



## **Account Service: The Art of Advocacy**

Think of the companies you use or shop the most. Whether it's Target, FedEx, Whole Foods Market, Starbucks, Nike, Disney or another personal favorite, odds are they'll rank high not only in terms of customer satisfaction, but in the key business measurements as well.

Unlike, cell phone providers, for example, who consistently rank low in customer satisfaction, these companies have the attitude that they will do well by giving the best possible value, service and experiences to their customers.

Since the day we opened with just 0 employees, that's been at the core of our culture as well. It seems to have worked. We now have over 250 employees and, in a business known for turnovers and defections, our average client tenure is 7+ years. Here's a little of what we've learned along the way.

### **Customer service starts with customer advocacy**

Whether through formal processes or corporate culture, companies with strong customer service have in-house advocates who constantly express (and often agitate for) what's in the best interests of their customer.

In our business, those advocates are the Client Services teams. They're the ones pushing for faster cycle times, lower costs, more impact, better response rates. In other words, in a customer-centric agency, they are your on-site eyes, ears and voice.

### **More than good intentions**

However, in a business as complex and technical as direct marketing, the right attitude is not enough. That's because, more than any other specialty, Client Service requires comprehensive expertise across every discipline if your programs are to come in on time, on-budget, and exceed your expectations in terms of results.

That's why, at DMG, Client Service is a career track, not a stepping stone and our team leaders have an average of more than 20 years of industry experience. It's a depth of knowledge that's needed because...

A Client Service team leader is responsible for understanding your entire business dynamic and communicating it effectively to the agency team.

He or she needs to be a production and postal expert ... and understand that a marketing plan involves more than just showcasing your product, but establishing a value proposition that demonstrates its superiority to all other choices.



They need to know how to guide and motivate the creative team ... work with list and data specialists ... and set and enforce budgets and timelines. In addition they need the flexibility and sensitivity to your needs to communicate with you weekly, daily or hourly as circumstances dictate.

Direct marketing is a powerful marketing engine. But like an engine, it has a number of critical moving parts that must be balanced, fire in the right sequence and be fed the right fuel.

When all the elements are in tune, it's an engine that can speed you to your objectives ahead of the pack. A good Client Service leader is your marketing mechanic that keeps your programs running at top speed.

### **Account Service Team Checklist**

Whether or not you are a Direct Marketing Group client, you should expect the following attributes and deliverables from your Account Services team.

- [ ] They are experts in maximizing production efficiency.
- [ ] They have in-house processes that minimize postal costs through techniques such as non-deliverable hygiene, co-mingling, and BMC/SCF bulk shipping strategies.
- [ ] They deliver marketing strategies that go beyond “showcasing” your product and are built on actionable business plans that include:
  - Knowledge of your customer and prospect universe and characteristics.
  - Analyses of your competitive set that crystallize areas of vulnerability and opportunity.
  - The ability to identify and work with multiple “best customer” tiers, isolating actionable characteristics of each group, and offering effective strategies for moving customers into higher value categories.
  - Expertise in helping to frame messaging that generates action based on customers’ and prospects’ actions, motivations and attitudes.
- [ ] They work with creative to keep executions on strategy and on budget as well as exploit opportunities for creative breakthroughs.
- [ ] They work with list and data experts to help identify the most responsive prospects.
- [ ] They help guide the construction of models that expand your prospect universe and deliver continuous improvement in terms of higher response, lower cost per acquisition, higher customer value... or a combination of all three.



[ ] They communicate bad news faster than good news. (Deadlines missed by days and weeks are not uncommon in a business that often relies on multiple providers. Because of our vertical integration, DMG, with rare exception, does not miss deadlines.)

[ ] They're generous in sharing their knowledge and transparent in their dealings with you.