

OUR 12 PRINCIPLES OF DELIVERING A MEANINGFUL CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

1. MAKE IT PERSONAL

Customers want to feel like real people, like they matter. No one likes being “treated like a number.” Positive customer experiences are often all about customization and personalization. The more you can single customers out for attention, the more you build a connection with them. You need to “fit” the solution to the customer and to the customer’s context. How can you make the customer feel this is just for her?

2. CONNECT WITH WHAT’S IMPORTANT TO THEM

Believe it or not, your brand or product is not the most important thing in the lives of your customers. They are most passionate about their family, their home, friends, travel, health and fitness, arts and culture. Consider how your customer experience can help them enjoy, take better care of, and be more successful at these things.

3. HELP THEM ACHIEVE A HIGHER GOAL

They don’t really need what you are selling; they are trying to get something done. There’s always a higher goal and your product or service represents a means to an end. What they really need is to protect their families, serve nutritious meals, impress friends, look good in the eyes of others, and feel good about themselves. Consider how we can help them succeed.

4. MAKE THEM FEEL THEY BELONG

People like to feel part of something, like they belong to a group with shared interests and goals. Your customer experience can involve customers in things, invite them to join and to attend events, contribute to a sense of community, and help them interact with interesting people. What can you invite them to that they would find meaningful?

5. HELP THEM LOOK GOOD

Often, the customer’s ultimate goal is well into the future. They are not as focused on the immediate purchase, as they are on what that purchase will allow them to accomplish. They are looking for positive reactions and want to look good in the eyes of others. They want a gift to be well-received and to hear “oohs” and “aahs” when guests visit their newly-decorated home. Consider how you can contribute to their receiving the accolades they are looking for.

6. MAKE THINGS EASIER FOR THEM

An important part of a successful and enjoyable customer experience involves removing the irritants that get in the way of customer success. Think about how you can deal with the things your customers would rather not have to do. How can you take care of things, look after the details? One of the most powerful comments we hear from customers is “that’s one less thing I have to worry about.”

7. BE PROACTIVE, ANTICIPATE WHAT THEY NEED

Customers tell us all the time that they welcome meaningful, proactive contact. They like it when businesses reach out to them, rather than waiting for them to call. But, the contact must be *meaningful* and not just a sales call. Such proactive contact allows you to engage them in conversation, to head off problems, to look after things before they turn negative. This sends a powerful message that you are looking after their best interests.

8. DO WHAT THEY'RE NOT EXPECTING

We have learned through 40 years of research that customer expectations are bounded, predictable and generally subconscious. Customers expect you to do what companies like yours are expected to do, nothing more. Merely meeting their expectations will not allow you to impress and will not give you a competitive advantage. *Customers are not expecting to be surprised.* Focus on what they are not expecting, on the element of surprise.

9. HELP THEM AVOID PROBLEMS

Part of a great customer experience is helping the customer avoid negative outcomes. You can do that by providing solid advice and information that will help customers be successful in achieving their goals. This represents an opportunity for you to demonstrate your expertise and experience. Consider what you can help them not experience. How can you help your customers avoid disappointment and regret?

10. CAPITALIZE ON THEIR INEXPERIENCE

Many customers are buying certain products or services for the first time, such purchases are new to them and they are often unprepared to make important decisions. They literally don't know what they are getting into. These represent opportunities for you to help them avoid mistakes and to connect with major life events. Counsel them: "If you are thinking of _____, then you will need to know about _____"

11. DEAL WITH THE "LITTLE THINGS"

When dealing with businesses, customers often encounter small inconveniences and irritants. If left unaddressed, these "little things" have the potential to become "big things". We have encountered many situations where customers take their business elsewhere because of some seemingly minor thing. The firm often doesn't see these from the customer's viewpoint. They have the potential to negatively affect customer perception and ultimately your success.

12. MANAGE THE SHARED DELIVERY

Whenever you engage delivery people, installers, call centres or dealers, you are essentially delegating the delivery of your brand and the customer experience to them. Customers often don't realize this; they think they are dealing with you. These intermediaries have the potential to influence your branded customer experience. You will need to engage sub-contractors and partners to deliver the customer experience that fits and supports your brand.

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