

Understanding Your Customer Experience

by GregDeTisi - Monday, April 03, 2023

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Let's start by becoming the customer, it's not that hard, as we have all been there many times, and so 'Understanding Your Customer Experience' isn't as hard as you may think.

In fact, we all know what the Customer Experience and understanding it is actually like exactly, in a huge variety of situations over many years.

But as you probably also know, this experience has changed somewhat over time.

Today it could be a simple click of a button when buying online, no human interaction whatsoever, but a quick buzz from a purchase that is easy and user friendly, to navigate through the process.

Nice!

I admit that sometimes I love the simplicity of buying online, as it is convenient, fun and usually very fast. And in our modern times we often feel the need to get something quick and get it delivered, so sure, it's the world we live in now for the most part. But, what about the old typical human interaction?

Is that becoming a thing of the past to be discarded with the rest of the behaviors of the 20th century?

Well in actual fact it's far from it.

As we are starting to feel that we are missing this a little bit. But why?

Simply because, we are human beings who crave interaction and so the customer experience and understanding it, is something we all have views and opinions on.

Virtual isn't the only choice

Add to that the fact that we love something tangible in our experience, and so it means that many are favoring the process of actually speaking to others through a physical process, and so we still enjoy shopping and feeling that joy of walking into somewhere and leaving a new person in some way.

Maybe that's a bit of a stretch, but we do indeed still love talking with others, and seeing, smelling, tasting, touching, hearing all the sensations of reality when buying. It can be fun!

These are like mini stories! Just as you use stories to expose your brand, you should use buyers stories to grow your brand.

The smaller business is still very much cherished among those seeking something REAL!

This can mean many will still want to support that seller, whilst at the same time enjoy the experience of buying from a real person that cares about the products.

So expose your brand, and once you have driven many to your door follow on from that.

Never ignore the process afterwards once you have passionate customers lining up.

Understanding Your Customer Experience - Buying in shops

Personally I prefer buying most things including clothes in person, and I get fed up with ordering clothes only to have to send them back, as the medium is actually a large, plus I enjoy browsing from time to time.

No matter what the product or service is, there is something special about reality when buying.

Whether it is thrift shops, vintage, gadget shops, food and drink establishments, bakeries and so on, it can be a lovely experience. But it can also be a nightmare if it is not considered by the seller.

Whilst we may have all the CRM tools, email, follow ups, sales pages, websites, social media we could manage, and have a great brand image, which all acts as supportive ways to drive customers to buy through our pay points, and it's super cool, many people still want a smooth and easy process, and still see business as a personal human thing.

For example, have you ever ordered something online, and yet there is no communication throughout the process? And you want to know what's going on in the delivery process, but you have no idea.

This can be very frustrating can't it?

Even though you try every way possible to get in touch with a human or at least a contact of some kind, it is sometimes nearly impossible. Is that the future?

Understanding Your Customer Experience- Don't miss a trick

I guess you can see where I am going with this? A customer just wants to feel cared for in some way!

Besides, I expect you know that anyway, but I feel it is still vastly underestimated and underappreciated.

Even though I tend to bang on about knowing your role in a business, it's not just about knowing what you do, you also need to understand that the role consists of ensuring that caring about the customer experience and relationship is at the forefront of your operation.

In this world you and I should at least seek to know another person for our best interest, and this is true in all of life of course, but especially in our business. I mean, if you or I don't know others opinions, feedback and their needs generally then how can we possibly know how to understand the best course of action in what we do to improve?

We cannot! We have to grasp why the customer experience and understanding it needs to be at the forefront of our strategy,

But what can help?

Start here: If you need to do so, study the image below to become more aware of yourself and others, if it helps! I know that in understanding myself more I felt I could understand others more.

Learning to manage yourself and to manage relationships is a great skill and I can vouch for it 110%, but from there it goes further. In understanding ourselves and others we can empathize with their experiences, and we should continue our exploration with mastering the 'buyer persona'.

Have you heard of this before?

A buyer persona is kind of vision of our businesses **ideal or perfect customer**. This will have been created through your research and development in identifying who your customers typically are and who your future customers may be.

Through this you discover who they are, what they do, and what their core drivers may be, but also what they wish to get out of buying. So through this exploration you can pinpoint a picture of your customer and set about attempting to make their experience as accurate to what they would want as you can.

Do also bear in mind though that sometimes a person doesn't always know what they want or need until it is shown to them, so that gives you space to test the process.

The point is that you just don't want be hoping and preying for sales and not caring about their experience.

Whilst larger companies often don't care so much about people, and corporate style douches ignore people's feelings or treat them like a number, you really need to move past that and make it personal.

Some larger companies and organizations are tough to communicate with as you probably know, and some care less about you or me, and perhaps you are aware that when trying to get a human response from the lovely Meta verse of Facebook, which is not always easy.

The key for you and I with a smaller business is to take advantage of that, by caring and communicating more than they do.

Also, the less the world becomes personal and the more cold it is, the more you can simultaneously be warm and considerate.

So as small business owners we can do our utmost to ensure we are not a part of that awful virtual world of detachment.

Aim for real people to give you real reviews that are heart felt.

Yes, leverage the digital world and maximize your efforts through the use of tech, absolutely! But don't assume a care free attitude towards to the human part is good enough. It isn't. It is the human content, connection and careful use of words that gives the personal touch.

It is that which will help customers to give you solid reviews.

Understanding Your Customer Experience for growth

Knowing the customer is of course fundamental to sales as you may know, otherwise we are not getting to grips with where we should be marketing or promoting, and so we can waste a great deal of time and money missing the mark.

Certainly we all need to know all of the persona and demographic stuff, and that's a given, but so is the follow up and connection we then create.

Whilst I use tools such as Aweber and Mailchimp to gather details and to build lists, I don't just assume that automation is doing everything for me, as I also connect personally with those who have questions about products and services. And whilst I know that some business owners have assistants, teams and helplines for customers (depending upon the size and type of the organization), I have always prided myself in personally dealing with whatever is required, and that is because I want my clients to see that 'not only do I care', but I'm real and not trying to act like a big-shot or avoid people through some kind of CEO type positioning.

There is nothing wrong with having help in dealing with customers in a small business, I tend to offer support in my courses and consulting so I am always prepared to find answers and get in touch, as I am open and prepared to deal with any disharmony or mistakes on my part.

Just like in all parts of life - we want loyal connections, and in this case we want customers and clients who want to be around us for life.

Through understanding this we can drive growth, but we may also couple that with creating channels to monitor customer behavior data, thus we can always improve the experience.

Managing this is vital to all business growth, as we identify the areas that we may seek to improve upon what we do, and how we do it.

Human beings live in and with feelings, (sorry that was so obvious) but, we always have experiences throughout life, and it is no different in business, so in simple terms, the happier your customer is the more likely they are to come back and become loyal.

You then create greater retention, and hopefully the word spreads whereby your customer will tell others about the fabulous experience they have had.

That may also mean greater reviews, recommendations and referrals.

Think about this; a great customer is actually selling for you! FOR FREE! In actual fact it's better than free, they are paying you to market you.

Ain't that cool! All because you bothered to give them an awesome experience.

Through feedback and refining your processes you gain invaluable information that will help you to increase your loyal customers turned free marketers into messengers that are out there speaking for you.

Understanding Your Customer Experience and what your brand or message is, to gather those troops who can promote you.

It's a bit like having a conversation with a dear friend, one that is full of value and warmth, and you both gain something from this as you both understand each other.

In business your customers are sharing your awesomeness, which is otherwise known as word of mouth marketing.

If you underutilize this you are missing out big time.

Understanding Your Customer Experience- Learning to master this skill

Your job is to become a master of this subject, and to learn to gather the data around it, so you can look at your current methods, processes and systems and adjust what is necessary in order for 'word of mouth marketing' to assist your strategy.

If your customer experience isn't something you are aware of or care about, you could end up failing quickly, so it is very serious, and a great way to manage this is to first put yourself in their shoes.

Note: You don't have to walk a mile in their shoes by the way! But as I said at the beginning, we all have customer experiences, as we are all customers, so it isn't rocket science really, because we know what it is like.

The next time you enter a coffee shop pretend that you are a mystery shopper in your mind from entering the door to leaving, and have fun with it. See how you feel.

If you want loyalty, retention, growth, free marketing and promotion, great reviews, exposure of brand awareness, referrals from positive comments and conversations, and you want them to have that great journey that flows, then become them.

Are you getting this?

Great, but how do you go about getting this right?

Well - you can become them and study them also.

Thus, you will need to look at the behavior of your customers and measure how effective 'what you do' is. You can ask questions and ask for feedback, and even on websites, you can ask the visitor to fill in surveys, polls, questionnaires and give you honest answers about how they feel about your site. If you work in a shop or own a shop then ask customers what they think about the products or services, and take note of what they might also like.

TIP: You can offer rewards, tokens, money off, vouchers or anything else in exchange for opinions and views.

It will also pay you to look at the benefits they experience through what you create.

Again - become them to see what this really means.

Use whatever tools you see fit for your customer, so it might be e-mail, person to person, old fashion phone calls, text messages and so on. Look at what people are saying on your Facebook fanpage, on twitter and on instagram, and have the courtesy to respond with solutions and answers.

Perhaps you need to train your team, partners and associates also to really grasp this also.

We cannot always know what to do though can we?

Sometimes we will just lose customers, and sometimes they may have even been quite loyal, but for whatever reason they disappear like David Blaine does from a glass box suspended above the Thames.

Other times S@@@ happens, we all know that, and we cannot really stop it either, but we can see if we can figure out WHY!

These things may help:

1. When asking questions you can also find out what kind of things your customer would love or prefer.
2. Perhaps you could tweak your choices, add or remove products or services
3. Test new ways of selling, and this doesn't mean that you have to just do whatever another asks, but you should consider opinions.

Of course, we cannot just change our entire business to suit one person, as it is just not realistic, but we can look at what might make their lives seemingly easier or even a little more exciting.

Try this yourself

The next time you buy something online, study the process or the interaction you become involved with. And do the same offline.

Take notes on what you would love to have seen or experienced.

Why might you complain?

Why might you go back?

Why might you go to another seller?

Why might you stay and become loyal?

Study your data, and see what seems to be a common behavior for you when buying, and also look at what your customers take action on in your business and see if there is a recurring theme that is not positive and that can be adjusted.

After all, if you ignore the relationships you have, customers feel that you don't care, but you have to become invested in them and in their experience, otherwise they will go elsewhere because these days there are many options, as we both know. And so in a world with more choice than you can shake a stick at, you have to be on the ball.

I should probably make the small point now though that customers are NOT always right! But you knew that right?

They are not always right, and they can be very toxic and abusive in some cases, so we also have to do our best to lower intensity and diffuse some situations, but also respond or reply when we need to stand up for our brand and business.

You may have seen the odd person totally tear a strip of a restaurant or bistro, or put down a brand or business and do so in aggressive ways, and so we may delicately determine our best course of action when this occurs, so I am not writing this post with rose tinted glasses on.

In business there will always be issues, complaints, refunds, responses, exchanges, etc etc. But it is how we handle that that matters.

TIP: Don't assume that your super fresh digital strategy can be left alone to handle irate customers. As without managing this, you risk losing a good customer. And so you cannot just set and forget everything, as you need to know what the responses are, and if that strategy makes things easy enough for your potential customer or existing customers to find resolutions.

Bear in mind that regardless of what is going on, your job is to try to make it as smooth as possible and to find resolutions quickly.

As you don't want a bad reputation or a bad name or brand just because you left it to your digital tool, or you lost your mind emotionally for 2 minutes.

Yes we must stand up for our hard work, great products and excellent customer service, but we must also be realistic when it comes to uncontrollable factors.

By the way; sometimes tech can be a royal pain in the A@@! WE ALL KNOW IT!

Going back to you and me being the customer and client, we already know what it is like to have exceptional experiences and awful experiences, so we are already experienced in this, and something I always do is take notes on what I would improve or change if I was such and such company.

We are always observing and interacting with businesses, so we know this, and it is often plain and simple to see where there may be innovations, adjustments and serious changes.

Understanding Your Customer Experience- Basic psychology

Think about your greatest memories, falling in love, going on great adventures, cuddling and spending time with loved ones, and think about memorable experiences that were above and beyond what you experienced prior to that particular event or situation, and you will see clearly that you feel good when others bother with you.

Don't we feel good when we feel important, interested in and appreciated?

Yes of course, we all do. It truly is the little special things that matter.

Be that person that makes another's day. And I'm not suggesting that you vomit sunshine over them and get all gushy, or even fake, I am saying care, and consider and think from their point of view, and you will gain tremendous traction and growth through this simple (often free) act.

Are mother's always right?

Erm well, maybe not, but my mother always used to say this; 'It's how you serve them Greg!' Now my mother had sadly passed but her endless wisdom is always of great deep value to me, because I believe she was right in that 'how we serve' others will always determine what we get out of it.

Not that we should always give to receive, but because well, we tend to bring back to us what we give. If we care enough about how we write e-mails, how we write content on our sites, how we engage in real life and so on, we grow from it.

Because we create delight in others.

So, don't forget that whether you are a coffee house owner, a digital nomad or a vintage clothes store owner, you have an obligation to have in the fore front of your mind 1) what you are doing and if that is effective enough and 2) WHY you are doing it in the first place. Because, if you don't know why you are

doing it then no-one else will. And people can feel whether or not you are invested in what you do, as it matters to you.

Just because you have some kind of cool and relevant dating app or site, it doesn't mean you can just allow automation to do it all for you without caring about what the responses are. Whilst we need automation these days, we still need the right attention placed into that digital tool.

Let's face it; all tools are a way of assisting us in business outcomes, they are not the business.

Understanding Your Customer Experience - Is it easy to master?

We all know that it is easy for a customer to leave.

Decisions these days can be made very quickly, as choices are abundant, so if XYZ Pisses me off, I will go to ABC instead.

It is a world where we easily ditch what we don't want and move on.

In fact - studies show that it is way tougher now to create loyalty, because there is so much on offer.

This means that we have to be especially aware and focused if we wish to keep those repeat customers.

Consider this; Lets say that you have an awesome stylish website ok, well great and good on ya, BUT does it do the job right? Remember that no matter how good something looks or appears to be, it doesn't mean it is easy to use. I don't know about you but I get fed up with be taken to many places, I want a simple transaction, and I don't want to be bothered with all kinds of videos, pop ups or anything that get's in the way of that.

Sure, you can create offers on the way to the transaction, and this is smart, but you don't want to make life hard for another.

Therefore, just like in a store, don't make people feel lost or confused.

If you own a bricks and mortar business like a Pizzeria for example, ensure you enable the customer to understand what to do when they enter. There is nothing worse than standing by a 'stand here and wait to be served' sign, only for the person way back in the bar to say, 'you don't have to wait there, you can just come in and order a drink.' Sure, it may sound like kindergarten stuff here, but it can be annoying.

Understanding Your Customer Experience- And Expectations

I remember walking into a up market gift store, and I wandered around taking in the lovely smells, sights and general feel of the place only to find that they weren't open!

They left the door open and people wandered in, and what made it worse was that a well mannered young person said, sorry we are closed you will have to put back what you picked up to buy.

Do you think I went back? Do you think I told others my experience? Do you think this unhelpful even neglectful act was a bit lame considering all the effort they had put into place?

All I wanted to do was to perhaps buy something, but no-one cared about me, so my expectations were ignored and shot down in flames.

Just think it through, and don't miss the details, as others will won't.

We can be sure that a wandering civilian will pick up on something you have neglected to bother considering.

So always look at what they expect to be able to experience.

Life can be hard enough when you go into an apple store only for smart arsed tech nerds to ask you stuff you have no clue about.

That's often why you take your apple product to them though isn't it?

For them to tell you what it means. And so you and I shouldn't really need to know some things, as their role is to show you, support you and guide you.

We expect that!

To be fair to my local apple store, I do receive exceptional attention I must say.

But I'm sure you get my drift when I say ALLOW customers to understand easily what is going on around them to buy, and make their life easier, as they shouldn't need to know how everything works, just because it's cool to know all the latest fads and trends.

Now wait a minute, I'm not saying we have to treat customers like 6 year olds, but I am saying we should treat them like they are at least 6 1/2 okay.

Just kidding , but life is busy as we all know, people are confused, the world is out of control, and so the last thing a tired and weary 6 1/2 year old needs is more complication. Capiche?

Apply the idea of 'ease' to products, services, design, displays, marketing, promotion, functionality and just about everything else that a customer experiences.

To inspire you

[52 Customer Satisfaction Quotes By Zonka](#)

[What is a buyer persona and why is it so important by Socialmedia today](#)

[Customer Experience by EY.com](#)

I hope this has helped you in some way, and if you didn't enjoy this then please do feel free to give me feedback through a message, as I will be more than happy to hear your opinions and take them on board. (I am really real!)

[CONTACT ME HERE](#)

Until next time my friend!

P.s, that's me below, and yes I wear sunglasses indoors. Plus I'm mostly smiling and building relationships. Just not in my sleep!

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