

Managing Expectations for the Entire Customer Life Cycle

THERE ARE CRITICAL MOMENTS WHEN THE RELATIONSHIP CAN FALL APART

by WENDY REED

O THER THAN AN IRS AUDIT, little causes as much dread for executives as a call from a customer saying that the product or service he bought doesn't do what he was told it would do. These calls can cause not only a cold sweat on your brow, but they also can devastate your business. After all, customer satisfaction is one of the bellwether measurements determining the overall quality and future success of an enterprise.

As you examine a customer-relationship life cycle, there are critical moments when expectations are set and managed between you and your customers. These points in time are where poor or missing communication can cause the relationship

with your customer to fall apart. They occur whenever different people become involved (that is, sales, service, customer-evaluation team, customer-project team, customer support) or when you and the customer enter into a new phase of the rela-



