

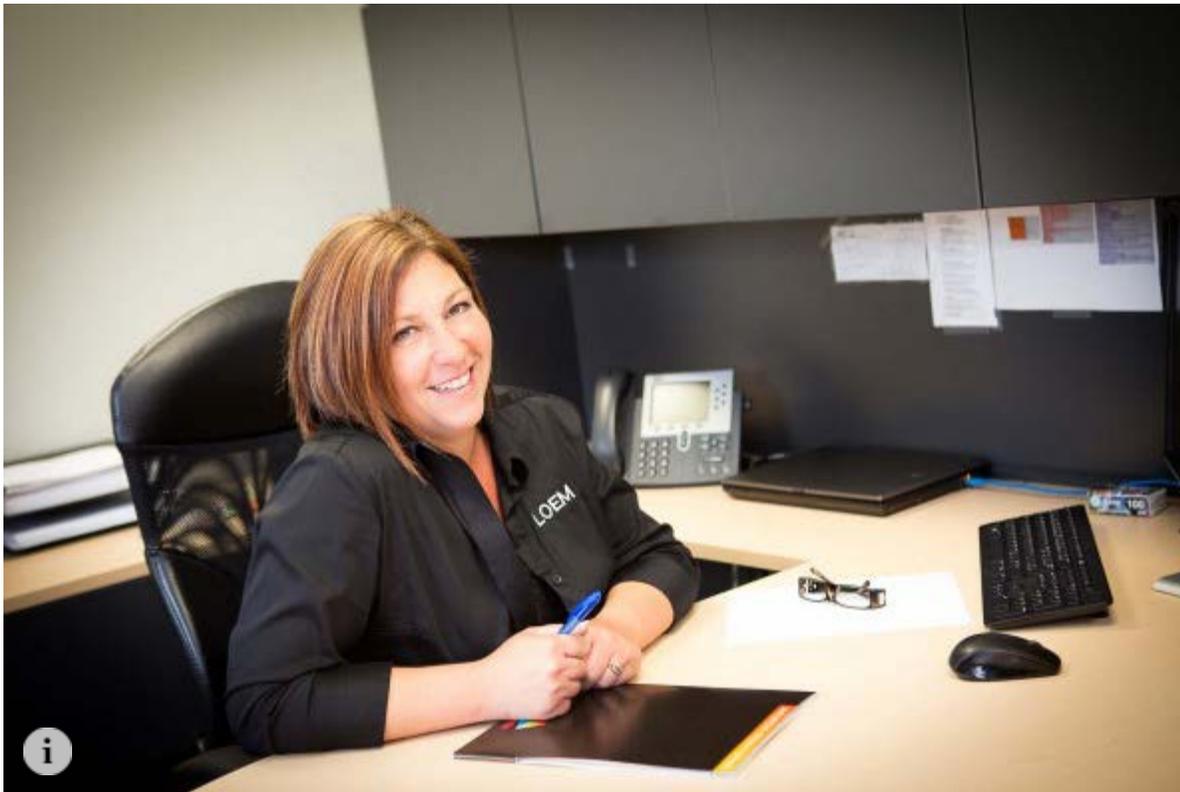
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Satisfaction Guaranteed

LOEM Consultation has found treating employees to bonus workplace benefits provides a big customer-service payoff

By Erin Brereton

Contact-centre service provider LOEM Consultation Inc.'s business model is built on satisfying client needs—a process, according to founder and president Marie-Helene Savard, that starts with employee satisfaction. When Québec-based LOEM opened its doors in 2007, Savard had only one employee to please—herself—and one product to sell: contact-centre consulting assistance.

Today, the company, which began also selling workforce management and quality management systems from software company Calabrio in 2008, provides contact-centre services to the retail, banking, government, insurance, and auto industries in Canada, the United States, and Europe.

LOEM now also sells CallCopy and offers a variety of other services related to implementing call-centre products, including deployment help, one of LOEM's most popular offerings; project-management assistance, to help run call centres; training on call-centre software and systems; and technical and functional support.

In the past five years, LOEM's staff has also grown to 10—and almost all employees have remained with the company since being hired. Savard is currently in the process of hiring two additional workers.

“Staff is the key to success,” she says. “LOEM is a service company; when your customers are happy, everybody is happy.”

To make sure employees feel valued, LOEM provides comfortable work spaces in its spacious, 3,300-square-foot office, which has expanded since the company first opened with a 1,200-square-foot space; by 2013, LOEM plans to have 4,000 square feet. Complimentary coffee and breakfast are also offered every morning.

Workplace perks are nice, but Savard knows free bagels will only go so far. To encourage employee performance and retention, LOEM also tries to offer in-house advancement opportunities and foster a fun work atmosphere.

Additional programs, such as bringing in a personal trainer once a week to offer a mind-body health break, have also helped boost employee satisfaction—which, in turn, helps LOEM's staff supply comprehensive, cheerful customer service.

Clients often approach the company with specific challenges, such as maximizing a call centre's call flow or standardizing the information that is communicated to customers.

DOs and DON'Ts

LOEM founder and president Marie-Helene Savard offers advice for operating and growing a business

DO

- Always listen to our employees; they are your key to success.
- Keep employees informed, and they will always follow you.
- Listen to your customers.
- Always keep client relationships strong.
- Put each staff member in the correct role. Since the beginning, I've worked to make sure my employees are at the right place.

DON'T

- Just dream of doing something; do it.
- Change if you have success—stay who you are.
- Sell just for the sake of selling. Sell if you think that you can meet your customer's needs (if you want to keep the customer).

However, LOEM also can offer advice on setting up a customer-service call centre or other operational aspects based on its experience working with the insurance and retail industries, as well as other clients on more than 30 contact-centre consulting jobs in the past three years alone.

“Whether it's for a comprehensive consultation, reviewing operational strategy, improving the use of systems and software for advanced courses, or to be guided through the process of purchasing software for workforce or quality management, our expertise gives customers the best solution to their business objectives,” Savard says.

If the task involves LOEM-assisted project management help or implementing products from another company and training a client's staff to use them, LOEM works to deliver a streamlined, hassle-free client experience. “When I decided to sell workforce- and quality-management systems,

every partnership we signed, we made sure my employees were certified and that the customer only had one point of contact,” Savard says.

To determine a client's needs, Savard first holds a quick meeting to discuss the issue, then performs a two-day audit on-site and suggests potential solutions, paired with an estimation of what ROI the organization can expect.

LOEM's cheerful staff then helps execute the plan, walking customers through all the necessary implementation steps and following up with technical and functional support for different languages, time zones, and applications.

“We can do everything when a company is looking for contact-centre expertise,” Savard says. “We stay with the client from the beginning to the end.”

Even LOEM's marketing plan was created with customers in mind. According to Savard, contact centres often reach out to LOEM because they're familiar with it or have been referred by someone else.

However, the company also attends two trade shows annually, and Savard publicizes the company through more than three call-centre practice-based speaking engagements a year and by writing quarterly journal articles.

Yet, Savard says, her journal articles are composed to provide clients with best-practice business advice—not just to promote LOEM's work. "[I don't write the articles] to market my company—but as a consultant who wants to help customers get ROI," she says.

Given LOEM's growth—revenue increased by 14 percent in 2011 alone—it seems the company's dedication to customer service and maintaining employee enthusiasm is paying off.

"Our employees know that customers are the reason we are where we are now," Savard says. "The employees do a great job, so we have a good time—and a good environment."

DOS & DON'TS

EMPLOYEES

PRESIDENT

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