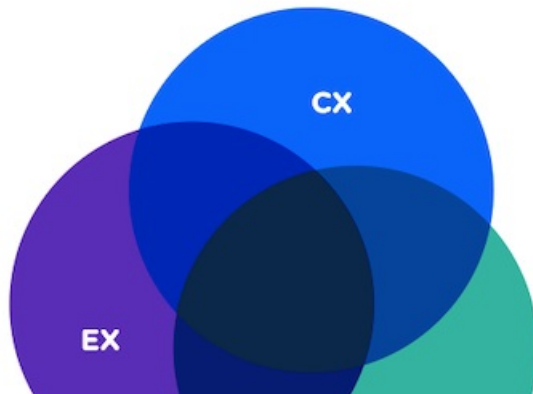


COLUMNS

Voice of employee is brand's greatest customer experience asset

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Listening to the voice of the employee is key to deliver good customer experience. Image credit: InMoment

By **Paul Warner**

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In 2020, the need for voice of the customer (VoC) technology is no longer a question for forward-thinking luxury brands.

Empowered by the right tools, brands can finally understand what their customers want, where they can improve, and how to best refine their strategies for the future.

But even as they make strides to listen to their customers better, brands might be ignoring a voice that is just as critical: the voice of the employee.

The voice of the employee (VoE) is a fundamental part of improving any customer experience, since employees have on-the-ground insights into the brand's strengths and weaknesses.

The VoE is even more crucial in the luxury space where customer-facing associates play an outsized role in facilitating sales and managing relationships.

Unfortunately, many luxury retailers underestimate the impact of the VoE, or even resist tracking the VoE either because of complacency with an "above average" eNPS (employee net promoter score) or because they fear a negative eNPS will leave them in a bad place with stakeholders.

Luxury brands that neglect their employees' insights will suffer the consequences.

Employees offer a holistic, comprehensive view into the customer experience

Brands understood the importance of customer feedback long before any of today's VoC technology was on the market.

As customers see more opportunities to share feedback either directly to a brand, to friends and family, or on social media brands have more access to their thoughts than ever before.

In reality, by the time a brand sees a potential problem through any of these channels, the causes of the problem are already entrenched in the organization and can be difficult to identify.

That is where employees come in.

Employees of luxury brands not only observe the everyday issues customers experience, but they likely know where the problem originates and why it is occurring.

For example, there could be a number of reasons why a loyal shopper complains he did not get the VIP treatment he expects from a luxury brand.

For example, maybe the location he frequents is badly understaffed. Or maybe employee turnover led to a lapse of knowledge about his previous history with the brand. Or a wider employee training issue exists that contributes to lackluster customer experiences.

Even the most reliable VoC strategy cannot identify the root cause of a problem as effectively as one that incorporates the insights of employees.

A strong approach to VoE allows brands to more clearly understand what makes customers stay, what makes them defect, and which broken processes and tools negatively impact the customer experience.

Brands need consistent and clear processes to harness the VoE

It is impossible to listen to employees without an intentional approach and the right tools.

Just like VoC solutions, VoE technology not only gathers employee insights effectively, but analyzes data so patterns can be more easily identified.

With the right VoE tech in place, luxury brands can learn which organizational weaknesses must be addressed as a whole and which occur on more local levels.

Additionally, VoE solutions ensure that brands actually follow through on what they have learned from employees.

It is one thing to ask employees what they think. It is another to implement real change from these insights.

If brands expect employees to invest the time to share feedback, they need to hold up their end of the bargain by acting on that feedback and clearly communicating that employees' voices are heard.

A proper VoE solution helps brands use feedback wisely so their employees remain their best asset for improving the customer experience.

THE LUXURY SPACE is at a crossroads.

With some predicting that **almost a fifth of all personal luxury sales will take place online by 2025**, brands need to find new tactics to engage and retain their most loyal shoppers.

In this period of upheaval, brands that cannot listen to their employees will not last.



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