

Transforming the Customer Experience

Practical tools that you cannot do without

Much has been written about why it makes sound business sense to focus strongly on creating customer advocacy in order to achieve good profits and true growth¹.

Putting your customers' wants, needs and expectations centre stage to create and manage a positive customer experience is at the heart of this journey.

A journey that is particularly relevant for businesses where product offerings are close to parity, and where creating a memorable customer experience is a considerable source of potential differentiation.

Not surprisingly, there are many good companies around who can assist you with the key elements to giving your customers the experience you *really* want them to have.

Most are expert in helping your organisation come to terms with how to understand and map the interactions that take place between your customers and organisation², the emotions you are evoking in your customers, and how to measure progress at the bottom line. All are important.

However, with much more emphasis being generally placed on how the customer, rather than the employee, is feeling and behaving during each interaction or touch-point, there is a danger that the fullest opportunity for driving fundamental and lasting change is missed.

In a recent assignment with a major services organisation operating in a competitive market place where word of mouth referral is hugely important, Philip Robinson found himself driving customer experience as the key differentiator to ensure most rapid business growth.

Recognising that everyone has their own work style, their approach to others, their own strengths and limitations and motivators Philip called Nick Leonard from Thomas International, who came armed with the wealth of behavioural and profiling tools that they have to

offer, along with a deep expertise in their application.

Their approach involved getting right beneath the surface of individuals responsible for operating each customer touch-point as part of their day to day routine, on the premise that, at worst, with any amount of training some may not fit in at all, whilst the remainder would at least need tailored training and development to deliver personal and business objectives.

Just as important was to properly analyse the tasks and interactions flowing from the customer journey mapping to construct job roles neither too diverse nor specialised as to make recruitment or churn problematic, as well as the design the wider organisation.

As an illustration of this, an exercise to determine the behavioural profile of key customer facing roles gave results indicating two distinct job roles, where previously only one had been identified.

The following extracts of each role profile prove the extent of the contrast:

Role 1: "Ideally the person should be routine-orientated, methodical, thorough, compliant, cautious, sensitive, diplomatic, self-disciplined, amiable and accommodating...a person who is non-aggressive by nature and prefers an environment which is free of trouble and confrontation"

Role 2: "The person fulfilling this role should be driving, thorough, systematic and enjoy working within clearly defined work parameters. Ideally the job is calling for a person who is tenacious, structured, methodical, organised, inquisitive, factual, cautious, shrewd, self-reliant, hard working and with a strong need to achieve a worthwhile result".

And although scale economies prevented these roles from being immediately separated, the new insight hugely aided understanding as to why some customer facing agents were more highly motivated, productive and routinely secured

higher levels of customer satisfaction doing one role rather than the other.

As a side benefit, it would seem a reasonable bet that closer matching of individuals to roles will also have a positive impact on the bottom line in terms of reducing employee churn, not to mention management and training costs.

Philip found that Thomas' management tools were not only able to deliver the information to enable individuals to be better understood, in terms of where they might best fit in (**PPA**), they were most accessible in terms of facilitating the design of new roles (**Job Create**), and also easiest to deploy within the organisation for the ongoing recruitment and development of individuals.

They fully supported Philip's objective to establish consistency in the recruitment of people with the right behaviours for a given role, and construct a management framework guiding the effective management and development of less than perfect, though acceptable candidates.

¹ The Ultimate Question. Driving Good Profits and True Growth. Fred Reichheld; 2006

² The DNA of Customer Experience: How Emotions Drive Value. Colin Shaw; 2007

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