

IMPROVING BUILDING VALUE THROUGH FAÇADE WEATHERPROOFING

1.0 Intro

1.1 Improving building value by sealing façade connections

1.2 Sealing façade connections – Raising the standards: state-of-the-art solutions

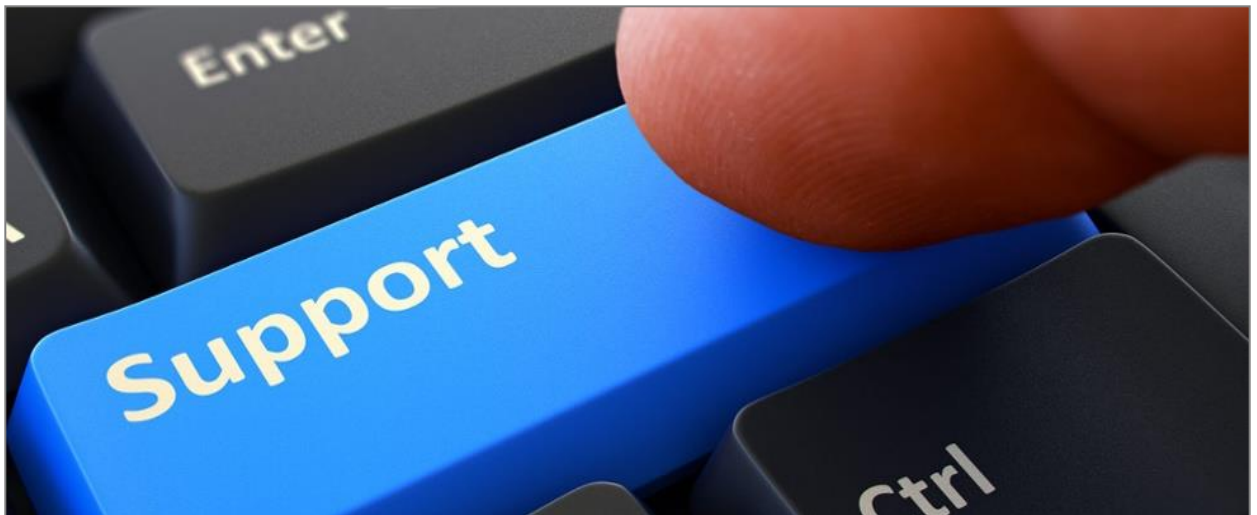
1.3 Sealing façade connections – Improving building value with complete, tested and approved systems

1.4 Sealing façade connections – Making each project a success with bespoke solutions

1.5 Sealing façade connections - Assuring flawless installation

1.6 Sealing façade connections - Costs-benefits analysis

1.7 Sealing façade connections - Improving building sustainability



1.8 Sealing façade connections – The importance of a trusted service

A – Relation between customer-supplier - Mutual benefits

A relation between customer-supplier should be a partnership where both parts are fully aware of the benefits that they can bring to each other and work actively toward the achievement of those benefits.

Understanding how suppliers can impact businesses will allow one to actively seek for and select suppliers that will bring the most positive impact to his company and project, and know what to demand from them.

Suppliers on their side need to understand that the product is only a part of the game and that customer service will at the end be the key to determine if a customer will return. Suppliers need to understand that great customer service needs to be present at every stage of the business.

**“People don't care how much you know
until they know how much you care”**

Theodore Roosevelt

It is every company's responsibility to be a demanding customer, but it is also every company's responsibility to understand that it is crucial to state quality and timing requirements clearly, in order to allow a high quality response from any supplier. Modern days customers' projects have become increasingly demanding in terms of time, cost, and quality. This means that the challenges, and even the opportunities, for superior customer service are higher than ever.

B – How suppliers can impact your project

For a company that delivers a final product so complex such as a building it is easy to understand that to have full domain of all expertise areas is almost impossible. To have the support from suppliers that are experts in such specific areas, such as weatherproofing or thermal efficiency, will be crucial to a project's success. This will allow one to overcome challenges that commonly look impossible.

Suppliers can impact a project's success in many ways, such as:

Quality: Supplier components will positively or negatively affect the quality of the final product. And of course that higher quality increases customer satisfaction.

Timeliness: On time deliveries are crucial for a project's success and for how customers view reliability. Delivery delays from suppliers will usually affect delivery times of final project.

Competitiveness: They can give you the one-up on your competition, based on their pricing, quality, reliability, technological breakthroughs and knowledge of industry trends.

Innovation: Suppliers can make major contributions to a project's / product's development. They live their product and are experts on it; they're working to be on the cutting edge of innovation for their product. The good ones will understand your company, its industry and needs, and can help tweak new ideas.

Finance: A loyal and paying customer will definitely be able to get better and special conditions from suppliers that will certainly have an impact on general project finance management.

C - How to be a valuable customer

Some behaviours will definitely contribute to make each company a valuable customer and be in a spot where the supplier will do the extra mile to attend his needs, such as:

Paying on time Favourable payment terms can be negotiated before an order is placed, but after this is placed rules should be followed. It is very important that information is shared clearly between both parts.

Provide adequate deadlines It is important to share with suppliers an honest projection of project needs and keep them abreast of any significant changes in that estimation. This will allow better responses from suppliers and promote quality of final product.

Personalize the relationship Personally knowing people with who you are working will make communication easier and allow the definition of an aligned strategy to meet both parties' needs.

Share information Sharing information with suppliers regarding company's specific needs, competitors, etc., will allow suppliers to review their offer in order to meet the customer's needs.

D – Customer service on the different project stages

“Good customer service on a project is about getting hundreds of things right throughout the project lifecycle – pricing is just one of those things.”

Solution proposal

Communication is always the key for a superior customer service. To listen to the customer carefully, place the right questions in order to understand clearly what are the project and the company's specific needs, or opportunities, will allow the supplier to identify and present solutions with added value, that will meet project requirements on time and within budget, or for example, solutions that will cover gaps left by previously used solutions.

Project success can be defined at this stage: many times a good supplier will be able to present non-standards solutions, solutions that the project manager has never considered, and that bring a major added value to the project. For example, a specific solution might allow one to overcome project delays, or significantly reduce the complexity of the installation on site.

For a clear communication channel it is essential that the supplier provides the customer with a single contact for the entire process, who must be capable of supporting promptly the customer on all stages and dimensions. Knowing who to contact when any question is raised will definitely facilitate communication. A supplier that pushes the customer to other departments or staff within the company, will introduce frustration in the process and increase the chances of misunderstandings.

A continuous one-on-one relation will also allow the supplier to understand in detail the general company's strategy and needs, which will allow him to provide a much better service.

At this stage it can also be helpful to develop solution prototypes in order to confirm if the presented solution fits project needs perfectly. The supplier can develop or support the development of such prototypes.

Quotation

A customer, specially in the construction industry, always wants to fulfil quality requirements, delivery on time and, most of the times, within a very strict budget. However, quality must remain on top level of priorities, and it is important that the customer understands that good profitability allows a supplier to provide good customer service. The opposite, most of the times, is not possible.

Quotations must be fair and made-to-measure.

Scope of quotations should be clear and leave no room for misunderstandings – quality requirements, quantities, delivery times, delivery address, price or transportation costs, have to be clearly defined on any quotation.

At this stage it is mandatory that the supplier is 100% honest with regards to the possibilities of delivering demanding quantities on requested timing, according with required quality requirements.

Again communication is key, any doubt that remains should be promptly clarified in order to allow that any decision made is based on a total understanding between parts.

If a quotation is not accepted by the customer it is the supplier responsibility to understand why this happened and identify what can be made in order to work towards customer needs: change the proposal solution, adjust delivery times, review prices, etc.

Even if business is not closed at this stage, the supplier must be able to understand better the customer needs and will definitely be able to present a more adequate solution and offer next time. Again, a customer-supplier relationship must be faced as a partnership being built progressively over time. All these knowledge will contribute to establish and strengthened this partnership.

Delivery of the product

A good customer service means that products or services will be delivered on time, with proper packaging. All support documentation should be provided, such as installation manuals, technical datasheets, certificates or testing reports.

As in any area, things do not work perfectly all the time. It is expected that at some point something will not go as planned, and in these moments customer support must make the difference. A supplier with superior customer service will go the extra mile in order to solve any difficulty on the process or to overcome any unexpected turnout.

Installation

During installation it is important that the supplier communicates clearly and often. At this stage customer service can be crucial in order to determine quality of installation. This can be done through:

- proper training of project managers
- proper training of the crew on site
- installation monitoring with emission of monitoring reports
- continuous availability to clarify doubts during the installation process

Difficulties will definitely arise and customer service has to be available to analyse these difficulties and present solutions. A supplier that is flexible enough to accommodate changes on requirements of quantities, or any other, and still offer solutions that will make the difference.

After-sales service

Installation is concluded but the supplied product has just started its lifespan. customer service must:

- Consider customer feedback for internal upgrades
- Make operation & maintenance guides available
- Make project reports available
- Issue defined product warranties
- Define and communication clear channel of contact for after-sales service
- Maintain quick answers for any enquiry or support needed after sale is concluded

A long-term customer-supplier partnership will only be possible if after-sales services work properly.

The Effisus Way – Effisus Ecofacade

Consulting department:

- Solutions specification
- Customisation of solutions to specific project requirements
- Support on mock-ups development
- Compatibility tests

Continuous technical support:

- Training on site
- Inspections on site
- Maintenance plans
- Supporting material such as project customised installation manuals

Effisus Ecofacade Envelope - Air tightness and water vapor management facade integrated system.

Effisus Ecofacade – Facade waterproofing solution.

