

Customer Orientation and Fromm's Productive Orientation

A brief addendum by Prof. Matthias Mölleney (Hochschule für Wirtschaft Zürich, HWZ) to the [Agorà Leadership Talk about Funk and Fromm](#)

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I usually explain customer orientation in leadership to my students like this: Imagine you could choose for yourself which (human) services you would be willing to pay for when traveling by air. Then you always get a list of functions such as pilots, flight attendants, mechanics, ground staff, etc., but the CEO of Swiss is never on the list. Nor is anyone else who has «Leader» or «Vice President» or «Head of» on their business card.

What does that mean? For customers, leadership is not a «value added», they only pay for the product or the service. Leadership can therefore only be justified as a service to those who provide services or manufacture products for the customers. The service as a leader consists of creating conditions in which employees can work productively and with satisfaction. It also means helping employees to develop their skills and to grow personally. In the sense of Fromm, this is much more about «being» than about «having». However, this attitude is not yet very widespread.