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Reviews

Book Reviews

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The DNA of Customer Experience: How Emotions Drive Value

Colin Shaw

Palgrave Macmillan, 2007; Hardcover; £25.00; 288pp
ISBN-978-0-230-50000-6

The premise of Colin Shaw's book *The DNA of Customer Experience* is that emotions drive value, and 50 per cent of customer experience is concerned with emotions. The problem is that most systems and processes delivered through multiple channels are rarely designed with this in mind. The average marketing director is happy to discuss sales and profits but not normally emotions. More rare still are emotions discussed at board level, except for a few enlightened companies.

The problem is that as products/services become more and more homogenised, including prices, what's left to differentiate? In today's environment of ever-more sophisticated customers, the company that delivers memorable customer experiences consistently creates superior value and competitive advantage. It's a bit like creating 'theatre' around your products/services: whether customers experience them by phone, web, in-store, etc, the experience engenders positive emotions. It is easy to create negative emotions — British Airways opening Terminal 5 being a current classic example. We have all had negative experiences of call centre menus and indecipherable operators with strange accents. First Direct has, for years, had an amazing recommendation rate — a new customer is recommended to them every five seconds and 86 per cent of customers have recommended someone in the past three months. This can be translated into acquisition savings of £150 per person, while the customer satisfaction rate is an unheard of 92 per cent. First Direct understands the customer experience and works it hard.

Colin suggests five imperatives for managing experiences:

1. manage experience as theatre
2. use experience to build brand equity
3. balance control and spontaneity
4. manage conflict between creativity and business
5. develop and use appropriate measures.

To understand the DNA of customer experience you have to study in minute detail the connection between emotions and the effect on

Delivering memorable customer experiences creates superior value

Five ways to manage customer experience

Four clusters of emotion

loyalty and spend. Combining the work of several authors, Colin presents four clusters of emotion: three that add value to a product/service and one that damages value. In addition there is an advocacy cluster.

Each customer has their own set of different emotions. The book is therefore primarily based around our explanation of each cluster, how it works in practice and useful examples. Readers should pay particular note to the destroying cluster as it is far too easy, with a mechanically designed process, for customer management to fall into this trap.

The final chapter in the book is an example of these principles in practice based on a case study from TNT Express Services.

In conclusion, this is a very well-researched, well-written book (159 pages) with a strong message that customers do create value both short and long term, a fact that is too often neglected by marketing managers. In some way it is similar to 'delighting customers' or 'added value', but I believe it's more than that because it is developing a consistent mindset on how to manage customers over their journey, which may involve multiple contacts to a business. The sad thing is that making someone smile often does not cost money — it just needs planning. At the IDM, for our training delegates, we provide homemade, fresh lunches and it is remarkable how often this is commented on as a high point of their IDM experience (we'd like to think the quality of the training mattered as well).

One final example from Mercedes is Mercedes World at Brooklands, Weybridge, Surrey. Built on the original racetrack, Mercedes has created a whole new Mercedes experience that allows you to experience the brand and feel part of it. There are regular events, restaurants and brasseries, a museum and a racetrack beyond the traditional showroom. It offers something for all generations and engenders positive emotions towards Mercedes.

Derek Holder

Emotions create short and long-term value

Write to Sell — The Ultimate Guide to Great Copywriting

Andy Maslen

Paperback, 191pp; 2007; £6.74
ISBN-978-1904879992

This admirably short book merits a mercifully short review.

It manages in 191 pages to cover quite a complicated subject in a surprising amount of detail.

One of the author's aims, revealed at the end of the book, is to help you write better English. A most laudable objective, but I fear this will