

# ARE YOU MEASURING YOUR REAL CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE?

What has buying a new pair of shoes got to do with customer feedback and experience – Colin Shaw has the answer



When you ask your customer for feedback on their experience what aspect of their Customer Experience are they referring to when they give you their assessment?

Let me explain by drawing an analogy. When you buy a new pair of shoes they may rub and produce a blister the first time you wear them. Think what is happening in this process. As you put them on they feel fine. Then, as you start to walk in them, they rub.

It's only a tiny irritation at first that is registered in your subconscious mind but it has not reached the threshold we call 'pain' so the subconscious mind does not disturb the conscious mind. It is only when this rubbing reaches a point when pain is produced that you think 'Ouch, these new shoes are hurting'.

## There's the rub

The important point here is the rubbing started to occur way before pain was produced. The same applies to a Customer Experience.

When a Customer starts an experience with an organisation there are many things that can be subconscious irritations before the irritation turns into an emotion of frustration or annoyance. For example, imagine a Customer who calls Customer service:

1. They can't find the number
2. The number is not a free phone number
3. There are many layers in the voice menu system
4. The voice menu system does not have clear options
5. They have to wait for the call to be answered
6. When the call is answered the agent is clearly in a hurry
7. The agent is not friendly
8. The agent is not helpful
9. The agent doesn't answer your question.

In the example above it could be that when the call is finally answered the agent is not friendly. This is the final straw and from this point the Customer emotionally thinks 'this is a poor experience'.

## Cumulative effect

Most organisations ask Customers to fill out a survey at the end of their experience. The danger is that if you ask 'what did you think about this experience' or 'what made you give us this score', do you really think that Customers will list out all these aspects? Of course not. In fact, like the rubbing of your shoes at the beginning of the process, many people won't be conscious of this causing an irritation it is the cumulative effect that becomes the issue.

In addition many organisations ask 'What did you think of the agent? The danger is the agent will not just be judged on their personal performance but the experience that precedes them. The customer is entering the experience already with their 'shoes rubbing' and feeling irritated. In this frame of mind they start to look for other signs to confirm their thoughts.

## True feelings count

The reality is that many organisations just put a band aid/plaster over the bits of their experience that are 'rubbing' rather than dealing with the root cause. To do that you have to break the measurement down into parts of the experience to see how a customer is feeling at each of these points. It's also critical to look at the cumulative effect.

Finally, have you ever felt unhappy but can't pinpoint the reason why? The unfortunate reality is sometimes Customers can't tell you why they are feeling a certain way. Or more problematic, they tell you something that is not true just to give you a reply. As you go through the experience we have discovered it becomes critical to use psychological techniques to understand what is happening to discover a customer's true feelings. ■



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