



EXPERIENCE INSIGHTS

In Conversation with:

Bruce Andrew,
Vice President Marketing & Customer Experience
Shred-It Canada

June 2012

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IN CONVERSATION WITH: BRUCE ANDREW

We recently sat down with Bruce Andrew, Vice President of Marketing and Customer Experience at Shred-it Canada to get his thoughts on customer experience. Bruce is an advocate of designing and integrating service experiences into the core of a brand as a means of competitive differentiation and delivering on the promise a brand communicates to its customers.

5P: Let's start by asking you to complete the following statement: "Customer experience is . . ."

BA: Customer experience is how the customer "feels" throughout the end to end journey they have with an organization. It isn't that you just got it right during the transaction by making it easy and seamless, it is that every aspect of their interaction goes above and beyond to make them feel special.

5P: Similarly, please complete the following statement: "Employee experience is . . ."

BA: Employee experience is the great feeling an employee has beyond just doing a really good job. It is about their sense of fulfilling a "noble cause" beyond their day to day tasks. If we expect employees to be good servants to customers, you better be good servants as an employer in terms of how you create the culture for an employee in which they can live and thrive. Your inside needs to match your outside and the work you do has much greater meaning than simply getting from A to B.

5P: Why has customer experience become such a hot area of focus today?

BA: First of all, we are now a service economy in which products themselves in many categories have become more or less the same. Therefore, customers are looking beyond the physical product as a way to derive satisfaction, value, and even emotional association. Experience has emerged as a natural evolution to meet these higher emotional needs to customers. Secondly, customers have become far more educated through the Internet and social media. They are very savvy, with high expectations. It has gone beyond make me happy today, the bar is now higher and organizations need to break through fulfilling these expectations at every point of contact with the customer, whether physical, digital, or personal.

5P: Where does accountability for customer experience reside within an organization?

BA: It begins with the top leader of the organization because it is about

how an entire organization operates, than any specific department. Without this level of senior endorsement and commitment, you simply cannot make the transformational shifts to fully capitalize on the benefits customer experience can provide. Also, if Cx resides in a functional area such as sales, marketing, or operations, it absolves the rest of the organization of their role in customer experience. That being said, improvements can be made on a function by function or department by department basis. Ideally, if it is not the CEO, then someone needs to take on the responsibility of ensuring everything that happens, from product design, operational processes, personnel and customer service, etc. is done so from the customer back.

5P: You've mentioned a few times the term "service organizations", does customer experience apply equally to product organizations?

BA: If we take a narrow view of product and service organizations for the specific product or service they create, you can argue that the design of the experience can be built equally into the product or service itself. But where it differs is in the execution. In product organizations, certain controls are built into the design and manufacturing process to ensure quality and consistency. In a service organization, however, the experience is generally delivered by individuals one interaction at a time where the control over each

interaction and each moment of truth is much more difficult to accomplish.

5P: Of all the things that things that make up customer experience design, what is the most critical element that has the greatest impact on business results?

BA: It has to come back to people – and you can't overlook how integral they are to the product itself. People add an extra and often unexpected element, especially for service brands. Yes, people can follow a standard operating procedure, but their attitude and approach to how they do that is what makes the experience so unique and memorable. Coming back to what I said earlier, what galvanizes people in the organizations that deliver a consistently great customer experience is that sense of noble cause. The noble cause provides employees with the context and permission to not accept anything less than the best experience possible. In our business, for example, our noble cause to keep our customer's confidential information secure, not merely to shred paper and that is a huge responsibility I have as an individual. Noble cause doesn't work all by itself either. It has an important counterpart, and that is engagement. An employee who is engaged and is connected to the noble cause will consistently deliver a superior customer experience.

They work harder, they give more, and they try harder for customers simply because they care.

5P: What is the significance of the human interaction in great customer experiences?

BA: We've certainly touched on this already, but let me say this. Every good customer experience story I've heard involves people. It usually doesn't involve a product or process alone, but it typically involves what a person did for another person. They wowed them with their attitude towards a noble cause and their over and above behavior that was not necessarily a standard operating procedure. It was someone with a noble cause and an engaged attitude that decided "I can do that for you".

5P: How are customer experience and employee experience related?

BA: You cannot ignore the relevance and importance of people throughout the entire customer experience process, as we've been discussing. So logically, almost too logically, there is a direct line between customer experience and employee experience. Yet, most organizations don't draw that line so clearly at either a strategic or operational level. They operate first as functional departments and the rules that exist to maintain order in those departments, creating a box and barriers where people are neither willing nor encouraged to go outside

that box to do what is fundamentally right for the customer. In the organizations that get it right, it is the storytelling that begins and ends with the heroic things employees did to go the extra distance. This is the key ingredient in creating a culture of customer experience. It becomes "the way we do things around here" and liberates employees with the permission to do what is right, not restricting them within their department, their job, or the "rules" of that box.

5P: Can you share any evidence that Cx delivering bottom line results

BA: The best evidence you can point to broadly in the market are the results of those organizations who have an almost legendary reputation for delivering a great customer and employee experience. Look at Four Season's Hotels, look at Amazon, look at WestJet and you can see on virtually any key dimension you care to measure that points to success of implementing both customer experience and employee experience successfully.

5P: If you had a few pearls of wisdom to share with those embarking on a Cx or Ex initiative, what would they be?

BA: If you truly want to transform your organization, customer experience is a journey that requires a commitment across the organization. You can't underestimate the amount of cultural change that will be required to make the transition.

Often companies simply opt for tweaking or masking real root issues. But today's customers are way too savvy and see right through that so unless your business is figuratively "re-imagined" from the customer back, you risk faltering in this exercise. Secondly, make sure senior leadership is signed up for the journey and understands what is required – you can't go half way. And finally, until the organization has assumed its new Cx and Ex identity, make sure there is someone with direct line of sight to the CEO who has the responsibility, authority, and oversight over the end to end process across all departments. This cannot be simply a staff role, it needs to have teeth to move inertia, break down the barriers, re-think the way things are done and take the actions to make the step changes that will be necessary.

5P: Can you share the best customer experience moment you've ever had?

BA: I've had so many, but one that I recall is when a sales rep was not satisfied with something that I otherwise would have accepted. It was with the car dealership I have been dealing with for years. When I picked up a new vehicle, the sales person noticed a very small scratch on a mirror, which to me was not a big enough issue to even worry about. But, to the sales person, it simply wasn't good enough and he went to great lengths to ensure that the vehicle was delivered to me to his

expectations, which in hindsight were even above mine. It is not often that the person selling something has higher standards than the customer so for me this stands out in my mind. It is not the most dramatic moment of customer experience, but one that is memorable.

5P: Can you share the best employee experience moment you've had in your career?

BA: It was a little earlier in my career when I worked in the coffee service business. What struck me as an employee of the company I worked for, was that no matter what the challenge was, the entire organization rallied around doing what was right for the customer. As a person in the sales department at that time, the challenges whether they were product supply, service, or terms, everyone in the organization was willing and enabled to understand what needed to be done and to get it done. To me, this comes back to the point where the noble cause of every employee was linked to delivering on a great customer experience every day with every customer.

Fifth P is the customer experience agency that designs and implements ways to help organizations become who they say they are. Do you want to learn more? Let's start by saying hello.

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