

# Implementing a customer-driven approach

If you were not already a believer, we hope that you are convinced that it pays off to improve the tenant experience and increase tenant satisfaction.

Below we have listed best practices, including five important pillars or steps to take to be successful in implementing a customer-centric approach.



## ■ Create commitment

In order to succeed, you must create commitment to the work of making improvements. It is crucial that the organization believes in the work to be done and is involved in 'why'. It is also up to management or people responsible to explain the value and benefits of having good customer dialogue, both at the individual level and for the company's bottom line.

Within companies that succeed, one can feel how service culture permeates the very walls. That everyone is pulling in the same direction to achieve the same goals. The fact is that, in virtually all instances, the companies that reap the benefits from having satisfied tenants also enjoy truly contented employees and a high employee satisfaction index.

## ■ Measure and improve all points of contact

Successful Housing and Real Estate companies have often defined their own customer journey. By continuously gauging and measuring tenants' 'touchpoints' such as moving in, moving out, fault reporting and customer service, each element and process can be consistently improved with greater rapidity, thereby elevating overall customer experience in both the short and long term. Measuring more points of contact, following up on more processes and getting real-time data can also make it easier to maintain focus on the tenant experience. This makes follow-up a natural part of daily work, like other important KPIs, not just an isolated 'once-in-a blue-moon' project.

It is also essential that responses and analyses are presented in a way that the entire organization can easily absorb and act on.

## ■ Talk about the work being done

Many good things are being done all the time at every Real Estate company, based on both challenges identified by the companies themselves and on tenants' input. Many companies also draw up good action plans and action lists, put a lot of effort into services and make daily improvements, but sometimes forget to talk about what they have done. The method of transferring the outcome and actions back to the tenants (as a result of their feedback) is called Closed Loop Feedback (CLF).

Good feedback and communication are as important internally as they are externally; internally in order to create commitment and drive in the ongoing work, and externally in order to demonstrate responsiveness and that received feedback is being acted on.

## ■ Clear leadership and concrete goals

The CEO, management, steering group and other responsible persons must clearly show that they are invested and emphasize the importance of a high level of service. There are 'crusaders' in almost every company. However, to get a real return and generate drive throughout the organization, leaders must provide support and have a clear focus.

Do not forget areas scheduled for improvement, make sure that you have action plans with concrete, timetabled measures based on tenants' views and monitor developments continuously.

## ■ Keep the customer in focus – for real

It is not enough to say that it is 'important to have satisfied customers'. The companies that really succeed go all-in, do not lose focus and never retreat from set customer satisfaction targets.

Sometimes, ongoing improvement work gets downgraded in the event of organizational changes or when focus shifts to other initiatives. In such situations, it may be even more important to measure and monitor customer experience of the services and products offered. It pays to have satisfied customers and improving customer experience requires continuous effort.

