

Understanding and Engaging in the Customer Experience

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Customer experience is mostly determined by the aggregate of previous experiences, with a significant amount of weight being given to the most recent interaction the client had with your organisation.

In contrast, customer engagement is focused on the future. It is a strategy that is in a state of perpetual evolution and is supported by data. This strategy specifies how you continue to keep the client engaged with your organisation (as opposed to the organisations of your competitors.)

Even though it is possible to create a customer experience with little attention paid to engagement, there is a risk that the experience you actually provide may fail to accomplish the objectives you set out for it. This is a mutually beneficial connection. The experience you design should always be driven by an understanding of how your customers want to engage, and a better experience will, in turn, promote higher engagement.

Consumers now demand perfection as a result of the widespread availability of modern digital capabilities across all industries. Therefore, in the field of life insurance, each and every department, system, and process needs to be focused towards the goal of exceeding the expectations of the client, and not just one customer's expectations but all of their expectations. It is only possible for businesses to anticipate the type of continuous involvement that truly maximises the value of their connection with their customers if they first achieve that level of success.

Customers' expectations of what constitutes a good customer experience have seen substantial shifts in recent years. These changes might be attributed to more individualised products, more digital parity with analogue services, or shorter turnaround times. These tendencies have only been amplified by COVID-19, which has put the travel ecosystem in a position where it must play catch-up.

Travel companies who place a priority on customer experience are more likely to earn customer loyalty, develop resiliency, and future-proof their businesses in an environment of constant change.

Our research shows that there is opportunity for improvement in customer experience, despite the fact that travel executives may assume that their companies already provide a good CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE. Inconsistency in customer experience across goods, services, and digital; trouble forecasting customers' sentiment without having to directly ask them; and time lags in getting to market with updates, releases, and enhancements are common examples of common issues.

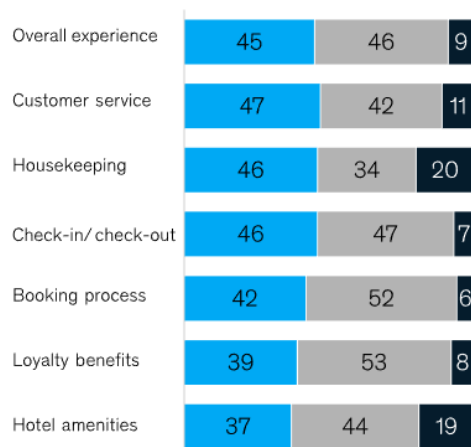
This paper investigates the significant significance that customer experience plays in the travel sector at the present juncture of history. Executives in the travel industry should ask themselves:

- Do you believe that your product, service, and digital offerings regularly provide a high-quality experience for your customers? According to research, there is room for improvement.
- Do you intuitively understand the feelings of your clients without ever having to directly poll them? According to research, you are able to have a deeper understanding of your customers.
- Do you move as quickly now as you did when the pandemic first started to spread? According to the findings of research, you are capable of accelerating.
- How can you ultimately be more intentional about bringing back the enchantment of travel and unlocking the value of the client experience?

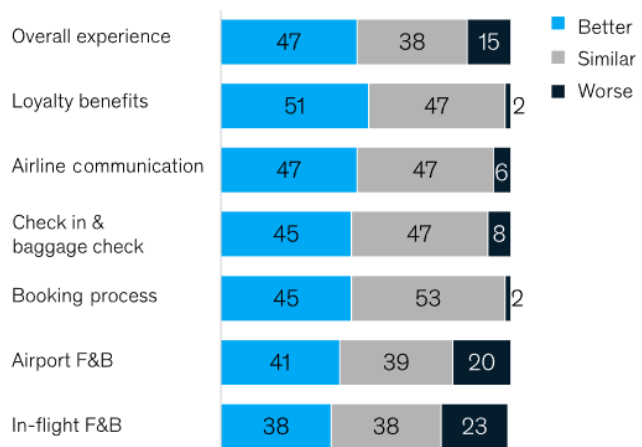
The financial impact of COVID-19 is still being felt by the travel industry, and investing in CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE at this time may feel like too much of a burden for many of these businesses. According to study conducted by McKinsey during the recession of 2007–2009, businesses that place a priority on customer experience are more likely to outperform their rivals in the years to come. Indeed, prudent investments in customer experience may be the key to the industry's continued existence and growth in the world after a pandemic.

The majority of leisure travelers were satisfied with their recent flight and hotel experiences.

Leisure hotel experience compared to pre-pandemic, % of total



Leisure airline experience compared to pre-pandemic, % of total



Source: Skift Research U.S. Travel Tracker Survey July 2021

Three strategies to transform your customer experience

This research outlines three tactics that travel-related businesses may implement to improve customer experience while the industry recovers. First and foremost, set your sights higher than those of your competition and work towards recapturing the wonder of travel. Second, consider the future and make use of an extensive measurement toolkit to gain a deeper understanding of your clientele. Last but not least, move quickly and make use of an organisation that is fluid and agile so that insights may be implemented quickly.

1) Aim high—aspire to bring back the magic of travel

When it came to customer experience, the travel sector used to be the gold standard because of its promise of unforgettable travels and adventures. First, travel companies should broaden their conception of customer experience from one that is human-centered to one that also incorporates digital components in order to work towards their goal of recapturing the romance of travel.

Then, travel firms will be able to develop an emotional connection with their customers that goes above and beyond their expectations. It is crucial for travel companies to promote the experiences that they provide to their customers, such as feeling well rested before a key meeting, awed at a gorgeous place, refreshed after a holiday, or valued after a poignant, personal farewell as the customer disembarks from a plane on the way home. Using the science that lies behind joy, businesses are able to develop these emotional connections with their customers. pleasure is an emotional state that is experienced as a result of joy and surprise; whereas satisfaction is a rational evaluation of reality minus expectations, pleasure is experienced as a result of joy and surprise. The goal of travel companies should not simply be to satisfy, but also to enchant customers.

2) Look forward—understand your customers better

It is essential for travel companies to have an in-depth knowledge of their clientele in order to realise their lofty goals. As the COVID-19 experiment showed, the requirements and expectations of customers are in a state of perpetual flux, which can make this a tough task. By making use of the data that is currently at their disposal, travel companies may construct a measurement toolkit that is more comprehensive. The next step in the evolution of measurement is becoming aware of what your customers want and need even before they express those desires or requirements.

A more mature toolkit ought to use a holistic approach and strive to measure the majority of consumers by utilising data from internal and external sources, such as social media, booking and mobile systems, and operational systems. The holistic approach should aim to measure the majority of customers. Travel firms cannot afford to spend money on interventions with a low impact now more than they ever have before, which is why it is important to prioritise a toolset that identifies touch points along the end-to-end experience that have a significant impact. Additionally, it should be predictive and foresee satisfaction as well as lifelong value in the present moment. For instance, businesses can use machine learning to create predictive models of customer attitude and behaviour by applying it to enormous data sets that are spread out over multiple locations. Last but not least, a toolbox ought to be prescriptive and make use of data in order to direct initiatives that maximise return on investment.

3) *Move fast—implement insights quicker*

Real-time insights are only useful if businesses are able to promptly act on the information they provide. The next frontier in the travel industry is not so much in the data and insights as it is in the speed at which that data can be put to use, as more travel companies invest in measurement toolkits and customer experience systems. The COVID-19 conference served as a rigorous crash course in adaptability for numerous travel companies. Breaking down silos to guarantee that increased bureaucracy does not negatively impact customer experience and iterating journeys with customers and workers are two organisational techniques that need to be implemented as soon as possible in order to take advantage of the momentum that the recent crisis has generated.

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE is more than a sentiment, more than an entire department, and more than a single stage in the path that a client takes. Rather, it is an approach to conducting business that is centred on the client and which necessitates analytical leadership, collaboration across functional lines, and ongoing iteration in order to provide an excellent user experience.

Because travel firms traditionally have close emotional connections with their customers, they stand to gain a great deal by cultivating good customer experience, which is supported by the ability of current digital systems to assess impact and forecast behaviour. Those who do not seize the opportunity presented at this time run the risk of slipping further behind. As a result of COVID-19, consumer preferences have begun to shift, making customer experience an area in which businesses have an opportunity to shine. CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE allows businesses to develop performance uplift and stand out from the competition, all while bringing the romance of travel back to customers.

Customer engagement is not limited to the retail industry; rather, it encompasses all industries where there are significant interactions between a company and its customers. A robust omnichannel concept is essential for any company, according to the numbers, because maintaining client loyalty is always of the first importance. 89% of customers continue to be loyal to organisations that invest in customer involvement, however the retention rate for companies that do not include such components drops substantially to 33%. In a typical scenario, the tourist industry just could not be left off of the lengthy list of businesses that are committed to making customers feel valued and well taken care of.

Because of the increased level of competition caused by the proliferation of new technologies in the tourism industry, distinguishing factors have become increasingly vital. Once more, consumer engagement strategies for tourism are playing a very essential part in the cognitive and emotional decision-making process of every traveller that chooses to visit a new place. This is the case since these strategies are becoming increasingly prevalent in the tourism industry. A large boost in a brand's net sales and profit margin expansion can result from its interaction with the tourist industry, which offers both direct and indirect benefits.

In addition, the development of meaningful relationships enhances the overall experience of visitors, as well as their comments and their continued devotion to the site. This post is dedicated to all of the significant methods that professionals working in the tourist industry should take into

consideration, and it is intended to encourage them to improve their marketing strategy in order to get higher conversions.

Product, performance, and price: deliver a first-class experience in the basics

There has been a consistent improvement in performance within the travel and hospitality business ever since the introduction of pandemic travel restrictions and the launch of vaccines. As a result of consumers being unable to take leisure trips, there was a surge in demand for hotels and airlines during the entirety of 2021 and the most of 2022. Many travellers have started to move past their anxieties regarding the pandemic, but travel companies still need to continue to plan for the ongoing uncertainty regarding public health.

However, other significant obstacles are already taking their place, such as the fear that consumers feel regarding their financial situations and the conundrums that arise from climate change. There is also a lack of available labour, which continues to have an effect on all areas of the travel industry. Therefore, will travel ever get back to the levels it was at before the pandemic?

Leaders in the travel industry, hospitality industry, and airline industry should take into consideration these new and complex realities in order to succeed in the coming year. Companies have the potential to reinvent themselves for the better as a means of climbing out of a once-in-a-generation crisis if they place an emphasis on raising and improving the fundamentals, which include product, performance, and price.

The ability of hoteliers and airlines to provide the kinds of experiences that travellers anticipate is a pressing issue for both industries at a time when consumers are weighing the cost of travel against its perceived value. In the same way that the service industry as a whole has struggled, travel vendors have had trouble adequately staffing frontline roles.

By October 2022, the labour force in the hospitality industry had only achieved 84% of the levels that it had reached in 2019. In addition, a poll conducted by the American Hotel & Lodging Association (AHLA) in September found that 87 percent of hotel owners reported having personnel shortages

During the same time period, a number of hotels have postponed their renovations due to the fact that hotel companies have paused part of their quality reviews because of the pandemic. It is still difficult for some properties to invest in upgrades due to rising interest rates and ongoing difficulties in the supply chain

It is difficult to find qualified candidates for a variety of jobs within the airline industry, including those of pilot, air traffic controller, luggage handler, and gate agent.

In addition, similar to hotels, they are encountering holdups in the completion of infrastructural modifications. Labour and equipment difficulties are anticipated to "inform growth" in the years 2023 and 2024, according to Helane Becker, a senior research analyst at Cowen

Even if hotels and airlines are experiencing decreased performance as a result of these challenges, the damage is not sufficient to prevent the companies from expanding. According to STR's data, October 2022 marked the fourth consecutive month in which hotel occupancy in the United States reached or above 100% for the year 2019

Over the course of those months, daily average rates saw an average increase of 16% compared to 2021. According to Hopper, everyday air travel volume in the United States was on average 90% of what it was in 2019. This was the case even though domestic fares increased by an average of 9% and international fares increased by an average of 15% over that time period.¹⁰ Despite this, both of these groups of suppliers may soon experience an increase in demand from travellers who are looking for better bang for their buck. "Hotel guests are feeling like they are paying more, but not getting more in return," according to the findings of the annual hotel study conducted by J.D. Power, which revealed a decline in overall guest satisfaction from May 2021 to May 2022. In the coming year, airlines may potentially encounter customers who are more price conscious, particularly in the event that there is a severe slowdown in the economy.

It won't be easy to find a solution to the staffing problems. Eighty-one percent of hotel owners and operators responded "yes" to the question in the AHLA study regarding an increase in salary. However, the average pay across the hotel industry was £20.00 per hour in June of 2022. These rates may not be sufficient. Hotels have claimed that they have made other enticements available, such as improved perks and more adaptable working hours.

These challenges need to be addressed inside intricate systems, and hotels and airlines are no exception. The majority of the burden falls on hotel owners, despite the fact that hotel brands want to see transformation across their entire portfolios. Even as they attempt to stabilise their own workforces, airlines must contend with the challenges posed by the policies and procedures of airports, government agencies, subcontractors, and other entities.

6 New Travel Trends Due to COVID

1. Prioritisation of Hygiene and Safety

Since the outbreak of COVID started, emphasis has been put on preventing the spread through safety and hygiene precautions. These measures may call for hand gel to be provided by travel industry companies, encourage social distance, mandate mask use, and/or generally enhance cleanliness, depending on the situation and local laws.

Hygiene and safety precautions have obviously always been important, but because COVID has made them a top priority for customers when making purchases, they have now become one of the primary travel trends. In light of this, it is crucial that businesses emphasise hygiene and safety precautions in their marketing materials and actually follow through on them to keep customers safe and prevent bad press.

2. A Greater Focus on Leisure Travel

Business events are one of the most important travel trends to stay aware of. Many of these events are being postponed or cancelled due to travel limitations, restrictions on family mixing in some countries, and a focus on working from home. This is motivating some travel agencies to change.

In some circumstances, professionals in charge of travel management may want to shift their attention from pleasure travellers to business travellers. Although the pandemic has also had an impact on leisure travel, there is still a high demand for travel, family members can travel more freely, and peak vacation seasons can still attract customers.

In these circumstances, it could be important to alter your general travel marketing plan, focusing more on families, groups of friends, couples, and other groups of people who might still be eager to make reservations with you.

3. Emphasis on Local (vs. International)

Another of the main COVID-related travel trends has been focusing local clients because of the travel restrictions and quarantine procedures that are in place in some countries, as well as the increased level of concern around international travel. Locals here could refer to tourists from your own nation or one of its neighbours.

By concentrating efforts regionally, one may change marketing messaging to appeal to various audiences and/or promote aspects that are more likely to appeal to locals. For hotels, for instance, this might entail advertising amenities and features like gyms, saunas, Wi-Fi, and rooms that can be used as temporary workplaces.

Of course, this does not mean completely abandoning foreign clients; rather, it just means reorienting your attention.

4. Wider Adoption of Contactless Payments

Since quite some time, contactless payments have been a significant development in travel technology, but the COVID situation has increased the significance of this development. By reducing the number of shared surfaces your consumers must touch, accepting contactless payments is a terrific way to show them that you are doing everything possible to protect them.

In addition to improving cleanliness, using contactless payments as often as feasible can also make transactions more convenient and quick for travellers. Additionally, this can be helpful for promoting impulsive purchases, which can help your travel agency increase income.

5. The Power of Virtual Reality

One of the most innovative technological breakthroughs in recent years is virtual reality, which has a greater impact on the travel business than almost any other application. After all, virtual reality enables the promotion of locations, viewing of properties, and exploration of attractions through a digital experience.

When travelling in the COVID era, when people want assurance that they are travelling to the appropriate place, this can be extremely helpful. Because clients will be able to thoroughly explore facilities without needing to travel for in-person viewing, it can also benefit businesses that accept corporate or event bookings.

6. Voice Control Technology

Another way that travel businesses can give touch-free settings and lessen COVID hazards is by using voice control technology. In the hotel industry, where an increasing number of businesses are employing voice-controlled gadgets in their hotel rooms, this particular travel trend has been extremely pervasive.

With the use of smart speakers or a voice-activated hub, visitors will be able to manage the temperature in their rooms, turn on the television, switch between channels, call the front desk, and much more. Other facets of the travel industry can simply use the same technology to add further convenience and layers of safety.

Fello Travel is a travel management company thriving to make every aspect of business travel as smooth and stress-free as possible, to understand that the traveller is the most valuable asset of any company and is on client side every step of the way, guaranteeing an exceptional experience.

Fello Corporate operates a quality management system in accordance with the requirements of ISO9001:2015 & ISO14001:2015, the scope of the system covers business travel activities.

2. Quality Policy

The Quality Manager has established a quality policy statement appropriate to the needs of the organization and its customers, which includes their commitment to continual improvement. The statement is reviewed for continuing suitability and is communicated, understood and implemented throughout the organization.

Policy Statement

Fello Corporate aims to be the best at everything it does. We will do this by:

- Placing the highest value on being customer driven and meeting requirements
- Setting and monitoring achievement of objectives
- Focussing on efficiency and service standards
- Continually improving the effectiveness of the quality system
- Fello believes it has an important duty to ensure good environmental performance in all its business operations and to provide the necessary implementation, commitment and training to fulfil this obligation.

Objectives

The quality objectives have been established and recorded by the Director and directly support the above Quality Policy Statement which is reviewed at the management review meeting.

3. Quality Management System

The Quality Management System within the Company has been designed to cover the requirements of ISO9001:2015 & ISO14001:2015 with the following reductions in scope:

- Clause 7.3, Design and Development

The Company sells a standard range of services with the client specifying individual details. Consequently, there is no design element within the services provided, and this clause of ISO9001:2015 has been excluded.

- Clause 7.6, Control of Measuring & Monitoring Devices

The Company does not maintain any measuring or monitoring equipment used in relation to the services provided. This clause of ISO9001:2015 is therefore not applicable and has been excluded from the Quality Management System

The documented Quality Management System is constructed in two parts as follows:

- Quality Manual – This document provides an overview of how the Company meets the requirements of ISO9001:2015 & ISO14001:2015 and contains reference to the various procedures which define how the activities of the Company are controlled and managed.
- Quality System Procedures/Flow Diagrams – These procedures/flow diagrams describe the activities required to implement and maintain the Quality Management System.

The interrelation of the various processes of the Quality Management System is represented at Appendix A of this document.

- QP01 Document Control and Records

4. Management Responsibility

The Quality Manager is the “Management Representative”, who is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the Quality System. The Quality Manager has full authority for the implementation, enforcement and maintenance of the requirements defined in this manual and the associated procedures.

Regular reviews are held in conjunction with the Management Review Team to ensure that the Quality Management System is operating effectively and is continuing to improve the service levels provided by the Company.

Documented procedures related to this section of ISO9001:2015 are as follows:

- QP02 Management Review

5. Resource Management

The Quality Manager keeps up to date with modern business techniques and maintains records of skills, experience and training of all staff. Job Descriptions have been drawn up and key competencies established. The effectiveness of training is evaluated. The Quality Manager has direct responsibility to maintain a proper infrastructure and work environment.

- QP03 Training, Awareness and Competence

6. Service Delivery

Formally controlled processes are in place to enable the Company to successfully deliver the full range of services expected of a high quality and progressive Company. The documentation controlling these processes includes procedures/flow diagrams and standard forms prepared internally along with external standards and regulations where applicable.

Procedures are in place for the purchasing of Suppliers. Examples of which are, as follows:

Travel Products

Office equipment

Training

3rd party requirements - e.g. Outsourced IT support

Documented procedures related to this section of ISO9001:2015 are as follows:

- QP07 New Business
- QP08 Bookings

7. Measurement, Analysis & Improvement

The Company is committed to the principle of continual improvement in all aspects of its services, and has established processes which provide for the measurement, monitoring and analysis of services against customer requirements. The company measure customer satisfaction and ensure that performance indicators in line with the Policy and Objectives have been established and are regularly reviewed by the Quality Manager.

Documented procedures related to this section of ISO9001:2015 are as follows:

- QP04 Internal Quality Audits
- QP05 Non-conformance, Corrective and Preventive Action
- QP06 Monitoring, Measurement and Improvement

8. Environmental Management

Executive Statement

Fello believes it has an important duty to ensure good environmental performance in all its business operations and to provide the necessary implementation, commitment and training to fulfil this obligation.

The senior management team firmly believes in and is committed to monitoring and improving environmental performance in all departments, pollution prevention, environmental protection and compliance with legislation and regulations.

Our clients know –

“Fello acknowledges that running any business has an impact on society and the environment. We take our responsibility seriously and work with our clients, employees, partners and broader community to always behave socially and environmentally friendly.”

Scope Statement

The scope of our Environmental Management System (EMS) is defined with respect to our business activities based at our offices in London, EC4N 6HL.

All company departments and staff are required to comply with EMS requirements upon them. The company EMS does not extend to external parties' activities or premises which Fello cannot control.

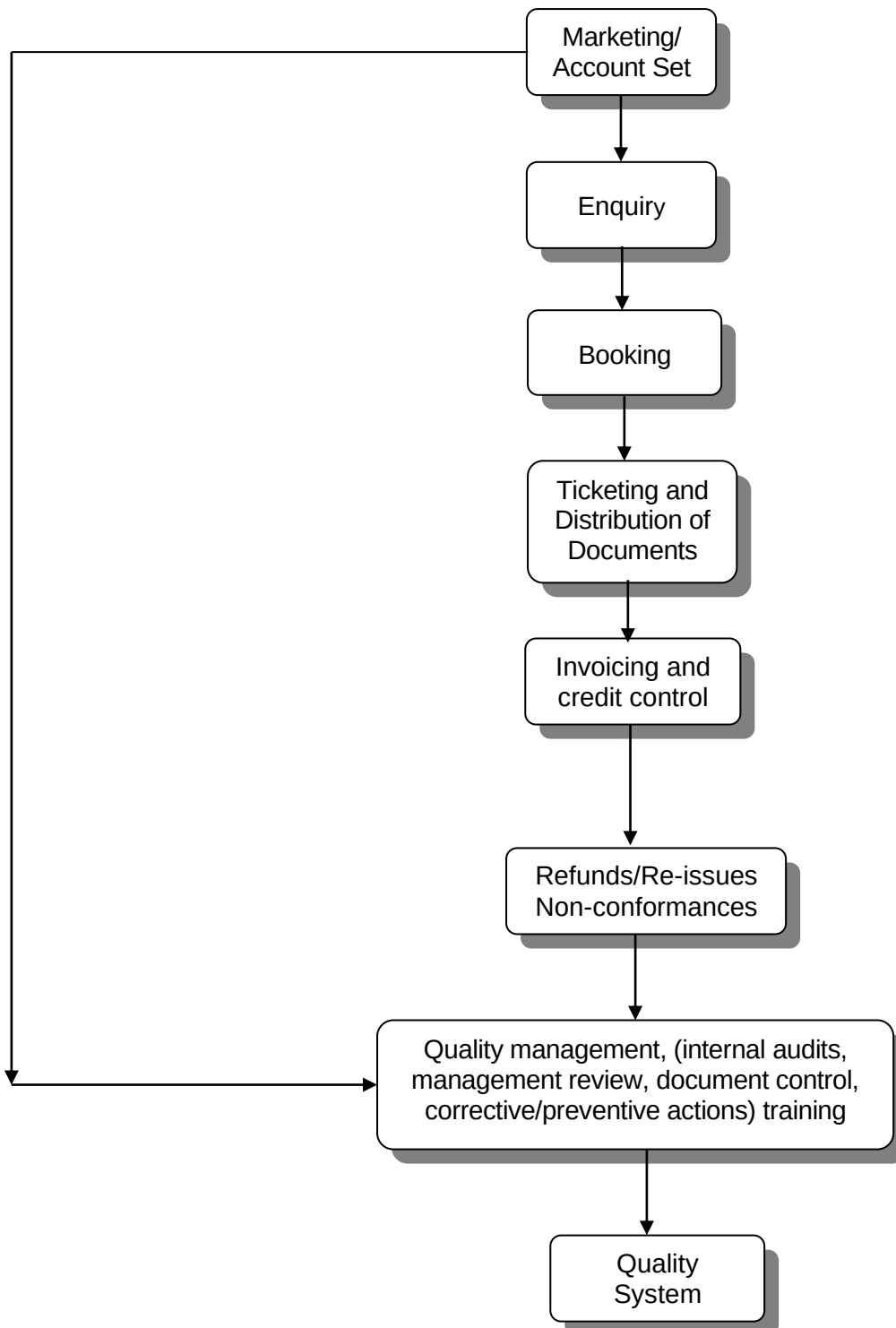
By maintaining and improving its EMS, Fello seeks to minimise its impact on the environment, support sustainability opportunities and otherwise influence others where it realistically can, thus maintaining its good business reputation and remaining a business partner of choice.

Documented procedures related to this section of ISO14001:2015 are as follows:

- EMS01 Office Procedures – Printing, Shredding & Recycling (Working from home)
- EMS02 Energy consumption
- EMS03 CO2 consumption

- EMS04 Indirect Environmental effects

Quality System Process Map



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