Group, a CEO and leadership peer group grounded in proven processes for success. Visit [www.mnexecutivegroup.com](http://www.mnexecutivegroup.com) to learn more. To purchase his book, "The Power of Conscious Conversation," send an email to Bill at [bill@mnexecutivegroup.com](mailto:bill@mnexecutivegroup.com).



<b>QUESTIONS</b> Place a checkmark in the answer column that best describes your organization relative to each of the following questions.		<b>Answers</b>				
		Rarely	Sometimes	Half the time	Most of the time	Almost always
1	We segment our customer base.					
2	Our vision, strategy and goals are discussed with all employees.					
3	Our vision, strategy and goals are clear throughout the organization.					
4	Our company is recognized as the preeminent supplier of at least one of our offerings.					
5	We turn down business that is outside of our core competency.					
6	We get our business by strategically and proactively focusing on a few customer segments.					
7	Our executive team meets with our key customers to identify shifts in their trends, new products, vision, strategy, challenges, etc.					
8	After we meet with our customers, we refine/develop unique skills, activities and/or systems to improve the value of our offerings to them.					
9	We understand the problems and challenges our customers face in running their business (not necessarily related to our offerings).					
10	We understand how our customers compete in their marketplace.					
11	We understand our customers' cost structure and how they make money.					
12	Our company has a clear understanding of what our customers do and don't value.					
13	What we know about our customers comes from unfiltered information that is personally gathered by our executive team.					
14	Our organization clearly understands the different customer segments in the marketplace.					
15	We are satisfied with the information we have to run our business.					
16	Our customers are becoming more sophisticated.					
17	Our company competes on best total solution.					
18	Our company competes on price.					
19	Our company competes on best products.					
20	Our customers are becoming more demanding.					
21	Developing personal relationships is key to getting customers and business.					
22	Focusing on producing and delivering our offerings at the lowest possible cost is a top priority.					
23	There is a certain amount of business that we deserve/expect to get.					
Enter the Total number of responses in each area.						
Response Value		0	1	2	3	4
Total Response Value						
<b>GRAND TOTAL:</b>						