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**“Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen” - Winston Churchill**

I was introduced to pantip.com around two years ago. Since then, I have come to realize that pantip is one of the most popular web boards in Thailand. There is even a special ‘room’ called ‘maboonkrong’ where people can post their comments and queries on IT and telecom services. A lot of the room’s members have posted their comments around the clock; sometimes the information posted is even more updated than what appearing on daily newspapers.

It’s a pity that my Thai is extremely weak so I have to ask someone to regularly translate and summarize the comments for me. We also have a team who keeps monitoring the web board and provide prompt feedback to inquiries related to us or to our services. This feedback has relatively satisfied the customers at a certain level. However, for some cases, posting answers on the web can’t cover everything customers want to know.

That’s why a couple of weeks ago, I had a chance to meet with 3 pantip users, who are also our customers.

Almost 3 hours passed at a speed of a blink.

I really admire the sincerity and straightforwardness of the 3 customers. Throughout the 3-hour meeting, I had paid my full attention to listening to their comments and criticisms. I would call the meeting an ‘eye-opening’ experience of that week.

I have learned so much from listening to them. And more importantly, I have learned that our services still need a lot of improvement...

Many big companies normally do their customer satisfaction surveys on a regular basis. But sometimes the level of ‘dissatisfaction’ of some customers may have gone beyond repair when the survey’s result finally landed on our desk.

Several problems have been resulted from the belief that we are so good at what we are doing. So we often dominate the ‘talk’ and never listen to others’ opinions. Criticisms, in particular, have been a pain in the ears for many people who usually keep their ears saved from such irritating words.

But I think constructive criticisms are far more valuable than fault compliments.

This is particularly true if the criticisms come directly from the customers. Because they tell us things that we haven’t been aware of and enable us to improve our services.

So many people have tried to use ‘time constraint’ as an excuse for not listening to customers’ complaints. But I think they lack the courage to face the reality. Don’t say that you don’t have enough time. Everyone has 24 hours a day. But why do some manage to allocate time to listen to customers while others don’t?

Most importantly, what's the point of kicking off so many services that customers don't want to use?

While talking with the pantip customers, I thought about what Winston Churchill once said ""Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen".

In fact, information from customers is floating around everywhere. The problem is if we are brave enough to open our hearts to see it, if we are brave enough to admit our mistakes and if we are brave enough to improve ourselves.

Today's question, therefore, is not whether we have enough courage to speak and take action. But are we also brave enough to listen and correct mistakes?