

STUDENT 1

"We don't have customers, we have members..."

Explain how being a member differs from being a customer. How does this benefit the individual and the community?

Picture in your mind a stained glass window. It is expansive and colorful, multiple feet in each dimension and complete with various shades of every color. It is a large gestalt, made up of thousands of small fractals. Each of these small shards of glass is uniquely different in texture, size, shape, and hue. Each is different, but each is essential. The presence of each glass fragment of the window adds value to the entire picture, and at the same time, within the window as a whole, each piece is separate and unique in its own way. The relationship is two-fold. Just as the many individual glass fractals make up the entire stained glass window, so do the members of an organization play a role in the entire institution. In both cases, the parts impact the whole, and because they are reciprocally involved, the relationship between them is symbiotic.

Members within an organization certainly benefit individually from their position within the greater establishment. Membership in an organization allows individuals to take advantage of benefits offered to larger groups. They have access to a pool of resources made up by the collaboration of other members and thus are able to receive exclusive opportunities. Because they're also partners of the group, they have genuine care and interest in the organization's success. As the organization is strengthened, so is their position within it.

At the same time, the organization also benefits from members' involvement. As each new member joins, the resources of the establishment are expanded and fresh perspective is added. The organization is able to put forth improved quality and products as a result of its contributing members. At the same time that the organization is able to serve its members by honoring their voices, the members add greater depth and support to the organization as a whole. Members bring valuable insight and increased strength, improving the organization on all levels.

On the contrary, a customer is quite different from a member. Rather than being a contributor, a customer is only able to take from an organization. While a member is able to influence and be involved with an organization from within its foundations, a customer is only a surface relationship. The customer externally takes what an organization can offer in exchange for a price; the relationship is superficial. Members, however, are essential to the greater function of an organization, constantly giving and receiving in order to make the establishment prosper.

Being a member of MC Financial Credit Union is a great investment and infinitely valuable. As a stained glass window is able to produce a more detailed and captivating image with each additional piece of glass, so is an organization such as this able to broaden its impact and enlarge its presence with each additional member. This is the beauty of having members instead of customers.