

Good design leads to outstanding CX

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The Comcast-gate is still very much fresh in our memories. Thousands of opinions have been written about it, and shared (I did to – “Aggressive CC agents deliver outrageous CX”). The ones who nailed it are those who didn’t blame the employee, but the way the service model was built by the company.

In one of my latest posts (“You don’t buy customer loyalty... You earn it”) I point out that the delivery of a great Customer Experience is first and foremost dependent on the design of a good model. One that will allow, even the most junior or less apt / capable employee, to deliver an outstanding service.

We all had many bad experiences with contact centre agents. And we obviously got angry with them. The thing is we were calling because we had a problem, and the way we were (mis)treated by the contact centre agent made it even worse. Naturally we blamed it on him, because he is the one dealing with us.

But this is what is happening in the other side of the line: the contact centre agent is looking at three screens and flicking through tens of applications (KB, CRM, ERP, OMS, etc...) trying to find the solution or the answer for our enquiry/issue, regarding that one particular product/service (out of the hundreds his company provides).

When an employee is delivering a poor Customer Experience it is probably not his fault. It is more likely to be because the company set him up to fail. The service model was poorly designed. Sometimes it might have even started well, but the addition of new services, products or channels led to more policies, processes, procedures, systems... which increased the complexity of the job.

Believe me, I have been in many contact centres, and this is what I have seen in most of them. A few years ago I also had the opportunity to be part of a project in a telecom company, where we were building a CRM system for the sales force. The system was so complex that many times I thought “how can an average contact centre agent get his head around this system?”

These cases are prolific in Telecom companies, as they provide hundreds of products, services, bundles, etc. There is one American telecom company (not the same I mentioned above) whose

system is so complex that it took 12 months for a new employee to be completely proficient. But the truth was most of them left the company after 9 months (one can wonder why!).

The service model design must be good, in order to simplify the job, so that employees focus on the customer and his issue. The design of good IT systems is obviously part of that. A system that is user-friendly and easy-to-use can be swimmingly operated and free employees to focus on the customer and the service they are providing.

A good and well-designed IT system reduces the complexity of the job, and can even eliminate the need for long, intensive and costly training – consequently reducing costs for on-boarding and change management. An intuitive IT system can be operated with almost no experience and enables employees to do their job almost from day one.

Most companies tend to hold off great spending in the implementation of IT systems, dismissing the early design phase and jumping directly into the configuration of the software. They have not yet realised that a good design is exactly what will make the IT system simplify their employees' job, and hence enable them to deliver an outstanding Customer Experience.

