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Make Good Customer Experiences Easy

by Lynn Hunsaker

Upgrading to a new model of any kind of product can be an exciting customer experience ... but not if you as a supplier don't set it up for success. All too often, upgrades cause too many surprises, wasted time and money, and frustration. It just doesn't make any sense to spoil what could be a perfect opportunity to strengthen your fan base into brand evangelists. After all, buying an upgrade means customers are giving you a new revenue stream and market share. Show your appreciation for that with these keys to making it easy for the customer to have a great experience: anticipation, policies, and communication.



Anticipation

Put yourself in your customer's shoes. What are their current habits with the old model:

- What do they love about their current experience?
- Which habits would they find difficult to modify?
- What is combined with their current model? (other habits / solutions)
- How long ago did they upgrade to their current model?
- What do they wish would be solved regarding their experience?

Also, gain a clear picture of customers' understanding of the technologies associated with the current and the new models.

Policies

As you design your upgrade, honor what you discovered in the "anticipation" exercise above. Design the product and its surrounding business processes and policies to honor the customer experience. Give customers more choices and more control, not less. Even if you would like to migrate customers to a new revenue stream by replacing something they've taken for granted (was free or combined with former model), find a way to give customers choices *that they will like*.

Communication

Make it easy for customers to find information that will help them adapt to the new model. Again, referring to what you discovered in the "anticipation" exercise, provide real-time information from the customers' perspective. As they go through the upgrade process, is needed information at-hand? For example, include with the product a list of URLs that address all of the expectations and challenges the customer may face. Even better, include this information on the product packaging and along with the specs list on the "buy-now" web page. Do not require them to peruse your blog and forum for such basic information.

When customers make inquiries or comments about something that surprised them, step again into the customers' shoes to formulate a solution *that they will like*. Do not give the customer an answer that just reflects the company's perspective. The customer has already invested in your brand, and now they're expanding that investment — honor that!

Customer Experience Management

Customer experience management is a way of life for everyone in a company. It's not confined to the call center or sales force or website navigation or personalized marketing. To manage customer experiences, it is essential to anticipate and communicate much more than what has been done traditionally. Customer value (for both parties) is cultivated by preventing all things unpleasant. Always setup yourself and your customers for success!

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