I Can’t Wait! 18 Ideas for Improving the Customer Experience of Waiting

When customers complain about long waits, organizations often reflexively try to reduce those wait times, but fail to consider how to improve the wait experience. The examples below pertain to a customer waiting to enter an amusement park, which you can use to generate ideas in your organization (whether it be product or service, B2B, B2C, D2C, government, etc.) to address waiting.

Nine ways organizations can address wait times
Identify and implement the most promising ones.

- Reduce wait times
  Increase staffing and open more lines/gates.

- Provide information to set expectations
  Provide monitors with estimated wait times (and be conservative with estimates).

- Start another customer journey
  Enable customers to place their lunch order while waiting in the entrance line.

- Give the customer control of the wait
  Free customers’ time by noting their spot in line and sending a text when it’s their turn.

- Entertain/make the wait more pleasant
  Have activities for customers to pass the time more enjoyably.

- Show you value customers’ time
  Eliminate the sight of unoccupied employees.

- Show progress
  Incorporate a visual akin to a website’s “progress bar” showing a task’s complete/incomplete rate.

- Offer shorter waits to high-value customers
  Set up a dedicated line with shorter waits for season ticket holders.

- Reward
  If there’s an unusually long wait, consider some form of compensation for customers.

Nine ways customers can address their own wait times
Determine which you will support versus discourage.

- I’m going to abandon the line and find a different venue.

- I’m keeping myself occupied during this wait.

- Can I shorten my wait by paying the organization?

- I’ve paid someone else to wait in line for me so I can do other things.

- It’s more tolerable if I wait together with others instead of alone.

- I’ll find out the reason for this wait so I can make a more informed decision.

- What if I simply cut in line?

- I’ll choose a different time to wait by coming back tomorrow.

- It’s going to be worth the wait! I’m using affirmation to counter a long wait.

Source: Gartner

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