

# UNDERSTANDING YOUR CUSTOMER

## Idea in brief

**Let us state unambiguously: customers are not inside your organisation. Results within the walls of your company do not matter compared to the one which happens outside: a satisfied customer.**

The customer needs to be at heart of what we do. They are the most important stakeholder in a company, without which the business has no purpose.

Delivering value to this customer creates positive-sum benefits – everyone wins. When the customer's needs are recognised and fulfilled, they may pay more, buy more or introduce new customers increasing the size of the pie (total value).

Your entire company is a system designed to drive value to the customer. Yet the IT department often finds itself separated from the customer and so can become reliant on internal goals and measures. The mere fact of their existence outside the company makes customers easy to ignore.

Through mapping the value flow, you should be able to see both the barriers and connections between IT and the customer and provide a customer-centred appraisal of value to every project you are working on.

IT is integral to all companies today, it is important that the teams understand the needs of the customer.

## Ideas in practice

### First Principle of Agile Manifesto

Our highest priority is to satisfy the **customer** through early and continuous delivery of **valuable software...**

- Only by understanding the system's overall purpose can we appreciate how to create value.

*"...only interested in IT if it supports our processes and ultimately delivers value for our staff or our customers."*

Colin Cobain, Tesco IT Director

So... customers are **NOT** in your organisation



- Reserve the word customer for those who have a choice about whether to use your product or service.
- Reject the terminology of 'the business' as separated from IT.

Talk to them as often as you can,

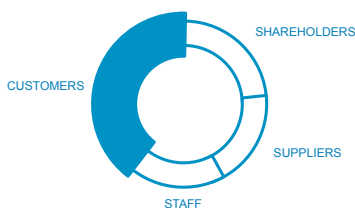


*"Your most unhappy customers are your greatest source of learning."*

Bill Gates

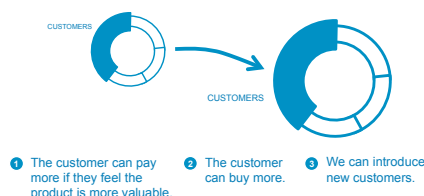
- Visualise your customers – create a persona (soccer mom), give it a name and provide a picture to illustrate your types of customer.
- Important for IT to validate solutions/ learning as quickly as possible.

Customers are the **MOST** important!



- At it's most basic level, your company is made up of four key stakeholders.
- Measures of success should have a customer focus.
- Like Tesco, carefully compose in a customer's language, not management speak.

So customers make **BIGGER** pies!



- Successful companies focus on creating value for customers.

### Remember

It is the **RESPONSIBILITY OF ALL** to consider the **CUSTOMER NEEDS.**

- Don't just leave responsibility for customer needs to the product owner.
- Never be satisfied with requirements that are not customer focused.