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Do Your Customers Deserve a Bill of Rights?

By Rob Berman

The U.S. Bill of Rights was established December 15, 1791. How long have your customers had their own Bill of Rights?

I view a Customer Bill of Rights as the codification of what we say about our approach to customers.

Customer Touch Points

We have many touch points with customers and potential customers. Examples of these might include:

- Length of time to return phone calls.
- Response time to e-mails, especially those requesting help.
- Deliver services on agreed timeline.
- Level of training or expertise of staff.
- Complete project at or under budget.

Publicize Your Internal Standards

Often, there is a set of internal standards to which we hold our employees accountable. Take that internal document and make it an external one. Tell your customers about the standards that you already live by.

You already know that these standards can be achieved. Therefore, downside risk of not meeting the Bill of Rights should be mitigated.

Publishing a Customer Bill of Rights is a great way to show how you value customers.

How Long Should Your Bill of Rights Be?

The U.S. Bill of Rights numbers 10 items. Your version can start out with any number you like. It does not need to match the number in the U.S. Bill of Rights.

In fact, I suggest no more than five or seven items on the list. This approach allows you to roll out an expanded list to your customers and prospects in six to 12 months. You essentially get “two or three bites at the apple” by launching; then, separately expanding and re-launching your customer accountabilities.



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What do you think?

- What percentage of businesses have a Customer Bill of Rights?
- Do you agree that a Bill of Rights provides a competitive advantage to businesses that offer one?
- Do you utilize a Bill of Rights?

About the Author

Rob Berman is PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT / MARKETING Executive with a proven track record of success growing the top and bottom lines in small, medium and large companies as well as matrixed and multi-national organizations. Experienced in domestic and international markets. Effective in a fast paced environment with multiple priorities — meet deadlines while consistently bringing new products to market, managing existing lines of business, driving communications and achieving financial targets.

Rob is looking for my next opportunity in Marketing, Product Development or Product Management. I am based in the Hartford Connecticut area although I am open to relocation. Please contact me with suggestions for recruiters, companies to speak to or business opportunities. His e-mail is rcberman2@yahoo.com and his blog is at <http://www.rob-berman.com>.

About the 280 Group

The 280 Group is the world's leading Product Management and Product Marketing consulting and training firm, and has been featured on CNBC's World Business Review and the Silicon Valley Business Report. Formed in 1996, the company has helped thousands of companies to learn and implement best practices, resulting in better products and increased revenues. Major consulting clients of the 280 Group include SAP, Nokia, Intel, Adobe and Palm as well as dozens of small and medium-sized high-tech companies. A partial list of clients, letters of reference and samples of work are available on the 280 Group website in the clients section.

Brian Lawley is the CEO and Founder of the 280 Group (www.280group.com) and former President of the Silicon Valley Product Management Association (www.svpma.org). During his twenty five year career in Product Management he has defined, launched and marketed over fifty successful products. He is the author of the Books "Expert Product Management: Advanced Techniques, Tips & Strategies for Product Management & Product Marketing" and "The Phenomenal Product Manager". In 2008 he won the Product Management Excellence Award for Thought Leadership by the Association of International Product Marketing & Management. Mr. Lawley is a Certified Product Manager (CPM) and Certified Product Marketing Manager (CPMM). He earned an MBA with honors from San Jose State University and Bachelors Degree in Management Science from the University of California at San Diego.

The 280 Group team of trainers and consultants have over 150 years of collective high-tech Product Management and Product Marketing experience spanning a wide range of software and hardware markets and products. Our trainers are experts in the realm of high-tech product management and marketing, and have extensive real-world experience and examples that they draw on to make the training as effective and useful as possible.

The 280 Group methodology, training, toolkits and templates are used by thousands of customers worldwide, including 3Com Corporation, Agile Software, Agilent Technologies, Autodesk, Cisco, Citrix, Claritas, D-Link, Dolby Laboratories, Fandango, Hewlett Packard, IBM, Monster.com, NEC, NetManage, SugarCRM, Travelocity, VeriSign, VMware and Yahoo. The Procedural Requirements Management methodology (for writing market and product requirements) is included in the Microsoft Windows SharePoint Services 3.0 Application Templates. Additionally, Intel has licensed the Product Manager's Toolkit, Product Roadmap Toolkit and Product Launch Toolkit for use worldwide by their product managers and product marketers.



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