Catalyst

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Custommerce Service Excellence Foundation is a not-for-profit organization striving to create a customer experience driven, globally competitive Indian economy.

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Making customer experience happen in companies

In the future, the single biggest competitive advantage for companies will be the power of making customer experience happen in their interactions with customers. This will become the single biggest differentiator as other assets like software, hardware, products, distribution and people can be acquired but customer experience will be the one that will be difficult to replicate easily by their competitors.

While many companies are aware of this emerging trend, customer experience design and execution is still evolving in many corporations across the world. Since this needs to straddle across different departments, many existing silos need to be broken down to deliver superior customer experience. If this has to be made a reality in companies, then it is important that people, process and technology need to be aligned.

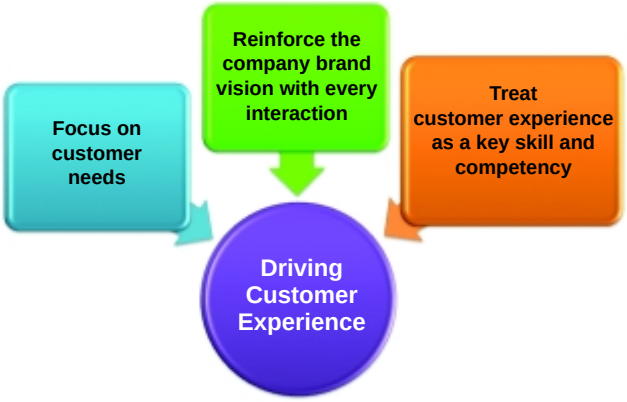
How, what and who of customer experience

Step # 1: The first step is to engage all key stakeholders in defining the customer experience for the company. Most often we have found that there is no consistent definition of customer experience across various managers and stakeholders of a company. What might be acceptable to one department or function may not be acceptable to the other. Also, the customer experience needs to reinforce the vision of the company brand. Hence, this forms the foundation of the customer experience vision for any company.

For example, if the company brand stood for "innovation and value", how will these need to get translated in customer experience across touchpoints becomes a key point of discussion at this stage. What can the customer service team innovate which will leave an indelible experience. This needs to be put down in the blue-print. Similarly, what can marketing and sales do in their interaction with customers to drive this vision also becomes important - it could be a differentiated pre-sales approach to a post-sales on-boarding experience which will lead in to the customer service team taking the baton from there. This understanding of inter-links between departments and people within functions is key to the success of a customer experience transformation program.

Swaminathan S.
Chief Executive Officer
Hansa Customer Equity Pvt. Ltd.

Step #2: In the subsequent step, we now need to identify and empower a key executive team to help us design and adopt this customer experience vision within key areas of the company. This team will need to start to baseline the "as-is" customer experience which will help us outline process, outcome and metrics that can be put down to measure the quality of improvement in customer experience that is being delivered month after month post the program roll out.



Step #3: The next stage, for this key executive team, is to draw up a blue-print to build an operational process "to-be" architecture. Here, the individual processes will be defined and drawn out. Key stake-holders within the key executive team will ensure they are vetted for business agility and delivery reality. They would then champion the roll-out of these "to-be" processes within

Key Areas	Current Scenario	Future Scenario
Interactions	How the company interacts with their customers	How the customer experience needs to be re-looked at, to achieve customer experience goals?
Products	How is the product being bought and used today?	How can the purchase and usage be changed to enhance customer experience?
Channel	How is the consistency of experience across channels for customers?	How can we enable a consistent experience and information across channels for the customer?
Customer service	How is the customer service experience today?	How can we develop and build a proactive customer experience for customer service?
Measurement	How do we measure customer outcomes today?	How can we measure customer outcomes and track the experience in the future?

departments and functions across the company. Customer outcome metrics must be clearly put down at this stage as this will form an important pillar of measuring the impact of the customer experience redesign and delivery at every interaction and touch point.

At this stage a variety of cross-functional teams need to be included as this may warrant some changes in technology and process. There needs to be a clear evaluation done by this team on cost-benefit value that can be got from each of the "to-be" architecture. Most of the time, it is recommended- that the executive team pick-up some "quick-win" areas and also pick a couple of "pilot" areas for execution. Once there is a validation of the Impact vs Value delivered, more individual processes can be identified and addressed.

Step #4: Alignment of systems and process post drawing-out the blue-print is a critical step and most often missed at this stage. Also, many companies tend to underestimate the investments that may be required at this stage. A clear benchmarking of requirements and investments is very important. Also, the executive team needs to prepare a clear road map for these investments over a 2-3 year period and prioritize them. There could be a host of changes that might be required - right from re-architecting customer databases, integration of multiple touch points - phone to web to mobile to stores to field sales systems, billing systems, etc. The executive team needs to draw up the systems, process and priorities template and share it with the management team for approval.

Step # 5: At this stage, it is important to look at incentives and rewards of people across the organization. What kind of behavior will be considered to be in alignment with the customer experience vision, what customer outcomes will be measured and rewarded, etc. are critical to the success of this journey in the organization. It is important to publish a monthly customer experience dashboard of metrics and delivery which must be made available enterprise-wide. Also, there is a need to build a culture of recognition and continuous governance of the customer experience delivery across touch points.

Here are some cardinal rules that work when such a transformation has to be done in companies:

Rule # 1: Have revolutionary objectives but practice evolutionary methods to accelerate adoption.

Rule # 2: When executing it across people, process and technology - think big, think small.

Rule # 3: Build and empower a cross-functional team of stakeholders.

Rule #4: Strive to build incremental improvements at early stages, improve them continuously, transform over time and sustain them over time.

Rule #5: Build emotionally compelling customer experiences.

Rule #6: Engaging employees is an important stepping stone for better customer experience - unengaged employees don't create engaged customers!

Rule # 7: Measure customer outcomes and recognize performers.

Rule #8: Don't get technology to lead customer experience transformation efforts.

Rule #9: Allow people to lead, by not letting them wait for permission.

Rule #10: Set expectations and deliver value every time.

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Meet a Member | Corporate Member - Custommerce Service Excellence Foundation

Magal LVD India Pvt. Ltd.

Magal Engineering Company, since 1992, has steadily grown to become a premier one source company for supply, service and consultancy of sheet metal working machines, metal cutting or forming machines and metal processing or finishing equipment in India.

LVD Company NV is a leading manufacturer of a comprehensive range of sheet metal or plate working machine tools and software solutions, including laser cutting systems, punch presses, press brakes, guillotine shears and mid-level automation systems; integrated and supported by its CADMAN PC-based Windows-compatible software.

Magal LVD India Pvt. Ltd.(www.magallvd.com) aims to capitalize on the extensive market knowledge of both LVD and Magal that would eventually maximize sales and service coverage while ensuring a strong localized support to all customers across India.

Magal is known for the after-sales service the company provides to the customers. Our service engineers are trained by the principals themselves at their manufacturing centers. Their service engineers are very effective as they gain extensive hands-on experience during the training program. Magal ensures that the machines run with almost zero down time and there is no disturbance in production.Magal LVD have their service engineers spread across India to service customers anywhere.

Magal's primary strength lies in its technical expertise and insight that has resulted in cementing a strong rapport with principals and customers in various manufacturing categories. Based on principles of technology proficiency, honest dealings and conscientious customer service, Magal has successfully built a respectable clientele.

Today, Magal has grown into a multi-crore enterprise, through progressive performance, consistent growth and result-oriented objectives. With a clear confidence in its niche area of competence and efficient management, Magal has deservedly earned the goodwill of customers and principals alike in India and abroad.

Why Retail Workers (Like Me) Drive Customer Experience

Caitlin Kelly — HBR Blog Network

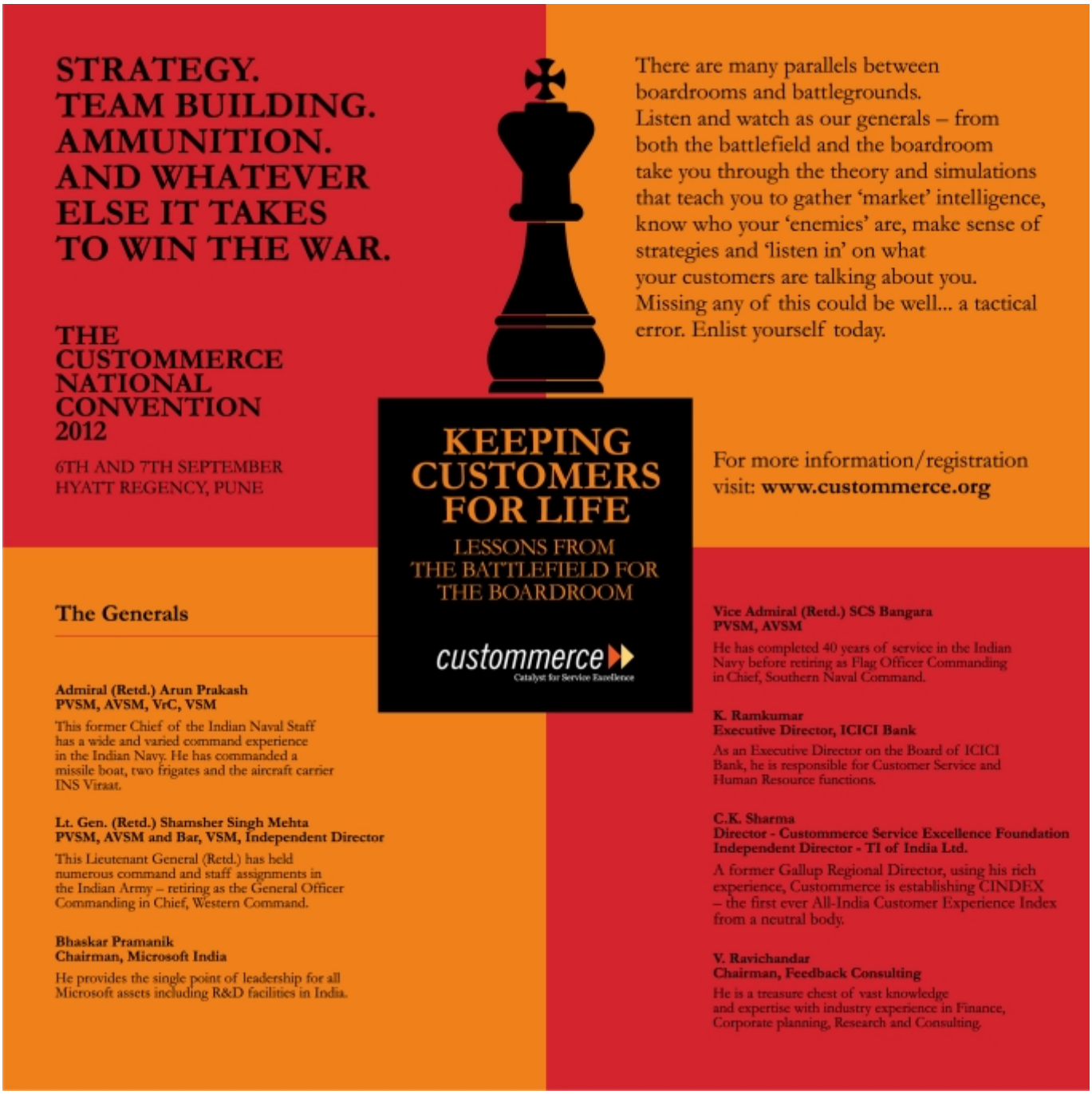
...Yet within weeks of starting at The North Face, I was easily meeting, and often doubling or tripling, our daily individual sales goals. I was creating positive customer experiences for my employer, for a simple reason: Joe had hired smarter.

As more shoppers arrive in stores with price and product data literally at their fingertips via smartphones, their interaction with sales associates... is more crucial than ever. A study conducted by the Verde Group and the Wharton School of Business found that the single most critical element in customer satisfaction was not billion-dollar branding, advertising or extensive use of social media, but the quality of those personal moments when a shopper chooses - or not - to become a paying customer.

Getting the right people into these jobs - and retaining them - is a challenge...

When I asked senior consultant Jane Flaherty how many of these retailers conduct face-to-face interviews, the answer was disappointing. Because these companies receive so many applications, many don't conduct personal interviews for store associate jobs. "Face to face is absolutely the best," she agreed, but many companies rely primarily or exclusively on computerized tests and tools like the 30-minute Predictive Index...

For the full article visit : http://blogs.hbr.org/cs/2011/04/why_retail_workers_like_me_dri.html



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