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Customer Experience Management: Walking the Talk

by Lynn Hunsaker

Beyond customer surveys and rhetoric, an organization has to do things uniquely to lead its industry peers in superior customer experience. Here are some examples of companies that 'put their money where their mouth is'.



At IBM, the executive leadership model includes customer-centricity guidance: within their 'focus to win' core value are 3 components -- customer insight, breakthrough thinking, and drive to achieve. Customer insight is defined by IBM as putting oneself in the mind of the customer, to see the customer's business from their point of view.



At Toyota, the concept of 'Next Process is the Customer' plays a significant role in defining the company culture. Next Process is the Customer means that everyone treats all downstream processes as if they were the final customer, all the while emphasizing that the final customer deserves and demands perfection.



For Intuit's first product launch, early versions of Quicken were tried out by members of the local Junior League, while the founder and other company employees looked on. These early observation of customers' use let the developers get the initial product design right for the market. This "Follow- Me-Home" program continues to this day, where Intuit reps ask people who have just purchased the product from retailers if they can go to their home, watch them unwrap, install, and use the software. Reps are expected to watch and not interfere until the end of their visits, at which time they can offer help or advice.



At JetBlue, founder David Neeleman said he had three rules for employees: show up on time, take care of your co-workers, and take care of customers. He explains: "When customers fly JetBlue they feel special. You feel like the people serving you are actually pleased to have you on board. It's okay to use the flight attendant call button. We relish the opportunity to serve." JetBlue has been the top airline in JD Power's customer service survey for the past 5 years, and it has 1.1 million followers on Twitter, more than any company except Whole Foods and Zappos. In 2009 JetBlue is profitable, expanding to 8 new cities and hiring 2300 people.



At Enterprise Rent-a-Car, response rates from customers to the company's phone surveys run as high as 95%. Enterprise uses customer input as a frontline operating tool by measuring customer loyalty at the individual rental office level. This has enabled regional managers to hold branches accountable for improving customer relationships, and encourage employees to be more responsive to customer feedback. All Enterprise offices are ranked by their

monthly Enterprise Service Quality Index score, but only employees in those offices that score at or above the average index score for the company overall are eligible for promotion, raises or bonuses.

As these examples have shown, there are infinite approaches and styles for building a customer-centric culture, and the rewards can be fantastic. An attitude of anticipation allows greater flexibility and prevention of hassles for customers and for employees, and subsequently less wasted time, effort and money for all parties.

Find out how to customize these tips to your situation; contact the author lynn.hunsaker@clearaction.biz.