



Timely Information for Personal Success

Building Outstanding Customer Service

By Carlos Dominguez

In a world where buyers are overloaded with content, ads, and purchase options, delivering amazing customer experiences is paramount to survival. In fact, 86% of business leaders say customer experience is foundational to their success. Still, knowing that is one thing, while actually executing those experiences is another. Here are some tools for building a superior customer-service strategy.

Think Beyond Marketing

I recently had a meeting with a marketing executive from an airline. I asked him how his marketing campaigns were going. He proudly showed me one of the company's latest ads—a clever video that had accrued tens of thousands of views and hundreds of comments.

I urged him to take a closer look at the comments. It turns out that most of them were from customers frustrated about delays, overbooked flights and other service-related issues—a growing list of customers telling others not to do business with the airline.

This brand probably spent a lot of money making that video. But it's their customers—their very pissed-off customers—who are doing the marketing for them.

In a world where 3 billion people are connected to social and openly sharing their experiences with brands, marketing no longer happens in isolation. The things that happen in marketing and the things

that happen across the street in care are inextricably linked now. *Care is the new marketing.*

Channel the Voice of Your Customers

Your customers are talking, they're tweeting, they're posting and they're livestreaming. They're sending information about themselves and their interests into the world.

The onus is on us, as brands, to listen up and to turn these various conversations into meaningful decisions that improve the customer's experience. To accomplish this, companies must be properly

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Healthy Recipe: Black Bean Breakfast Bowl

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 avocado, peeled and sliced
- 4 eggs, beaten
- 1 15-ounce can black beans, drained and rinsed
- ¼ cup salsa

NUTRITIONAL VALUE:

- Calories per serving: 625
- Protein: 27.9 g.
- Carbohydrates: 46.6 g.
- Sodium: 1,158 mg.
- Fat: 38.8 g.

DIRECTIONS:

- ➊ Heat olive oil in a small pan over medium heat. Cook and stir eggs until eggs are set, 3 to 5 minutes.
- ➋ Place black beans in a microwave-safe bowl. Heat on high in the microwave until warm, about 1 minute.
- ➌ Divide warmed black beans between two bowls.
- ➍ Top each bowl with scrambled eggs, avocado, and salsa.

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Questions and Answers

Does Work Cause Death?

Q: I recently heard that workplace stress doesn't just affect productivity and morale, it can actually cause death? Can this be true? Could you elaborate?

A: That's exactly what Stanford professor Jeffrey Pfeffer says in his new book, "*Dying for a Paycheck*." Pfeffer's book is built around a 2015 paper, which said more than 120,000 deaths a year and roughly 5 to 8 percent of annual health care costs may be attributable to how U.S. companies manage their workforces. A core argument of Pfeffer: Instead of adding wellness programs or yoga classes, companies need to focus more on the management practices that lead to substantial health issues, such as layoffs, job insecurity, toxic cultures, and long hours. Check out his book, or the *Washington Post* article, to learn more. ■

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equipped to not only capture insights from billions of online interactions, but also to analyze and distribute these insights.

For example, at Microsoft's Social Command, listening is the first step in crafting memorable customer experiences. The team's social listening software pulls in about 150 million conversations each year. After artificial-intelligence filters scan and deactivate all the irrelevant conversations—someone cleaning the "windows in their office"—5 million are handled personally. The social team directly reaches out to customers with personalized messages and custom-made content.

Microsoft is creating a truly holistic experience for its customers, and it all starts with the simple act of listening to the voice of the customer.

"... and it all starts with the simple act of listening to the voice of the customer."

Summary

The rules of marketing have changed. The rise of social and digital media has reinvented how people learn about brands, form opinions, buy products, seek support and give feedback. Now that customers are more connected and empowered than ever before, their expectations have evolved and increased.

To survive and thrive in our digitally disrupted, customer-driven world, brands must undergo a marketing transformation. ■

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