



FROM THE FIELD NOTES BLOG

## 5 Sure Ways to Spot a Customer-Centric Solution Provider



Just about every company will tell you that the customer always comes first. Their product direction is driven by the needs of their customers, pricing is designed to delight customers...heck, the accounts payable team even knows your billing address by heart.

But let's face it – it's one thing to say how much you're all about the customer, and it's a very different thing to actually design every aspect of your company based on what customers need, want, or daydream about. That's what we at Zinier mean when we say we built our company to be customer-centric. But not every company that makes that claim means the same thing.

Here are five sure ways to tell if a company is really living up to that mantra.

### #1: Your industry is the primary focus for the company

It's easy for a company to put together a flyer or a few web pages that talk about how important your industry is to them. It's a very different matter to build a product suite with the needs of a specific industry in mind.

And it's a completely different matter altogether to build a team with specific expertise in an industry like field service, to ensure that everything from product design to pricing models are 100% aligned with the tasks you do, the way you do them, and typical industry practices.

For the field-service industry, a customer-centric design philosophy should include mobile-friendly apps that will work well in the field, workflows that can be continuously updated in a no-code environment (rather than requiring lengthy and expensive processes for even minor changes), and configurable AI capabilities that make it easy to automate processes and recommendations to streamline critical tasks.

## **#2: Your ongoing success – long after the initial deployment goes live – is a metric that they live and breathe**

We all know that the business of providing enterprise B2B software solutions doesn't have much in common with retail commerce. Or do we? Most consumer transactions end as soon as the cash register closes or the check clears. Unfortunately, a lot of enterprise deployments start winding down at that point, too.

But for a customer-centric operation, that's when things start revving up. Most legacy field service vendors lack a robust and structured program to support customers once a project enters the go-live phase. At best, they rely on a cookie-cutter approach, in which one size is expected to fit all customers. In the customer-centric approach, every customer has a dedicated customer success manager to ensure the success of your project, track down the resources needed to address any issues, and take a proactive role in coaching you toward the best possible outcomes.

## **#3: Gauging your success**

You will, no doubt, have your own vital metrics for gauging the success of any given solution that you roll out. But what metrics does your solution provider use to gauge their success at helping you succeed?

Many OKRs have a goal of minimizing the burden your deployment places on the company providing your solution. That's perfectly reasonable – but it's not a sign of a customer-centric approach. When your solution provider has your success at heart, they'll focus on goals such as how well they help you as a customer embrace change, roll out new functionality, and improve your workflows.

## **#4: Voice of the customer**

Raise your hand if you like spending 20-30 minutes tracking down somebody who can help you, and then waiting on hold until it's your turn to leave a message for somebody else to maybe call you back. No hands? Not surprising – that's no way for a customer-centric company to operate.

If your "customer roundtables" are about as effective as an anonymous suggestion box, maybe it's time to find a team that listens. When a company takes customer input and feedback seriously, you'll see the difference immediately. When a company is obsessed with its customers, that doesn't mean that every customer whim will automatically show up on the product roadmap – but it does mean that suggestions are taken seriously, whether the outcome is to embrace the suggestion or to create an opportunity to explore how the customer could better leverage existing functionality.

## **#5: Plays well with others**

When you think of Switzerland, do you think of chocolate? Multipurpose pocket knives? Cuckoo clocks? When a customer-centric company thinks of Switzerland, they think of the country's long standing tradition of neutrality.

A neutral customer-centric perspective acknowledges that you already have a wide range of existing products in your tech stack, and it's very unlikely that you'll drop them all in favor of some monolithic solution from a single vendor.

The customer-centric approach is to ensure that it's easy to integrate new solutions with your current tech stack – and to avoid pulling the rug out from under you by discontinuing products or integrations that you rely on. In fact, a truly customer-centric philosophy will even support your preference for maintaining legacy products in your tech stack that don't always play well with other products, helping you get more out of even those components of your overall operation.

*If you'd like to see what a truly customer-centric field service solution can bring to your operation, we'd love to walk you through the experience. Schedule a [demo](#) here*

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