

Success in the crisis - Customer Proximity and Customer Value Part II

In order to **identify the customer value better**, consider the following points:

1. **Have a good questioning technique prepared:**

Only questions lead you to the "pain points" of the customer, which will allow you to generate a value proposition. Therefore, a well-developed questioning technique is essential, especially in times of crises, when time is short, and everyone is busy.

Here are **a few tips**:

- **Keep the beginning as little offensive as possible.** Begin the conversation with an open question and let your counterpart talk. Then, for example, you can paraphrase and narrow down the conversation ("Did I understand correctly that...?"). In this way, you are able to control the conversation more easily without restricting your counterpart.
- Show **genuine interest** by asking your counterpart for his or her opinion or assessment: "What does this mean in concrete terms for you/your company?", "What influence does this have on XYZ?" or "What is your current assessment of the situation?".
- **By revealing something about yourself, you strengthen trust.** A crisis is a special situation for everyone. Talk about the challenges and pain points you personally are facing.



2. **Preparation:**

Prepare yourself. What topics are preoccupying your customers or the person you are talking to?

3. **Sharpen your sensorium** concerning the topics in which you can create value.

The value can be manifold. For example, use the **PERFECT formula**:

- **P**roblem: Solve an immediate product problem
- **E**fficiency: Increase the efficiency of the customer
- **R**isk: Reduce risks of the customer
- **F**eelings: Conveying positive feelings
- **E**nvironment: Improve the customer's environment
- **C**omfort: Increase customer comfort
- **T**otal Cost: Reduce the customer's overall costs!

4. **The customer value can be created at several levels:** Perhaps, it is now time to develop new business models and forms of cooperation with your customer at the **strategic level**.

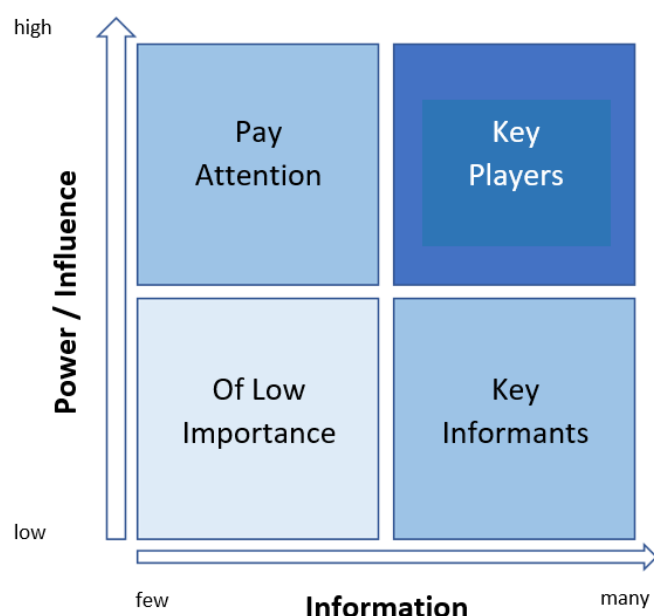
Value can also be created at the **operational level** by implementing many small improvements in the operational processes. To do this, however, you must first raise the **awareness of your employees** at the operational level. After all, their work has a significant influence on the customer's processes and they know where to find the greatest opportunities for improvement.

5. **Organise webinars or workshops with these employees** and train them to identify these opportunities. The reward will be the gratitude and loyalty of the customer, as well as the pride of your employees of having contributed to the company and its success.

Develop an **information strategy**: In order to create value, you need information. Who can provide you this information? Check with your employees who they are in contact with in the client company and develop a strategy which information they can obtain it and how.

Don't forget that a crisis is not only about decision-making power and influence, but also about information. The key informants are not always at the top of the organisation, but often at the expert level.

These experts or key informants are often much more important than the decision-makers in a first round. These informants allow you to develop solutions which you can then present to the decision-makers in client company. Categorize your contacts according to the following matrix:



Last but not least:

Time is short during a crisis, how to communicate with customers in crises **without getting on their nerves**?

1. Only get in touch **if you have something to say**. Nobody likes to be involved in a fruitless conversation when he or she hardly has time anyway. Respect the time of the person you are talking to.
2. **Monitor regularly the topics** relevant for your customers so that you are well-informed and that you can lead an insightful discussion.
3. **Develop approaches to solutions and thoughts jointly** with your most important contacts in the client company. Include them in your considerations from the beginning (as far as it is possible and reasonable).

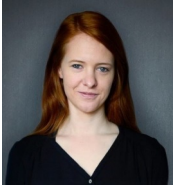
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