

A healthy business based on customer satisfaction

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Singapore

IN 2003, Roshan Mani left his job with a large multinational corporation to establish Fortuna Scientific. With only S\$50,000 paid-up capital and a team of two, he was determined to turn his entrepreneurial dream into reality.

Today, Fortuna Scientific is one of the leading distributors of medical equipment and laboratory supplies in Singapore and Indonesia, offering an impressive high-tech product portfolio ranging from Stress Test Systems to MRI Patient Monitors.

Mr Mani set out with a simple business strategy – maximising customer satisfaction while gaining market share. Having worked in the industry, he knew that customer and supplier loyalty was the key for survival in this highly competitive environment.

Today, his philosophy has resulted in the unyielding loyalty of the company's partners, including big institutions such as the Changi Airport Group and the National Healthcare Group. Fortuna Scientific has come this far due to its commitment to satisfy three stakeholder groups: employees, customers and suppliers.

Fortuna Scientific has a strong partnership management programme that starts with the employees. Great emphasis is placed on retaining employees by making every one of them successful in his or her job scope, as opposed to monetary rewards.

Rather than vying for the *crème de la crème*, Fortuna Scientific hand-picks the second best candidates and grooms them into the best in the industry. In three years this policy has led to a big jump in staff morale.

Fortuna Scientific's employees take pride in their performance, be it a timely delivery or a satisfactory customer call. Even deliverymen are well-versed in various product specifications, and are capable of addressing customer queries during delivery.

Mr Mani says: "When an employee feels he is involved in more responsibility, he also feels good about his job, and will work hard to move up the ladder."

The company's management also takes great care to show appreciation to its employees. One initiative is Employee Awards. Under this scheme, employees evaluate each other's performance and cast their votes. Those who win are awarded attractive prizes.

The results are disclosed transparently, so that each employee is aware

of his relative standing; thus, developing a healthy competitive mindset and a strong drive to meet the expectations of others.

In addition, the management strives to enhance employee welfare. For example, the company has directed staff not to respond to work-related emails after office hours. As Mr Mani puts it: "After office hours is family time." This initiative was well-received by the employees, as shown through their enthusiastic attitude during office hours.

Fortuna Scientific also places a high premium on its relationship with suppliers. Suppliers, or "partners", are not selected based on the lowest price, but on the value premium that the products bring. The company prides itself on representing only world-renowned manufacturers of state-of-the-art products.

Over the years, Fortuna Scientific has become highly reputed for excellent business practices, winning numerous accolades. In 2014, they won the "Award for Outstanding Customer Care" from GE Healthcare, one of its upstream suppliers, as it set the trend for supplier experience in the industry.

Such supplier relations policies have enabled Fortuna Scientific to secure exclusive distribution rights for certain medical products from well-known brands such as GE Healthcare of the US, LP Italiana of Italy, and Austria's Skintact.

For customers, what really stands out about Fortuna Scientific is the high level of service. Mr Mani believes in being "consistently ahead of customer expectations". Indeed, his customers enjoy exclusive premium services such as unlimited free end-user training, proactive visits by service engineers, and same-day delivery for urgent orders.

These practices have built a strong foundation of service excellence, and keep customers coming back in both good and bad times. Says Mr Mani: "When things go wrong, that is the best time to show the difference between the competition and you."

Fortuna Scientific's customers enjoy a multi-faceted experience, as they themselves are part of the solution. For instance, when the company submitted a tender for an emergency health alert system for the Changi Airport Group, it stood out as the only bidder which consulted and cooperated with the Changi Airport Group during the entire process.

The result was a sophisticated wireless system that was customised to meet the specific needs of the



Mr Mani's business philosophy is commitment to the company's stakeholder groups: employees, customers and suppliers

group, though the initial requirement was for a traditional wired system.

This focus on client relations has enabled Fortuna Scientific to consistently obtain repeat orders and generate new sales through word-of-mouth publicity.

In every annual customer survey conducted since 2009, as part of the ISO9001 assessment, over 90 per cent of its customers were willing to provide positive referrals, a testimonial to its excellent customer service.

Fortuna Scientific also uses a share of its profits for the larger good of the society. The management channels a minimum 3 per cent of its net profit into charity work every year. Its most memorable corporate social responsibility (CSR) project was a partnership with the renowned maxillofacial surgeon Myra Elliott of the Philippines in 2008. Life-changing surgeries were performed under the project for children with cleft palates, bringing great joy to the children and their families.

A large proportion of CSR initiatives are dedicated to child education and well-being. The company has made monetary contributions to the Hope Centre in Cambodia, which provides after-school student care to underprivileged children, and the Children's Cancer Foundation.

Moreover, Fortuna Scientific gives all employees two days' leave to take up any community service of their choice.

The company is also on the lookout for new opportunities with plans to expand into Vietnam and the Philippines.

To ease entry into new markets, the company intends to explore potential acquisitions and partnerships with overseas businesses. Additional-

ly, it intends to collaborate with IE Singapore to acquire technical expertise and financial support for overseas expansion.

To constantly stay ahead in the healthcare industry, Fortuna Scientific places high emphasis on total quality management by customising its ISO9001 framework to maintain the best standards of product quality.

Innovative ideas are also regularly implemented to enhance the distribution process.

With an unwavering focus on customer satisfaction, a drive for excellence in product quality, and a dedicated team that believes in the company's values, Fortuna Scientific is confident of achieving its growth targets.

The writers are students at NUS Business School

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