



European Customer Experience World

By
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The European Customer Experience World conference was held at the Radisson, Heathrow Airport on the 20th and 21st May. The focus was 'delivering a great customer experience while improving operational performance'. Here are just some of the case studies outlined at the conference...



Mends focused on how having a clear vision leads to engaged staff and therefore a better experience for customers.

Why is a clear vision important?

A company's vision needs to recognise the link between the brand, the people and the customers. (below picture of vision triangle) People are key to delivering that brand proposition to customers, so they need to understand the company's vision and their objectives need to be aligned to it. Articulating a clear vision will better engage them in delivering the required result.



Mends adds that a company's vision should be part of everything people do and be relevant to everyone. The vision should also be tangible, practical and understandable, with the acid test being....does everyone know it?

What have been the benefits of engaging staff?

Coca Cola's vision is to be the best for beverage sales and for customer service.

Their strategy seems to have paid off, the results of their external and internal customer surveys have both seen Coca Cola rated as number one.

Other tangible measures of Coca Cola's success are staff turnover rates of less than 10% and staff engagement scores of just under their target of 65%. Mends asserted that most businesses that are performing well have staff that are engaged over 65%.



Hawthorn stressed the importance of having the right staff in your business to satisfy your customers' needs and motivating people to perform. He also talked about the importance of listening to customers, especially in the current economic downturn.

How do Barclays Commercial find the right people?

Like some other companies, Barclays recruit for attitude, they want people who want to help customers, not just those who go through the motions. Anyone who applies for a job at Barclays Commercial gets a DVD of what it's like to work there.

How do Barclays Commercial keep staff?

Hawthorn told us of a range of benefits offered by Barclays Commercial. As well as flexible working, there are a range of more creative benefits that Hawthorn says are cost neutral to the business, but add value for staff. For example, they offer a holiday club for children at half term, which is funded partly by staff and partly by the local council. This has solved the problem of staff having to take holiday at half term so has evened out requested

holiday time amongst staff. Other facilities and services offered on work premises are health services such as massage through to car washing and the provision of organic food. All of these are paid for by staff, but Barclays have organised them.

Hawthorn also stressed the importance of communication in keeping staff engaged and motivated. They hold daily team communications with staff in the form of a dialogue, with latest news and discussion points. In these they also discuss any customer problems or complaints.

How have Barclays Commercial listened to customers?

They ran focus groups where they asked customers what was important to them. As well as some predictable answers, Hawthorn says they got some more surprising answers. Rather than the speed of getting through, resolving queries and empowerment of staff were found to be critical to customers.

What have they done with the feedback from customers?

Barclays shared the focus group findings with their staff, changed their operating model and rebuilt their complaints process, using the results. They have focussed staff on getting it right first time; which has resulted in a significant change in the inbound/outbound mix of calls. Based on the customer feedback, Barclays see complaints management as fundamental to driving up customer satisfaction so they give any complaints customers the contact number of a senior person rather than delegating down.

What have been Barclays Commercial's successes?

Barclays have won awards such as European Call Centre of the year in 2005 and 2007. Hawthorn also quoted results such as sickness rates of less than 1% per day and a 3% attrition rate, as well as improved customer satisfaction results, agent productivity rates and reduced service costs. They also haven't missed any service levels in 2 years.



Brennan shared how and why they have measured the customer experience at Leaseplan

Why is service important?

Brennan asserted that in the car leasing market you can't differentiate on product and cost, so you need to differentiate on service. Customer experience is therefore at the forefront of their business success – they need to value add for customers to differentiate their service in these economic times. He says that it is critical to get insights in how to balance operational efficiency and deliver a better customer experience. Leaseplan are therefore interested in knowing what it is that they currently do that customers aren't interested in/bothered about. Conversely, what they don't do that customers would put a value on/pay for.

How have staff been engaged in customer service delivery and what have been the benefits of this?

All staff have targets and reward schemes linked to customer service delivery, including those at a senior level. Leaseplan have also worked at communicating to staff the impact of customer service and have created storyboards to illustrate the difference between good and great customer service scenarios. Fundamentally, Brennan says staff should be empowered to answer the question; *'why should I choose your business?'*. Every department also has to have a plan of how to get from good to great within three years.

Brennan told us that comparison of their four business areas reveals that the best businesses for staff engagement have also increased their market share the most.

The challenge of engaging third parties in improving customer service delivery

Brennan spoke of the challenge of having so much of their business delivered by third parties. To ensure third parties are just as committed to customer service, they have quarterly accreditation reviews and annual meetings at a senior level to discuss service delivery. Third parties are also strictly vetted and have a performance-related pay scheme. In summary, even though suppliers are harder to control, Brennan maintains that engaging with suppliers at the right level and clarifying SLAs and objectives has worked.



Rowan spoke about how they have reviewed customer contact channels to improve both the customer experience and operational efficiency

How has segmenting customers and their needs underpinned Hilton's strategy?

Rather than simply trying to reduce costs by pushing more customers booking hotel rooms to the internet, Hilton have segmented customers according to their differing needs and also according to their profitability. Their strategy has been to drive each guest to the most profitable channel whilst offering a differentiated service through each. For example, they have tried to encourage appropriate customers to book via the internet including those with more experience of booking and those who are less profitable, such as travel agents and staff using their discount to book a room.

However, for those customers who need

more information about the hotel and the location, the telephone channel is more appropriate. More profitable customers are also encouraged to use the phone channel as this allows opportunities for Hilton to up-sell and cross-sell.



Mostari demonstrated T-Mobile's instant customer feedback tool and how this has benefited their organisation

What are the benefits of instant customer feedback?

T-Mobile needed to overcome the cost challenge of getting customer feedback to the lowest level, as they have 4,000 customer service staff. These customer service agents have the most influence on improving the customer experience so it's vital to get feedback to those staff. The decision was made to use a text survey to get feedback from all customers who made contact with T-Mobile, this seemed to 'fit' well with T-Mobile customers too.

T Mobile feel that one of the benefits for customers of using text is that it is quick and easy for customers to give their feedback. Mostari also outlined other benefits; that they can contact customers quickly on the back of any problems raised and crucially, that it is part of agents' bonus scheme is based on the feedback on their performance from customers. T Mobile are also able to compile league tables of results at all levels, site, team and agent, in order to encourage competition and share best practice.

What have been the results?

There has been a month on month



increase in customer satisfaction and an increase in first call resolution (one of T-Mobile's KPIs). Mostari has also found that this type of feedback has increased agents' understanding and clarity of their impact on the customer experience.



Thaw told us how Barclays have used client feedback to drive customer service and retention strategies

How have Barclays used client feedback to improve the business?

Like Leaseplan, Barclays Stockbrokers have found that strong competition in their sector has meant it is increasingly difficult to differentiate on product and price, leaving service as an opportunity to differentiate themselves. Barclays chose to match their customer feedback method to the predominant channel of business, the internet. The advantage of this, Thaw says, was flexibility and real time feedback.

Barclays used this client feedback to turn measurement into action. They analysed the themes in the feedback, using these to identify root causes of advocacy/detraction and satisfaction/dissatisfaction. Like T-Mobile, they used the feedback to follow up on any issues or questions raised by clients, and even further than that, any opportunities highlighted to sell a product. Impressively, Barclays have calculated that they have retained £1.6 million worth of business by responding speedily to client dissatisfaction. They have also seen complaints and account closures reduce where they have fixed a process.

Thaw summarised by saying that Barclays

view is that the only way they can make money is by keeping their current clients, and they need customer insights to do this. The results of these insights have been improved client retention, advocacy and a positive impact on their bottom line.



Cripps shared Capital One's approach to measuring and improving quality within their call centres, by working to eliminate 'bad' calls

How did Capital One create an effective measure of quality?

Cripps pointed out that call centres are still predominantly managed on productivity rather than customer experience, probably because the former is easier to report because they are absolute measures and system generated. However, Cripps argues that relying solely on external customer satisfaction data can also be counterproductive because staff may avoid telling the customer 'bad news' that they are obliged to do for regulatory reasons. Plus, customers can be unhappy with the outcome of the call, for example because the staff member was unable to up their credit limit, and score the staff member low for this even though it is the company's decision.

To overcome these limitations, Capital One wanted one measure to be used operationally that was based on both internal and external feedback. Cripps believes that to be effective, an operational measure has to be derived from what staff are here to do, be timely and perhaps most importantly, staff need to

believe that they can positively influence the measure.

In line with this, Capital One based their new measure on three aspects of the call handling; first call resolution from an internal perspective (whether all the relevant things were actioned after the call), the end to end call from the customers' perspective and an internal regulatory compliance check. If staff achieved an acceptable standard in all three on a call then they would 'pass', but if any of the 3 was not good enough then the call would be a 'fail'. This was because Capital One found that there are negative costs associated with the three measures not happening, such as losing the customer's business.

What have been the results?

Capital One's system generates daily and weekly reports for each staff member including the details of any defects logged. The monthly data is examined across all agents to identify patterns and themes. Capital One also log why customers call in, as well as defect levels by call type. This information was used to feed into self-service design, so that customers are provided with the option to do certain functions online if they would prefer to.

Cripps summarised by reminding us that you get what you measure. The results of changing the operational measure have been an improvement in customer satisfaction, fewer repeat calls and a reduction in complaints that are due to agent error. **S**



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Favourite loyalty scheme: Boots Advantage, but she's lost her card at the moment so if anyone's got it please give it back.

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