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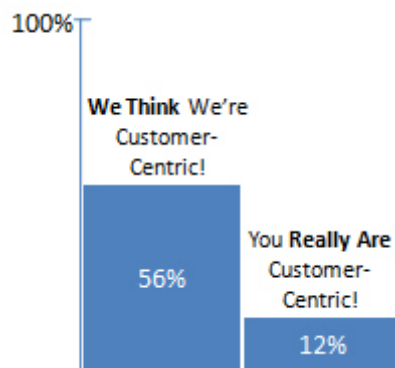
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## Improve Customer Experience by Overcoming Ethnocentric Customer-Centricity

by Lynn Hunsaker

It's easy to be ethnocentric about customer-centricity! Ethnocentrism is the tendency to look at the world primarily from the perspective of one's own culture. How often do we view customer experience, loyalty, word-of-mouth marketing, and customer care from the perspective of our own company culture? Perhaps too often.



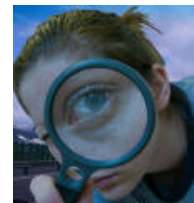
In the name of customer advocacy, we tend to have a number of exciting customer relationship-building programs in place: advisory boards, user groups, reference programs, satisfaction surveys, experiential marketing, personalized customer communications, and much more. These are indeed useful efforts — but their usefulness is exponential when we put aside ethnocentrism for true customer-centricity. The key is in examining our motives.

### **Ethnocentric Customer Advocacy**

Inside-out advocacy seeks to build customer relationships through these primary motives: design new products, obtain new customers, up-sell and cross-sell current customers, determine employee bonuses, and so forth. These motivations are ethnocentric because they are essentially self-serving. Sure, the customer may benefit along the way, but the focus is foremost on company revenue. With this focus, the benefits to customers are short-term at best. And the company's outreach efforts must be constant to keep the wheel moving.

### **True Customer-centric Customer Advocacy**

Outside-in advocacy seeks to build customer relationships through these primary motives: make it easier and nicer for customers to get and use the solutions we offer. With those primary motives securely in place, secondary motives may include: design new products, obtain new customers, up-sell and cross-sell current customers, determine employee bonuses, and so forth. The company will certainly benefit along the way, but the focus is foremost on customers' ease. With this focus, the benefits to customers are long-term and self-sustaining. By making it easier and nicer for customers to get and use the solutions we offer, our ambivalent customers are more likely to migrate to brand enthusiasts, positive word-of-mouth accelerates, and both revenue and profit growth are sustainable in an almost auto-pilot mode, relative to the ethnocentric motives scenario.



**Waste of Inward Focus**

An executive once told me he'd be glad if his company had only manufacturing and sales functions — just the bare minimum to make and sell solutions for customers. He was really commenting on the excessive inward focus and waste that tends to occur in companies. Certainly, customers expect additional services around the solutions they buy: safety, quality, financing, upgrades and innovations, and so on. And that's why companies exist — to make and sell whole solutions for customers. After all, it's the customers who make our payroll dollars possible! And truly customer-centric companies keep that thought at the forefront, with pure primary motives to make it easier and nicer for customers to get the solutions they need.

**Customer Experience Management**

Customer experience management (CEM) is an essential methodology for being a truly customer-centric firm. CEM brings an outside-in focus and pure motives to all groups within the firm. It's the key to creating strong customer perceived differentiation from the competition, as truly customer-centric customer advocacy encompasses the customer's full experience spectrum. CEM makes it easier and nicer for customers to get and use solutions.

Ethnocentric customer-centricity is easy to fall into! Executive champions must be on the alert to prevent it. Outside-in motives prevent waste and generate big results. The usefulness of any customer relationship building program is exponential when we put aside ethnocentrism for true customer-centricism.

*Find out how to customize these tips to your situation; contact the author [lynn.hunsaker@clearaction.biz](mailto:lynn.hunsaker@clearaction.biz).*