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THE AMAZEMENT REVOLUTION

HOW TO WOW

68 EFFORTLESS WAYS
TO MAKE EVERY
CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE
AMAZING

ADRIAN SWINSCOE

PRAISE FOR *HOW TO WOW*

'These 68 ideas aren't effortless. Not at all. They're effortful. They take work and it's worth it. Worth it because your lazy competitors are just standing by waiting for you to make a difference.'

Seth Godin – Author of *The Icarus Deception*

'An engaging, lively, and intensely practical guide to help put customer experience at the very centre of your business.'

Nick Chater – Professor of Behavioural Science, Warwick Business School and Co-Founder, Decision Technology Ltd

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Shep Hyken – New York Times Bestselling Author of *The Amazement Revolution*

'Truly lives up to its title. Packed with powerful, effective easy-to-implement tips that will transform your business into a genuine customer service champion.'

Dee Blick – FCIM Chartered Marketer and #1 Bestselling Marketing Author

'I love the way this book challenges management fads and lazy thinking and puts people at the heart of making businesses great.'

Guy Letts – Founder and CEO, CustomerSure

'Full of practical ideas that show you how to transform your business by standing in your customer's shoes. Adrian has given us a road map, now we need to act on it.'

Bernadette Jiwa – Brand Story Strategist and Bestselling Author

'Swinscoe offers practical, easy-to-implement tips on how to attract, engage and keep customers happy. Well worth reading.'

Steve Abernethy – Executive Chairman and Co-Founder, SquareTrade

'In *How to Wow*, Adrian has written a magnificent how to, based on interviews, data and his own down-to-earth knowledge of business. Drawing out the factors and attitudes that go into creating a fabulous customer experience, each of the 68 insights can be cherry-picked and you are bound to learn something.'

Minter Dial – President and Founder of The Myndset Company and Non-Executive Director at lastminute.com group

HOW TO USE IT

It's easier to talk about your business in the language of your industry. However, for customers that's not always the easiest way to understand and makes engaging with them harder.

Here are some questions to help you figure out whether or not you are speaking your customers' language and what you can do about it:

- Are you operating in an industry that is technical (even a little bit)?
- Are you speaking in a language that your customer understands?
Or, even better, are you talking the customers' language? If you were to show a sample of your communication with your customers to someone outside your business or industry, your grandmother say, would they understand it?
- How do you know if you are doing this consistently? This approach takes time and effort and, so, when in a rush or when things get busy, it's normal for us to slip back into the language of our profession or, if you like, back into bad habits. So, keep an eye on this and regularly monitor if you are communicating in plain language.
- Want to find out what your customers think? Ask your customers if they understand what you say when you describe your business or service?

INSIGHT 23 NATURE ABHORS A VACUUM

Use this to help understand if you have any gaps in your communication with your customer and what impact they may be having.

In physics, there is a postulate called ‘horror vacui’, which translates as ‘Nature abhors a vacuum.’

In common and personal terms, this can be re-stated as: ‘In the absence of information, we make stuff up.’

This has a lot to do with how our mind works and when we have no new information our minds make stuff up as a result of our anxieties, fears, stresses and all sorts of other negative emotions.

This has particular relevance when it comes to the delivery of customer service. Businesses often face situations where they have nothing to report to their customers. However, just because they have nothing to report or no new information to share doesn’t automatically mean that their client or customer doesn’t want to hear from them or that they shouldn’t be in touch with them.

We can call these gaps ‘vacuums’ in your customers’ journey, and if left unaddressed they can cause the kind of emotions that we don’t want to be conjuring up in the minds of our customers or clients.

INSIGHT IN ACTION

Here’s an example of a ‘vacuum’ in practice:

Peter (name changed) is an old friend of mine and is in his early 40s. It came as a great shock to everyone when a few months ago he suffered a stroke.

After Peter was discovered following his stroke, he was rushed to hospital where he received treatment. A few weeks later everything was looking good and he was making good progress in his recovery. But, then something suspect showed up on a routine scan.

This is where it got uncomfortable for Peter.

Despite repeatedly asking for more information about his situation, what the scan showed and what the next steps were, Peter was told by the nurses that they had no information and we’re waiting to hear from the doctor.

So, he waited. And, then he waited.

While he was waiting, there was apparently a lot of consultation going on behind the scenes but he still wasn’t given any information

as to what progress they were making, what the next steps were, when the doctor would come and see him or what his prognosis was.

In fact, he waited for a few days for something to happen.

Then, a new scan was scheduled, conducted and was followed by another period of waiting. Eventually, the results came.

The whole waiting process left Peter feeling lost, frustrated, uncertain, anxious and very stressed.

In terms of the prognosis, Peter eventually met with his doctor who told him that they had found an inoperable tumour on his brain and he was immediately scheduled for chemo and radiotherapy in order to try and shrink the tumour and prolong his life expectancy.

Peter's story illustrates how waiting for information, particularly at a sensitive or anxious time, can seem like a very long time and can have a huge impact on, in this case, a patient's experience.

In fact, research⁸ shows that in 'life-threatening situations, negative emotions can concentrate our attention on the passage of time and so make it seem longer than it really is'. Other research shows that this can be further compounded by our own efforts to take our minds off our emotions.

What is clear is that whilst they were busy analysing Peter's test results, his doctors lost sight of Peter during the process. They lost sight of how he was feeling during the times that he was waiting for news from them and how that had a huge impact on him and his overall experience.

It's true that, at times, waiting is part of a process and it cannot be avoided. However, what we can do is to be aware of how any periods of waiting affect our customers.

HOW TO USE IT

Whilst working hard to find a solution for a patient, client or customer, don't lose sight of how they might be feeling while they wait and what you could do to make their wait a bit easier. Think about their whole and actual experience.

Don't leave people hanging, keep them informed of what is going on and give them a clear idea of what is going to happen next and when it is going to happen. Even providing information about the ongoing process can fill the 'vacuum' and be just as helpful and comforting as the final answer. Finally, keep in mind that sometimes responses like 'there is no new information' or 'we have nothing to report yet' are still valuable to the customer, client or patient.

INSIGHT 24 BAD REVIEWS CAN BE GOOD

Use this to help reduce fears and anxieties that exist around bad reviews and how you can turn them into opportunities.

For consumers, reading and being influenced by reviews is now a fact of life. In fact, this is supported by research⁹ which shows that:

- 77% of UK consumers look at customer reviews before making a buying decision.
- 88% of consumers trust online reviews as much as personal recommendations.
- 90% of consumers claim that positive reviews influenced their buying decision making.
- 86% said that they were influenced by negative reviews.

But, many customers don't just look for good reviews, they also look for bad ones too as many are becoming suspicious of companies that only have good reviews. Jan Jensen, the former Chief Marketing Officer of Trustpilot, echoes this and says that he routinely looks for bad reviews when researching a new company.¹⁰ He learns more about a business by how they respond to negative feedback.

However, most businesses fret about bad reviews online and do their utmost to avoid them. But, the reality is that we have to get used to the idea that negative reviews and feedback are likely to come our way from time to time.

So, the important thing is not to ignore the negative reviews and feedback but to be ready to deal with them, respond to them and learn from them. Often, how we respond to complaints and negative feedback can show the side of our business that does not get seen or talked about much.

INSIGHT IN ACTION

Most customers are pragmatic and realise that sometimes things will go wrong.

So, going out of your way to show how you respond when things do go wrong can (assuming that you do it well) have a hugely positive effect on your reputation.

This is backed up by a brand loyalty study conducted in 2012 by ClickFox,¹¹ where they found that 40% of customers said that they were 'won over' by a company after the company exceeded their expectations when they resolved an issue with their purchase.

Moreover, TripAdvisor¹² in their research found that 87% of travellers had 'an improved opinion of a hotel after reading an appropriate management response to a bad review'.

Enough said.

HOW TO USE IT

No business is ever perfect all of the time. Therefore, there is a possibility that at some point you will receive a bad review.

Moreover, realise that some customers may be watching to see how you respond to bad reviews as well as looking at your good reviews as it's a good way to find out how good your service is when things go wrong.

So, when you receive a bad review don't do as many firms do: panic, ignore it, hope nobody will notice and then try to drown the bad review in more good reviews.

What you should do is respond as swiftly as you can and aim to resolve the problem as quickly and easily as possible. If you do, you just might keep that customer and win more in the process.

INSIGHT 25 REMOVE THE GRIT

Use this to help you identify and remove the small annoyances in your customer experience that distort the picture and always get remembered.

Often, in a bid to improve their customer service or experience, companies and brands find themselves just focusing on how they can add a delight or wow factor to their customer service or experience. In doing so, they tend to overlook the minor glitches or frustrations customers might have when they do business with them; they risk ignoring the very things that customers tend to remember.

It's a bit like walking to your next meeting or appointment and noticing that you have a piece of grit in your shoe. Now, you may be a bit pressed for time and the grit doesn't hurt so much that you have to stop to remove it. However, it's always there and once you arrive at your destination, what do you remember about your journey? The grit in your shoe, right?

That's all to do with how the memory works and the fact that we, generally, remember feelings, particularly annoyances and disappointments, better than anything else.

The great American poet and author, Maya Angelou, sums up this idea very well when she said:¹³

People will forget what you said. People will forget what you did. But, people will never forget how you made them feel.

INSIGHT IN ACTION

Ruter, the public transport body of Oslo, uses this principle in improving their customer experience and are continually investigating the things that annoy or irritate their customers. In fact, on realising the power of this insight, Ruter's CEO made a public announcement saying that Ruter's strategy from now on was to 'stop irritating you'.

Doing so has earned him and Ruter a large amount of respect and credibility in Norway.

In practice, Ruter have made a series of small changes in how they operate their business including changes like, while buses are waiting for the right time to depart, they now let their customers wait inside the bus rather than outside in the cold.¹⁴