

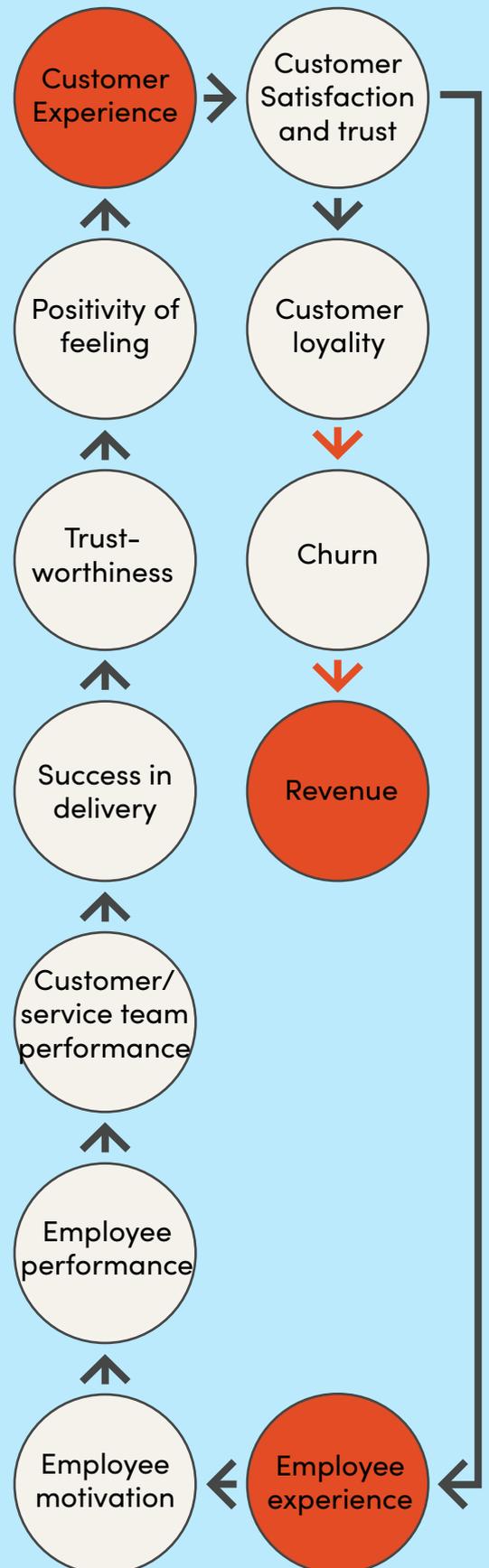
Modern approaches to engage employees for better customer experience

Customer experience has cleared its way to be an important factor of business success, and consequently many leaders consider manners to empower and engage their workforce. Investing in employee experience captures the full potential of human capital to increase output for customers. Employees can be better engaged by concretizing their influence on the end consumer, appreciating them accordingly, and creating an organisation operating on trust. These approaches are necessary components for organisational success now and in the future.

Introduction

Customer experience and its importance on business performance is widely recognized, and customer journeys and touchpoints are emphasized in many organisations.^[1] ^[2] Still, these encounters are ultimately formed by employees. Employees conduct the research and development of new products and services, they are in direct contact with customers, nurture relationships and much more. However, only 15% of full-time employees report being engaged.^[3] By crafting a brilliant employee experience, companies can motivate and engage employees to perform top quality to your customers. Success with customers in turn promotes good employee experience and engagement to form a positive reinforcing loop.

While upper management commitment is critical to both employee experience and customer centricity, this white paper concentrates on three actionable methods to increase employee engagement to provide the best customer experience. These approaches are making the role and influence of employees in customer experience specific and clear, acknowledging and recognizing the worth of employees, and fostering trust to succeed as a cooperative whole. Implement these means to encourage effective engagement to work and customer results.



Clarify and enhance employee participation

The simplest way to increase employee engagement is to clarify what the employee should be doing and why. Start by concretizing how employees can influence outcomes by their work and what benefits these advancements bring to customers, for example through user stories. Sometimes the effect of one's work toward the customer can seem far-fetched at first, but even indirect processes can have a huge impact on customer experience. Take for instance machinery maintenance, which ensures timely orders to

The increased clarity of causalities and their evolution creates everyone a more holistic view of customer-driven business.

customers by preventing unwanted disruptions to production, or the roles of IT and analytics department, which provide accurate insights for customer representatives to manage partnerships better. Leading companies are committed to align all organisational levels to customer objectives with customer-focused KPIs.^[4]

Targets guide actions and metrics define the development employees' efforts have produced to further enhance engagement. Even when workers far from client interfaces would know how their work influences customer experience, the distance can blur the transparency of impact which decreases commitment. Measuring and following the progress makes this substantially more tangible. Consequently, the increased clarity of causalities and their evolution create everyone a more holistic view of customer-driven business.

This sophisticated understanding should not be wasted but put to work by distributing decision-making. Your people are the best professionals in their own areas of expertise – hence often called experts – and deserve tools to implement change on their respective level. In addition, the possibility of adjusting and making improvements establishes control

and autonomy, which in turn builds intrinsic motivation.^[5] Employees have a higher sense of ownership to their job when they have the power to advance their initiatives. They take responsibility and improve their work to generate better customer experience, which should be appreciated accordingly.

Acknowledge and appreciate every employee

First and foremost, every employee needs a pertinent amount of owed respect; being individually acknowledged ^[6] Each employee must feel respected and that they belong to the larger whole starting from greetings to honest communication. This sense of belonging can be additionally strengthened with non-work-related activities, such as summer parties, hobby clubs and Communities of Practice.

Observe and pay attention to the norms of your environment to display respect adequately, as the nuances of perceived respect vary between people and cultures.^[6]

Moreover, employees should be recognized personally. Directed attention and incentives to individuals for their achievements demonstrate that organisation members' efforts are valued and kept integral to success; key ingredients for enhanced engagement. Management must remember that non-financial encouragement trumps cash bonuses in most cases.^[8] This recognition should be consistently aligned with the customer objectives and performance. Incentives signal things that are valued in an organisation and guide individual behaviour toward those concepts.^[7] Altering reward customs in different situations or with different people convey ambiguity, sometimes even dishonesty. These elements build a supportive and engaging culture where both performance and cooperation are principles.

Build and foster trust throughout the organisation

The aforementioned approaches generate confidence in the organisation and employees

themselves. Trust enables people to work with each other while uncertainty lies on counterparts' intentions and possible outcomes. High organisational trust is connected to, for example, increased motivation, improved strategy execution, and higher employee engagement.^{[9][10]} Building a working environment where people can depend on each other may seem obvious, but many institutions lack necessary cohesion and cooperation. Organisations that have achieved an empowered state execute a transparently shared purpose and vision where everyone understands they are helping others.^{[10][11]} Trust is crucial to organisations as networks and complex systems, where responsibilities must be delegated and reallocated in a fluid manner.

Without trust necessary relationships are under severe tests in daily encounters. People begin to feel anxiety and high levels of scepticism when the required bonding agent melts away. Furthermore, employees are uncertain whether the organisation can meet its objectives. Questioning of potential outcomes in both personal interactions and large-scale operations diminishes the purpose of doing meaningful things, which results in an absence of engagement. These things will crawl into customer outcomes, and in worst cases lead to attitudes where employees will not trust the customers either. Trust, together with respect, are essentially required because the building blocks of organisational design will shape employees' behaviour at first, and then influence the quality delivered to customers.

What the future may hold

The increasing speed of innovation and shifting of customer preferences together with technological progress has urged changes in work and organisations. Algorithmic advances, largely expanded computing capabilities, and availability of data have led to many feats that have the majority buzzing about the future of employment.^[12] In response to these challenges, current organisational designs still favour stability and predictability, and ironically can sometimes serve the purpose of holding the structure together instead of operating toward the actual purpose.^[13] Many corporations have become hierarchical clusters that play against each other when reallocation of resources is required due to external

Ways to generate trust in the organisation^[11]:

- Recognize excellence
- Create achievable challenges
- Give people room to work by their own means
- Facilitate job crafting
- Share information extensively
- Initiate relationship building
- Assist personal growth
- Demonstrate vulnerability

developments. Most have probably noticed how change management fails as single 'problems' are tackled, or broken pieces are only moved around instead of changing existing paradigms.

More companies answer to the issues by transitioning to protect more of their core competencies and value drivers while flexibly acquiring and reallocating resources to fast-moving concerns.^[13] This could mean more volatile organisational structures that are truly shaping around the swiftly altering requirements and still fulfilling the original function. Only the necessary parts of the systems are tightly kept internal and even in these groups responsibilities change fluidly. This evokes discussions of the gig economy and Expertise as a Service, where workforce act as part-time specialists in temporary teams called for a particular task and dissolved after the issue has been settled.

Conclusion

Employees are the cornerstone of great customer experience. Improving employee experience raises engagement and the quality of customer journeys. Defining the purpose and metrics will clarify and increase the influence of employees. When your people are recognized and acknowledged accordingly, the desired direction is emphasized while the community strengthens. Finally, building a high organisational trust enables effective cooperation beyond silos. Whatever is the case with future outlooks, these aspects only strengthen the notion how important it is for the organisation members to understand the impact of their participation, be appreciated, and trust the system and overlaying purpose that strive the organisation and daily engagement. The thing that will not change is the demand for great customer experience.

References:

- [1] Grønholdt et al. (2015), "Customer experience management and business performance". International Journal of Quality and Service Sciences, 7(1), pp. 90-106.
- [2] Zolkiewski et al. (2017), "Strategic B2B customer experience management: the importance of outcomes-based measures". Journal of Services Marketing, 31(2), pp. 172-184.
- [3] Gallup, Inc. (2017) "The State of the Global Workplace". GALLUP PRESS, New York, NY. [Online] Available at: <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/238079/state-global-workplace-2017.aspx>.
- [4] MIT Sloan Management Review, (2018) "Leading With Next-Generation Key Performance Indicators". [Online] Available at: <https://sloanreview.mit.edu/projects/leading-with-next-generation-key-performance-indicators/>.
- [5] Meng, L. and Ma, Q. (2015) "Live as we choose: The role of autonomy support in facilitating intrinsic motivation". International Journal of Psychophysiology, 98(3), pp. 441-447.
- [6] Rogers, K. (2018) "Do Your Employees Feel Respected?", Harvard Business Review, July-August.
- [7] Gagné, M. and Deci, E. (2005) "Self-determination theory and work motivation". Journal of Organizational Behavior, 26(4), pp. 331-362.
- [8] Dewhurst, M. et al. (2009), "Motivating people: Getting beyond money", McKinsey & Company. [Online]. Available: <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/organization/our-insights/motivating-people-getting-beyond-money>.
- [9] Nestic A. and Lalic, D. (2016) "The Impact of Trust on Job Performance in Organisations", Management - Journal for theory and practice of management, 21(81), pp. 27-34.
- [10] PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP (2015) "Understanding the value and drivers of organisational trust". [Online] Available at: <https://www.pwc.com/my/en/assets/trust/trust-insight-understanding-the-value-and-drivers-of-organisational-trust.pdf>.
- [11] Paul, Z. et al. (2018) "The Neuroscience of High-Trust Organisations". Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research, 70(1), pp. 45-58.
- [12] Manyika, J. (2017) "What is the Future of Work?". McKinsey & Company. [Online] Available at: <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/future-of-organizations-and-work/what-is-the-future-of-work>.
- [13] Forrester Research, Inc. (2018) The Future of Organizations. [Online] Available at: <https://go.forrester.com/key-topics/future-of-organizations/>