**Exercise 2 - Communicating with Different Stakeholders**

Read the scenario below, then use the template to provide advice to Fabian on the most appropriate way to engage with the stakeholders. Provide justification for the methods you have selected.

Scenario:

Fabian, the manager of the Customer Experience team at Funstar, a company which specialises in family package holidays, has recently seen a dip in performance by his team members, and a resulting increase in customer complaints. Recent customer feedback indicates that the team has not projected the welcoming attitude the company expects, and that some team members are just ‘going through the motions’ in their interactions with customers. The number of subscribers to Funstar’s newsletter has also gone down. Fabian wants to explore the underlying root causes of this problem. He also needs to swiftly respond to the disappointed customers, and implement a plan to keep them from deserting Funstar for the competition.

How would you suggest Fabian approaches these two challenges?

Your advice should be approximately 200 to 250 words.

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| **Provide your advice to Fabian in the following space.** |
| |  | | --- | | To address the performance dip and rising customer dissatisfaction, Fabian should experiment with differentiated communication strategies aligned with his company’s stakeholder engagement plan. If this is outdated, or does not exist, then spending time reviewing a plan following Thomas Krick and Maya Forstater’s five-stage framework for engaging with stakeholders. Key to this will be to include members of his team in two-way communication to explore the reasons behind the dip in performance.  **Internal Stakeholders – Customer Experience Team** Fabian should initiate two-way communication, a strategy that could include structured focus groups and one-to-one coaching. This draws from Krick and Forstater’s (2005) *Stakeholder Engagement Manual*, particularly Stage 2 (Analyse and Plan), which focuses on understanding stakeholder expectations through direct engagement and communication. These methods will help Fabian uncover the key issues, such as disengagement or lack of clarity in the teams’ role expectations. Following this he will be able to foster a culture of openness and accountability. By drawing on Goleman’s emotional intelligence principles, Fabian can use empathy and social awareness to rebuild team morale and motivation.  **External Stakeholders – Disappointed Customers** For customers, Fabian could combine one-way communication (e.g. newsletters and email ‘DoNotReply’ information) with selective two-way engagement for high-impact complaints. Friedman and Miles (2006) argue that stakeholder power influences the depth of engagement. So, the more personalised engagement to vocal or loyal customers with high-impact can help rebuild trust. This approach also reflects Krick and Forstater’s (2005) Stage 5 (Act, Review & Report), where feedback is sought, reviewed, and acted upon. By transparently communicating improvements and inviting feedback, Fabian can demonstrate how engaged he is with his stakeholders, and his high-level commitment to service quality.  Strategically adapting communication methods to stakeholder type and influence will enable Fabian to restore the high standards he expects from his team and improve external stakeholder confidence. | |