



***Notes From Lisa Cathie on Employee Satisfaction:***

Many organizations have made or are planning to make a substantial investment in their environment, technology and tools, and are considering their next step a key priority. This major initiative begins with measuring the customer experience through employees. As companies realize that customer satisfaction isn't enough, they recognize that customer engagement is linked to employee engagement.

What are we really promising through advertising and brand positioning? What is the reality of that promise? Our marketing dollars may be attracting customers but how are we dealing with the masses? As customers react to a promotion or message, they still need to be handled and respected for their individual needs.

The retail channel offers the greatest opportunity and is driven by emotion. We should not confuse our outreach efforts that are supported by technology with what truly retains customers. For example, CRM technology provides measures and analysis. Results are quantitative but not indicative of the customer experience. CRM can suggest to you who may be at risk, but not resolve issues, serve as retention adhesive, or reward. A CRM strategy supported by technology is essential, however, in moving an organization forward to achieve greater results in terms of retention and growth (the bottom line).

It's important how we utilize our tools and environment and integrate how our employees serve as the true representation of our company. The execution of a strategy must net positive outcomes not only in measurable results but also in terms of employee commitment and customer advocacy. Gallup's "Customer Experience" survey shows that consumer banking only connects with 37% of its customers.

Even as sales performance is managed, a sales process requires a seamless delivery method, which employees subscribe to in order to bond with the customer. The value has to be evident, the coordination from every level at the branch needs to be smooth, and the attention, respect, and level of urgency, coupled with the resourcefulness and confidence displayed by employees are critical. Satisfied, but not completely engaged employees, may not have the ability to WOW the customer.

Customer feedback and peer management & company assessments can measure these types of results. The success of the impact of any survey indicates strength in terms of the organization's ability to create programs that stem from feedback, that increase performance, and the (cultural) integration of these programs for the purpose of solidifying employee loyalty as well as the customer experience, which maintains the integrity and value of their findings.

With the right skill set and motivation, employees thrive on turning customers into advocates for the organization by offering a value-based proposition that resonates with clients. An organization that is committed to delivering a fantastic customer experience is committed to developing and empowering employees to provide this value-based sales approach.

In summary, it's not the environment or the technology that turns a mercenary into an advocate; it's the employee. If an execution strategy is really working, employees control results. Committed employees are the differentiating factor in terms of the customer experience.

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