How deploying a customer experience transforms a business

Description

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5 WAYS

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE MATTERS TO Y

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Sometimes we try to be too clever

I recently had one of the most frustrating experiences with a service I used personally: a satellite radio service provider, that I won't name (but you can probably guess). My wife and I decided we didn't need the service anymore because we barely listened to it in the car, either choosing the local radio stations or more often choosing to use our phones to play Spotify or a podcast. Being the online user expert that I thought I was, I went to their website to cancel the service.

There was one problem. There is no cancel button, tab, link, or information section on how to cancel on their website. Nothing. In the Help section, there is a FAQ on how to cancel my service. The answer? Call them. This is on purpose to make it difficult to cancel and give them an opportunity to convince you to stay. That's annoying but I understand the tactic.

Mustering up my courage for what is sure to be a painful call, I dial the number. And I am not surprised. They want to know why I'm canceling. Then offer me a discount. And then a second, deeper discount. Then, they dodge my question why I wasn't offered the deeper discount in the first place, or when I subscribed initially (no good answer was provided). After about 10 minutes of me getting more and more frustrated and periodic holds while they "work on the process", they finally confirm my cancellation is confirmed. I ask for a confirmation email or some record and they only give me a Confirmation number I can reference if there's a problem (I would have to call to use it of course).

Not trusting them completely already, I check on the website every couple of days to be sure my cancellation is recorded. After about a week where it still shows me as a subscriber, I muster my energy again to run the gauntlet and call back. And went through another 30 minutes of them checking and re-checking, asking me if I'm sure if I wanted to cancel, and apologizing (with no real explanation) for the cancellation not going through the first time. Finally, after all that, it was done.

Or was it? About two weeks later, I get a call from a 1-800 number I don't recognize, and it's a call center the satellite radio company has hired to try to entice me to subscribe. They don't seem to have anything on file recognizing the pain I just went through to cancel, and after I tell them what happened and why I'm not interested I hang up. about a week later the same number calls again. I don't pick up this time because I am absolutely hating this company by now and everything they've put me through. After about a month of the random calls from this center, I pick up in a frenzy and insist they never call me again. I think I have seen the last of them. But in all that experience it has turned me off of ever being a subscriber in the future. I may have considered again before all of this happened, but now I will never; just on principle.

To make sure you are really taking care of customers and the experience, these moments need to be carefully and thoughtfully crafted to make the experience easy for the client to get exactly what they want, enjoyably or at least painlessly, and have them leave with positive emotions towards your company. Let's talk about how you can make that happen for your enterprise.

Oh, and by the way, the satellite radio is still working 5 months after I canceled.

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So what is Customer Experience?

So what exactly is customer experience? [This Harvard Business Review Article sums it up pretty well](), but in a nutshell:

> Customer experience encompasses every aspect of a company's offering—the quality of customer care, of course, but also advertising, packaging, product and service features, ease of use, and reliability. Yet few of the people responsible for those things have given sustained thought to how their separate decisions shape customer experience. To the extent they do think about it, they all have different ideas of what customer experience means, and no one more senior oversees everyone's efforts.
> *HBR.org*

It encompasses every opportunity that a customer has to connect an experience with your brand, either by directly using your product or service, or indirectly through talking with your employees for any reason or even hearing about your company in the news or other sources. You have the ability to design and control how every interaction will go, and it is a powerful tool to grow your business.

Happy customers are the lifeblood of your company

Enterprises exist to serve customers and to ensure the longevity of your company, keeping them happy is of course essential. Then why don't more company's think about how they interact with customers? I think it is because many leaders focus on the financials of business management, and the product portfolio vs competition and specs and performance, instead of the overall customer experience journey. Financials, market data, and product specs are numbers and data, and analysis is obvious and easy while dealing with 'happiness' is grey and emotional.

But ignore this at your peril. Customers will choose your competitors over you if you treat them poorly. Or piss them off. Or make it difficult for them to work with you. If you approach your customers with a perspective of gratitude then you have a much greater shot at growing your business and keeping it strong.

Focusing on CX provides USP's that can help grow your business

When you actually start to map your customers' journey with your business, you will likely come up with some great crafted moments that they will experience. If you are looking for that USP (unique selling proposition), sometimes just the way you interact with your customer can become that. Disney is a famous example of how the way you interact with customers creates a USP that can vault you to the top of your market. There are plenty of other amusement parks out there, and arguably some have better rides, and brand content to use (like Universal for example), but there is no better amusement park experience than being at a Disney park, with all the people working there unified in making it as magical for you as possible.

Another great example of this is Apple's brilliance in innovating around the experience of opening the packaging when you buy a new device from them. Anyone reading this who's bought from Apple knows the joy of opening the box and seeing how perfectly everything is unraveled for you, with

everything in its rightful place. These little details make you believe they take care of every little detail, hence increasing the user's trust in the company. And it's not even the product at all. Many people would say other companies provide superior products than Apple, and yet their brand is still stronger than ever. Have you kept the box from the last purchase from them? I have several because I couldn't bring myself to throw them away.

Both of these examples have had many imitators, but they still clearly stand out as USP home runs for them.

Defining what's good and bad experience will focus your customer-facing people

I'm curious to know if the satellite radio company has a customer experience journey mapped or not. They did the usual "This call will be recorded for quality purposes", which is the acknowledgment they spy on their customer-facing people to make sure they do everything to keep a client from canceling. But that also indicates a colossal lack of trust in those responsible for the direct interaction with the lifeblood of your organization. More likely, they gave them training on the tactics to use on keeping clients from quitting and are measuring them on how successful they are. It has nothing to do with if the customer is happy or not.

Mapping the journey documents all the interactions the customer has from start to finish, from the first internet search all the way through to throwing the product in the trash. Then crafting how you want those experiences to go allows you to set the bar to the best possible outcomes for each of those experiences. Not only to have those moments as transactional but as opportunities to delight your customer, and have them leave with positive emotions about your brand.

You can create the standards for every interaction, and then rigorously train your teams to follow a more consistent approach on how to perfect those moments. This is why Disney park employees are so consistently great to deal with. And its how Apple store techs are all consistently knowledgable and helpful. If you don't work on this, then you rely on individuals' own abilities (or lack thereof) to communicate your brand message. Scary.

Track your customer and learn

One of the other great offshoots of mapping and standardizing your journey is that you can inject data-gathering into your moments. Each time you craft an experience for your customer (a sales call, a support call, online manual, interacting on a website or app) you can get feedback on how the customer uses the products you offer. Your customer-facing people can be trained to ask key questions and document that feedback into a CRM (Customer-Relationship Management) software, or have the data automatically collected.

This data can provide areas of the customer journey that need to be adjusted because something isn't working, or product feedback that can be given to the design teams on upgrades or iterations of the product to be developed and introduced. Sometimes you need to even walk a mile in your customers' shoes to get this data but is so worth it.

Back when I was in engineering, I had the opportunity to fly with a customer on their Global Express aircraft for a month. I sat in the cockpit and watched every interaction the pilots had with the systems, from starting it up to problems in-air and the shutdown and maintenance cycles. Each interaction was an experience moment that could be tracked and monitored. The reason I was there was that the customer was so furious with the start-up procedures and how confusing they were, they demanded help immediately or they were returning the aircraft. As I watched them closely I saw how frustrated they were, because the procedures to troubleshoot indications and warnings were painful and manual, and in many cases required a maintenance person to come on the airplane and confirm it was ok (something you couldn't do on an average day if you weren't at home base). That data was so valuable to help the engineering team understand why they had to rewrite the procedures and eliminate the frustrations. The result was the industry's first pilot procedures that allowed them to bypass faults that were minor and didn't need maintenance technicians interventions. We crafted the direct experience to use the aircraft and delighted the customers in the process.

Make better decisions

Having all this customer-experience design, training for your people, feedback, and data will allow you to make better decisions as a leader on product design, market capture, sales campaigns, and investments required. But more than that, I believe it begins to provide purpose for your company that may be lacking. Just as people go through life searching for purpose so do corporations. And the noblest of purposes a company can have is to serve its customers as well as possible. Doing this is smart for business as you can see above, and it also brings meaning to your employees. We can all get behind the idea that we work to make customers happy. It can bring joy to a workplace when a customer becomes your biggest fan.

Once you start adopting this philosophy you can introduce the idea in your internal meetings that you assume the customer is in the room with you. Would you say the things you would say if the customer is there? Sometimes I've put a chair at the table in meeting with a sign saying customer, or a stuffed animal representing them. When you need it to talk you can identify a person to act as the customer and voice a customer's concerns to the attendees. It can be a very powerful way to make better decisions that are not only good for your business but good for the customer too.

So how do you go about creating a customer experience journey? Reach out to us and let's get started today.

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- Uncategorized

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