

MULTICHANNEL

Switching from a brand-centric company to a customer-centric culture

June 28, 2012



By RACHEL LAMB

NEW YORK – Marketers need to focus on a single brand vision to complete their customer service cycle, which means an emphasis on cross-channel support and asking customers what they want, according to a speaker at the [2012 Forrester Customer Experience Forum](#).

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Brands may think that they know what consumers want, but the only real way to service customers is to ask. FedEx revamped its business model by focusing on what the customer wants, rather than asking them to conform to the company.

“We are built around a single brand focus,” said Laurie Tucker, senior vice president of corporate marketing at [FedEx Services](#), Dallas, TX. “Because the customers have changed, their demand on us was simple – do it our way, not your way.

“How do we go from a model from the customer conforms to us to a proactive alignment with the customers’ needs?” she said. “We deliver a seamless, designed cross-channel experience.”

Express changes

When FedEx started to ask customers where they were dissatisfied with their service, they were surprised by the results.

“We were disappointing customers in new ways that we were not prepared for,” Ms. Tucker said.

Therefore, the company launched “customer dissatisfaction” research. FedEx asked customers where their negative experience was associated and at what particular touchpoints.



Ms. Tucker at the Forrester forum

By doing this, FedEx was able to measure where the worse satisfaction was to prioritize the amount of revenue at risk.

FedEx found out that the No. 1 issue that it had was cross-channel marketing. Since FedEx has many brands – FedEx Express, FedEx Freight and FedEx Ground, for example – there were many Web sites on different servers.

Because of this, customers were frustrated that they did not have a clear and seamless experience across all channels. The brand would never have figured this out if they did not ask customers, Ms. Tucker said.

Therefore, FedEx was required to step customer experience up a notch.

Now, the company has customer experience steering committee meetings once every two months, where the chairman discusses with employees the metrics of customer

experience.

The main conclusion was that there is no such thing as customer-caused error. Rather, it is the company's job to remove all causes of error for a successful customer experience, Ms. Tucker said.

"A brand is the subtotal of all of the experiences that you have with a brand," Ms. Tucker said. "We updated the attributes of the stuff we worked towards because we want to stay in touch with our customers.

"What they really care about is the ability to be personally connected, to meet their requirements and commit to excellence, not just those defined by the company but by the customer," she said. "We are solving problems and being proactive about it."

CSR for CRM

Another major component of customer experience is engaging with consumers.

Through research, FedEx realized that customers care about companies that care about more than making money.

Since FedEx delivers globally, it burned a lot of fossil fuels with its jets and used gas-guzzling vans and trucks. To make a change, the company switched to smaller jets that use less fuel and are now using hybrid and energy-efficient vehicles, per Ms. Tucker.

Therefore, the FedEx launched a multichannel cause-related campaign that flaunted its environmentally-conscious values.

The campaign spanned a partner support with the Arbor Day Foundation, social media, in-store displays, a Facebook application, a USA Today print banner ad and a television and digital pre-roll.

Enchanted Forest video

In addition, FedEx is selling the frog "Bo" from its video at its FedEx locations, with all profits going towards the Arbor Day Foundation.

It is important for luxury marketers to link with causes that make sense with their brand image.

For example, Swiss watchmaker Jaeger-LeCoultre, which began its fourth annual auction to benefit the UNESCO World Heritage Marine Program, let consumers bid on a prototype N°1 of the Deep Sea Vintage Chronograph ([see story](#)).

Luxury brands typically use charity-related marketing because it makes consumers feel better about buying or using their products or services.

In fact, luxury marketers host events or team-up with charities to create a halo effect around themselves, and some experts believe that affluent consumers respond quite well to this strategy ([see story](#)).

“We plan on continuing our support over time, because we know that this is what our customers care about,” Ms. Tucker said.

Final Take

Rachel Lamb, associate reporter on Luxury Daily, New York

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