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Marketing Wins Strategic Clout by Driving Customer Experience Management

by Lynn Hunsaker

Traditionally, Marketing takes the organization's message to the customer base, but now equally important is Marketing's potential to take the customer base's message back to the organization. Marketing sets up the value proposition that the brand represents, but ultimately customers define what brand truly means to them. *The way we actually deliver the value proposition is more relevant than what we tell customers.*

This theme emerged in my recent online interview with David Cliche, Vice President of Global Interactive Marketing at Aon, a leading provider of risk management and workforce productivity solutions. Dave's role includes leadership of interactive marketing, customer experience management strategies, sales operations, corporate communications, marketing research and analysis, and knowledge management.

"Delivery on brand expectations is most important and customers will tell us how well we do that. There's so much to learn from the Sales and Customer Service interactions with customers", explained Dave.

"Take all those lessons learned for improvement, and drive them into creation of Marketing programs and value propositions. Then take the customer experience full-circle back into the organization as part of the strategic discussion for the whole organization to accurately understand customer needs, and to impact strategy and structure, to better manage delivery of the value proposition."



Two-Way Messaging

Dave suggested that Marketing should own the message flow both ways. Take the customer's message to parts of the organization that may otherwise not hear it. Customers are generally treating company messaging like noise. They think:

*At end of day, did you actually do what you said you would do?

*If I told you something did you listen?

*And most importantly, did you let me know that you did something differently because of my inputs?

There is a world of opportunity to create new relationships with customers that are potentially much more valuable. Where most organizations seem to experience the greatest challenge is making sure appropriate field data and customer feedback are understood and used across the company. Marketing can enhance the organization's ability to incorporate customer feedback into new product offerings,

organizational structure, revenue models, strategic resourcing of talent, operations, and more. We are probably squandering numerous lost opportunities to do what customers tell us they want. How can we ignore this guidance from the customer?

Accountability

Customer-centricity is not just a buzz word, it's a structural challenge to assign accountability into an executive policy committee, smooth hand-offs between functional areas, and commit to using customer feedback data. Marketing should own and facilitate customer experience management by leveraging all of the functional pieces to deliver the value proposition to stakeholders efficiently and cleanly. Marketing can help everyone understand how what they're doing plays a role in how the customer receives the brand. Give equal importance to satisfaction and advocacy metrics as to financial metrics. Compare revenue, share, profit, forecast, satisfaction, and retention data to gain a fuller picture of reality and to perk up the whole organization to maximizing the potential value available.

Elevate Marketing's Role

Historically, various functions have managed CRM and related initiatives, but Marketing is the natural fit for managing customer experience, as an essential strategy to brand management and business growth. Marketing executives can elevate their role in the company by owning customer experience management.

Listen to the interview: [Marketing Wins Strategic Clout by Driving Customer Experience Management](http://www.blogtalkradio.com/BTR-CEM) (recorded internet talk radio discussion, www.blogtalkradio.com/BTR-CEM; 28:34)

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