Bitesize Business Breakthroughs

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Secure your business success – take your customer experience seriously...

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Here's where you decide whether to leave your customer experience to chance or design it deliberately.

Before we pose the big question for your business, meet Lily.

In May 2011 Lily Robinson, a three-year-old wrote to UK supermarket Sainsbury's, saying:

> *'Why is tiger bread called tiger bread?*
> *It should be called giraffe bread.*
> *Love from Lily Robinson age 3 and ½.'*

She received a reply from a customer service agent:

> *'I think renaming tiger bread giraffe bread is a brilliant idea – it looks much more like the blotches on a giraffe than the stripes on a tiger, doesn't it?*
> *It is called tiger bread because the first baker who made it a l-o-o-o-ng time ago thought it looked stripey like a tiger! Maybe they were a bit silly! Chris King (age 27 and 1/3)'.*

Lily's mother posted Chris King's reply on her blog, someone posted it on twitter, other social media got involved as did the BBC...

Here's what people were saying about Sainsbury's...

> *'That's what I call good customer service!' ... 'Simple gestures like this can and do generate immense goodwill for the brand, yet is still so rare' ... 'If there were more Chris Kings working, bad customer service would be a thing of the past!'*

Sainsbury's changed the name of the bread to Giraffe Bread – you can still buy it today!

The big lesson...

What your customers think, feel, say and tweet about their experience buying from you determines your success or failure.

Your customers' experiences influence what your customers say about you and whether they buy more and buy more often. Or don't!

The big question...

Assuming you want your customers to think, feel, say and tweet positively, don't you need to take more seriously the work of creating, planning and delivering a great customer experience for them? Or would you prefer to leave your customer experience to chance and let your customer experience focused competitors reap the rewards from your lack of attention?

IN A NUTSHELL

The experience your customers have of your business and your products is in your hands. You can decide what and how every aspect of your business impacts on your customer. Don't leave this experience to chance, don't assume it's going 'OK'. Instead plan it out and deliver on it well.

Why is customer experience left to chance?

Everyone is just so busy doing what they normally do every day and every week across your business. And yet...
...if *one person* took responsibility for customer experience, they'd make sure your company regularly reviewed and improved your customer experience.

> *"You've got to start with the customer experience and work back toward the technology — not the other way around."*
> – Steve Jobs, Co-Founder and former CEO, Apple

Follow the moving target...

In a fast-changing world, achieving outstanding customer experience is a moving target – it's too risky standing still, you must adapt to your customers' changing expectations or fail.

Your competition are improving, and customer experience with other products and services are improving too – like they are at Disney, Waitrose, Uber and many other companies (see download tools for examples of world class customer experience).

To avoid the risk of becoming irrelevant, or at best just less attractive than your competitors, you have to work on your customer experience delivery.

So, ask yourself:

> *"When did you and your team last review your customers' experience of your business/service/products?"*

STOP thinking your customer experience will look after itself as you continue to do the busy day-to-day work needed in your business.

START investing team time and effort consciously improving your customer experience – block off diary time for team focus.

Your simple next step...

ACTION: Set time aside – with a few key team members if you can – to investigate the experience your customers have of your business, products and services. You want no distractions, so make it off-site if you can. Schedule 3 hours or half a day for your first session.

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Get your team off-site to analyse and improve your customer experience

HERE'S THE PROVEN SOLUTION FOR YOU...

You build and improve your customer experience when you get clear on customer groups (or profiles) and get clear on the scenarios each customer group experiences with your product or service. ONLY THEN set about improving the individual interactions your customers have with your products or services.

Get clear on the customer groups you want to focus on...

It would be surprising if you only served one distinctive customer group.

For example, a city restaurant at lunchtime will have tourist visitors, business visitors and regular local visitors. To deliver a great customer experience, a different approach is needed for each group. A general approach could easily alienate one or all three customer groups.

Identify your different customer groups but keep the groups to a minimum (2 or 3) otherwise the complexity of the customer experience process becomes unmanageable.

Get clear on what your customer groups value similarly (the quality and presentation of the food perhaps) but also what they value differently (business guests may want fast service; tourists may want a relaxing experience with a visit from the chef).

Value differences...

Customer value shows up on three levels (according to Matt Watkinson in his landmark, award-winning book, *'The Ten Principles Behind Great Customer Experiences'*.

- **BRAND LEVEL** - *Brand value* is the value of the object in relation to other similar objects, both in a social context and also about the owner's personal values and beliefs. - eg. a Mont Blanc pen signifies different values, status and taste compared with a Bic.
- **PRODUCT/SERVICE LEVEL** - *Exchange value* is the economic or market value – a pig is worth two sheep, a pen is worth two pounds. This level of value is about how your product or service delivers on your customer objectives.
- **INTERACTION LEVEL** - *Use value* is the function or utility of an object – a pencil draws, a refrigerator cools.

To help you get clear on your customer groups, with your team use a flip chart and pen to answer the questions applied to these levels of value (found in the download tools at the end of this report).

Watkinson also shares a brilliant story to show how different scenarios for the same customer result in different emotions.

Different scenarios also mean different value...

Imagine two different bus journeys. In the first you are heading into town to casually shop; in the second you're heading to the airport to catch a flight.

Consider how you'd feel running late and missing the bus in each different scenario. Imagine your emotional response to the bus driver waiting for you on seeing you run for the bus!

Appreciating what the stakes are reveals another critical aspect of objectives: the more important the objective is, the more we become emotionally invested in it.
Here's how you do this...

Get close to your customers...

Empathy and understanding about what matters in your customers' lives (objectives/goals) can reshape the customer experience you want to create.

To help you do this Watkinson recommends that you use a 4-part framework of *'mental reconnaissance'*, to help you analyse and scrutinise the detail of your customers' lives to inform and guide your customer experience.

1. **SUPER-OBJECTIVES:** A super-objective underpins a whole range of lower objectives:
   "Brian and Jenny are on their honeymoon. Steve has a client meeting. James is attending a friend's funeral. They are all flying economy class to San Francisco. Yet for all their similarity, the three have radically different higher objectives, and thinking about them could open up a world of opportunities for the airline."
2. **SUBTEXT:** The difference between what people say and what they mean – the underlying thoughts and feelings that are compelling their behaviour.
   Don't treat subtext lightly. Like Watkinson says:
   "The subtext is the most difficult thing to identify, and yet often is the most powerful driver of customer behaviour.
   Can you imagine a customer walking into a luxury car dealership and saying to the salesman, "I'm looking for a status symbol that will make me attractive to the opposite sex - something that shows to everyone how wealthy and powerful I am"
   You build empathy with your customer when you understand their motives, shining a light on their unspoken and often unrecognised shadow issues (subtext) and relating all this back to a higher objective.
3. **OBJECTIVES:** The reason why your customer performs an activity or task using your product or service. Watkinson uses the airline example again to explain the success criteria: Yes, your customer wants to arrive in San Francisco at a certain date and time, but here are some other objectives that feed into that:
   - when to go on my trip
   - find the cheapest fare
   - how to get to the airport
   - pack appropriately for the length of my stay; weather at my destination
   - get to the airport on time
   - check in my luggage, pass security

   So, for example, to help with the objective to pack appropriately – why not e-mail customers a weather forecast for their destination a few days before they go to influence their choice of clothing and improve the joy of their trip?
4. **STAKES:** Every customer objective has a different level of importance – holiday flight vs funeral flight.
   The stakes and level of risk involved determine how intently customers feel about your business, and how their emotional experience will be impacted.
   "Satisfying the high-stakes objectives is the route to a great customer experience."
   Matt Watkinson – 'The Ten Principles Behind Great Customer Experiences'

You'll find more detail and specific actions for this 4-part framework in the download tools at the end of this report.

Work on the nitty gritty detail too...

Brand image is one thing.

Brand reality is something far more important – especially in a world with social media.

Most customer experience work reviews the detail around the moments of interaction between your business and your customers. This is an absolute must – but only when the higher-level work has been done around customer groups and customer scenarios.

This report has been created to challenge your thinking and connect you to the ways and means of transforming your customer experience. In the supporting download tools you'll find guidance on building out the detail of each stage of your customer experience or customer journey.

GET YOUR BITESIZE SUPPORT TOOLS NOW
https://businessbreakthrough.online/winning-customer-experience-tools-and-resources/

4 helping hands for you...

Your customers' experience of your products, services and business reflects everything your business does and does not do. Customer experience work is a valuable undertaking. Doing it alone can work, but it works much better if you get more of your people and even (if you can) some customers involved.

1. **Set team time aside to work through your customer experience**
2. **Get clear on the 1, 2 or 3 customer group profile(s) you want to focus on**
3. **Work out 2 or 3 customer scenarios that have the biggest impact on your sales**
4. **Breakdown the stages and steps of customer interaction to identify specific areas of improvement**

Because your customers' experience of your business interactions ultimately determines how much and how often they buy from you and recommend you, this work can transform the results of your business!

TIME TO DISAGREE:

"I know my customers intimately and I know my products intimately, do I really need to do all this work?"

You are better placed than most to build a world class customer experience because you are so close to what's happening in your business.

Would you not be even stronger if you get clear on the high-level objectives of your 2 or 3 customer groups and the scenarios that have them buying from you?

"There's no time to do this sort of work because everyone is just so busy."

It's great that you're busy but if you leave customer experience improvements until you're less busy or have more people, you might be waiting a long time. In the meantime, it's possible your competition will improve their customer experience and steal a march on you.

Why not look at the ebb and flow of your workload, and when you have a natural lull, plan in diary time to review your customer experience. One or two improvements could easily spur your business on to greater success because your customers love you even more than they do now!

ULTIMATE ARGUMENT:

"Shouldn't every business review customer experience annually?"

Ultimately your customers are the 'Paymaster General' for your business. Without them buying from you the business fails to exist.

By reviewing your customer experience, you consciously and deliberately put your customers front and central in your and your team's mind. Whether you do this annually, or twice a year, or more often is up to you. Don't you think it at least pays to give it a go this once and see what happens to your customer reaction and sales results?

Check out the downloadable tools for extra videos, resources and exercises to help fully review your customer experience. You'll also find many examples of good, bad and ugly customer experiences to inspire you.

YOUR 'CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE' CHECKLIST:

If you're persuaded to take your customer experience seriously, you'll earn the right to a sustainable competitive advantage and the positive financial results that follow from the positive reputation this brings.

1. **Set team time aside** – 3-4 hours, ideally offsite to follow through on the actions suggested throughout this report
2. **Get clear on the 1, 2 or 3 customer profile(s) you want to focus on** – Every customer is different however you'll see obvious customer groups around which you can build world-class customer experience. NB. Remember to think 80/20 when identifying a minimum number of customer groups – approximately 20% of customers bring 80% of your profits.
3. **Work out 2 or 3 customer scenarios that have the biggest impact on your sales and profits** – Use the 4-part *'mental reconnaissance'* framework suggested by Matt Watkinson earlier in this report. Remember that the higher the emotional stakes, the greater the impact on customer experience (either positively or negatively)
4. **Break down each scenario into stages and steps to help decide what needs to be changed** – what changes need to be made to improve your customers' experience at each stage?

As always, it's not knowing about a business breakthrough that works, it's about putting it to work! Use the downloadable support tools to help you build better customer experience for your business.

Want to know more?

Matt Watkinson – The Ten Principles Behind Great Customer Experiences.

Customers matter, they can make noise about you, good or bad, they decide the future of your business and their expectations are high. This book covers the ten principles you must use to ensure you improve your customers' experience with your business. This book offers you the opportunity to create a great customer experience and give your business the edge over your competition.

GET YOUR BITESIZE SUPPORT TOOLS NOW

https://businessbreakthrough.online/winning-customer-experience-tools-and-resources/

Use these tools and resources to ensure you invest time and effort in your business to constantly improve your customer experience.

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