

Experience This! Show Podcast
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ExperienceThisShow.com

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Episode 57:

Welcome to experience this where you'll find inspiring examples of customer experience great stories of customer service and tips on how to make your customers love you even more. Always upbeat and definitely entertaining customer retention expert Joey Coleman social media expert durned good guess serve as your host for a weekly dose of positive customer experience. Hold under your headphones. It's time to Experience This!

Joey Coleman: Get ready for another episode of the Experience This! Show!

Dan Gingiss: Join us as we discuss: fruits and vegetables that may not look pretty but still taste yummy, the coming of a marketing rebellion led by (who else?) the consumer, and an NBA basketball star who made a little girl's dream come true.

Joey Coleman: Vegetables, rebellions, and sneakers. Oh my!

Joey Coleman: Sometimes a remarkable experience deserves deeper investigation. We dive into the nitty gritty of customer interactions and dissect how and why they happen. Join us while we're dissecting the experience.

Dan Gingiss: So I am so excited to talk about a company that I have been doing business with for the last year and it is called Imperfect Produce. Now this is actually unique in that it is the one and only thing that I have bought solely based off of Facebook ad.

Joey Coleman: Oh, my good friend! You were roped in by a Facebook ad!

Dan Gingiss: I was!

Joey Coleman: Who knows how these things work! I am intrigued.

Dan Gingiss: Yes so it showed up in my feed and I was interested in it. Basically what it is, is it is a box that you can order either every week, or every other week, and it is filled with fruits and vegetables that are deemed to be imperfect. And imperfect can mean something as simple as surplus. But it also sometimes means ugly. And it's kind of funny and I love talking about this is my kids because, you know, we are accustomed-

Joey Coleman: Even the ugly vegetable gets a friend.

Dan Gingiss: Right. Exactly. We're accustomed to eating perfect fruits and vegetables that we buy at the store. You know all the apples look beautiful and shined, and all the oranges are perfectly round, and you know they're never too small or too big or what have you. And as it turns out as I learned more about this company, this is actually a really big significant problem in the U.S. So before we get to that I had the pleasure of chatting with Reilly Brock who is the content manager at Imperfect Produce and he described the service probably better than I ever could. So why don't we listen to him now.

Reilly Brock: Yeah, Imperfect Produce is a subscription box delivery service, and we deliver boxes of awesome produce right to your door. What makes the produce special is it's ugly and surplus produce that often would have gone to waste otherwise in our food system. So we're sourcing produce straight from farms and bringing it right to your door. You get to pick what goes in it every week. You get to pick the produce each week, you get to choose from a wide range of sizes, you get to pick between organic produce and conventional produce, you can do fruit, veggies, or both. We really like to keep it open ended and fun, customizable. And our goal here is really to do two things, one in power folks at home to cook more and eat healthier and have more fun in the kitchen, and the other one is to really take a big bite out of food waste in this country and kind of rethink beauty standards in the produce industry.

Dan Gingiss: So here's what I love about this service. The first is I get to pick exactly what I want. Now this is big. I used to be part of a farm share where I got a box of fruits and vegetables every week. But I got whatever came off of the farm. So you open your box someday and you have 14 rutabagas and you're like, "What the heck even a do with a rutabaga?" Right?

Joey Coleman: Can you spell rutabaga folks? No it's a word you can just say.

Dan Gingiss: Exactly. So I get to pick what I want. Every week I get to go onto their website and decide the fruits and vegetables, or sometimes they have herbs or other things, that I want and so if you like squash, hey, they got three different kinds of squash this week and if you don't like squash you don't have to have any squash at all. If you only want fruit, you could pick that if you only want veggies whatever, so I find that really, really fun. And I also get the exact quantity that I need. So there's a couple of different sizes of boxes I get the smallest one and it's actually perfect for me. Most of it I find is that excess fruit or the surplus fruit and vegetables versus the ugly stuff but sometimes you do get some kind of comically shaped fruits and vegetables will include some pictures in the show notes at Experience This Show (dot) com (ExperienceThisShow.com) episode 57. It's also actually less expensive than the produce that I'm buying at the supermarket. So now when I go grocery shopping I basically skip the produce section because I've already gotten my produce for the week. And it has also caused me to cook more healthy items for both me and the kids because I've got all of these fruits vegetables and then when you have them you got to use them, and so I plan recipes around it, et cetera. And then you and I have talked about this, we actually made mention of it in the last episode, it's also really important to me that it's helping the environment. And one of the things that they do that is so cool is they actually track the amount of waste that I have personally saved. And so again we'll include a screenshot shot in the show notes but I want to tell you that as of this recording I have saved 323 pounds of produce that would have gone to a landfill or just kind of died in the ground versus being eaten. I've also saved almost 13,000 gallons of water and taken 1,101 pounds of carbon dioxide out of the air.

Joey Coleman: 323 pounds of produce? That's a lot of rutabaga folks. You know here's the thing Dan, anybody listens to the show and people know me well, I aspire to be a fruits and veggies kind of guy. I aspire to be a healthier eater. I'm just not. But I got to admit I'm intrigued. I'm intrigued by this because you're absolutely right. It takes a problem, and a fairly significant environmental problem, that most people have little to no awareness about, and it says not only are we going to solve that problem but we're going to do it cheaper than going to the store. And there's nothing wrong with these fruits and vegetables, I presume, they just don't look as pretty as the ones in the store because their standards on how things look when people are going around shopping. But the piece that really impressed me and I don't know that I've seen another brand that has done this, or done that is effectively it sounds like as the folks in imperfect produce are doing, is personally tracking your environmental impact. Right? I've seen plenty of boxes that say, "oh in the last year we've diverted x amounts of things from the landfill," or, "we've saved Y pounds of CO2." But

tacking it to your personal behavior almost creates an environmental scorecard for you which I'm left wondering, have you found yourself almost wanting to increase- You've been doing this for about a year, are you kind of like thinking, "oh this year I want to divert even more pounds of produce away or save even more water than I did in the past." Right? Are you almost gamifying yourself?

Dan Gingiss: Well it's a good question and to answer your earlier question, the fruits of vegetables all taste great. And so, you know, you might get for example an avocado that's got some scarring on the outside skin, but you don't eat the skin of an avocado. So you open it up and it looks like a beautiful avocado inside, right? So that kind of stuff you just sort of learn to overlook it. In terms of the environmental impact, it's not the core reason I do it, but I think it's an awesome sort of validation of doing it. So I'm doing it because I really enjoy the fruits and vegetables, because they're less expensive, and because it kind of forces me to use them once, you know you said you're trying to eat more fruits and vegetables, when they're sitting out on the counter or you open the fridge and I now have what I told the kids is the it's the healthy snack section of the refrigerator which is like it's always got fresh fruit that I've gotten from the box. And so that's really the core thing for me, but I do love tracking it. And in fact they help you. They remind you when you hit certain milestones so, for example, when I had hit 75 pounds of produce they put a little card in the box and they gave me some extra fruit that day in my box and then when I hit 200 they actually sent me some tattoos of different fruits and vegetables that were really cute for the kids so they do help you gamify that. And I think it's kind of a cool part of the experience. Now the history of this company is really pretty interesting. It started with two college kids noticing a lot of wasted food in their cafeteria and they soon learned that as we mentioned there are tons of perfectly good food being wasted before it even left the farm let alone getting to a college cafeteria. So here's Reilly again to describe the problem that they identified and how they went about solving it.

Reilly Brock: It was just going to waste on farms and a large reason was because of these very narrow cosmetic specifications that stores have, you know things have to be a uniform size, they have to be to be free of blemishes and scarring, and they have to be perfectly symmetrical, and the result is that a lot of stuff is just getting excluded from the marketplace and often gets left in the field. So they set out to solve this problem and address a couple of different inefficiencies with the food system. One is that farmers are not able to sell a sizable chunk of what they grow you know five to 30 percent of a crop in a given year might have to stay in the field or might be unmarketable or you might have to sell it at a loss to a processor just because of how it looks, which is pretty ridiculous, and on the other level there's the environmental cost of all this that we're cultivating a ton of land and using a lot of water to grow food that ironically no one ends up eating. So, that's kind of how Imperfect came to be.

Joey Coleman: I got to say, Dan, I grew up in a farming community in northwestern Iowa. My family has a long tradition of farming. We've been farmers and my grandparents, and great grandparents, and my brothers now are farmers and so this idea of being able to do good for farmers in addition to doing well for the planet is really special, and really got my attention personally you know kind of hearing Reilly describe that. I think what is fascinating about this is so many brands are trying to connect to a story and create a story for their brand. And I feel like there are multiple stories at play here, right? There's the story of the farmers. There's the story of the environmental impact. There's the story of your own health. There's the story of what's happening in the grocery store. And so the layering of stories and reasons and rationales for why it's a good idea to be a customer. I'll admit and I'll confess here on the air I'm sold. I'm in. I want to go get a box and check this out.

Dan Gingiss: Well fantastic, Joey, because I get you ten dollars off your first box.

Joey Coleman: I like it!

Dan Gingiss: With a special code that I'm also going to share with all of our listeners on the ExperienceThisShow.com episode 57. And I think you'll like it. I think it is a ton of fun. I look forward to opening that box every week. And you're right it does have an impact on sort of the entire vertical of the industry which I think is really kind of cool and I hope to see more companies try to do good while also making money. And I think those are the kinds of companies that are going to gain customer loyalty at a more rapid pace, because this is a company that I want to support and I feel good doing so. I think that's kind of the takeaway for me is that at the end of the day I feel good working with the company that I know is doing good for me as well.

Joey Coleman: We're excited to give you an overview of an important book you should know about, as well as share some of our favorite passages as part of our next book report.

Dan Gingiss: For today's book report we are going to turn to Mark Schaefer who just released a book called, "Marketing Rebellion," and Mark is a frequent speaker at Social Media Marketing World. And actually, Joey, is going to be taking the slot that you had two years ago and he's going to be the closing keynote this year.

Joey Coleman: Very nice.

Dan Gingiss: Yes and so Mark's a great guy and super smart and has written a whole bunch of books, but this is a brand new one and we're going to go straight to his description of the book because I think he did such a good job with it. I'm not going to try to ruin it by putting my own spin on it. So here without further ado is Mark Schaefer.

Mark Schaefer: "Marketing Rebellion," is my seventh book and I've never had a plan to write a book. I write a book when I see a problem that I don't understand, and I become obsessed trying to figure it out. And when I eventually figure it out that turns into a book that can help people. And this time the problem that I saw is that people all around the world, big companies, small companies, universities, nonprofits, startups, were all telling me the same thing. They were telling me they felt stuck. That they were falling behind, that they were overwhelmed, that their marketing wasn't working like it used to, and it just became such a powerful message. I became curious to see what was going on, and my original hypothesis was that technology was changing so fast people were falling behind. And certainly that's part of it. But the more profound revelation is that, yes, technology has sort of moved ahead of us. But our customers have moved ahead of us in a pretty profound and significant way. In fact, when I really started getting into the research it made me question what it means to be a marketer today. Two thirds of our marketing today is occurring without us. The customers are the marketers. They're carrying the message forward. And that's a key idea behind this book, that two thirds of our marketing is not our marketing. How do we get invited to that two thirds? Is it possible to make that actionable? Is there something that we can do? Because that part of the world where consumers talk to each other and carry our products forward it's just going to be growing. We really don't have a choice but to understand what's going on and what we can do about it. And that's what I provide through the book.

Joey Coleman: What I thought was interesting about that description, Dan, and about the book is this idea that two thirds of marketing is occurring without us, right? Wasn't that interesting to you?

Dan Gingiss: Yeah I mean that's crazy, right? I mean we think as marketers that we're controlling the message but what happened is we're not doing that anymore.

Joey Coleman: Yeah you're not in charge anymore kids, hate to tell you.

Dan Gingiss: And I will tell you whether you like it or not, Mr. Coleman, the reason for that is social media.

Joey Coleman: Social media, ladies and gentlemen I will give you that social media plays a significant role in that. But I also think a part of it is the shifting behavior of the consumer and the magnification of voice. Now a lot of that happens on social media, but it also happens with podcasts, and with blogs, and with other ways that people are kind of putting their own spin on things where before it was just having a conversation at the cocktail party or at the watercooler. Now you can kind of broadcast to a much bigger audience based on the technology in a lot easier fashion.

Dan Gingiss: Absolutely, and don't forget ratings and reviews as well so there's more places for customers to express their opinions and to share how they like, or dislike, or use a particular company's product et cetera. So I think this is absolutely true and it's probably continuing to go up. And to me the key question is: What can we do about it? What can companies do to affect what people are saying? And I think one of the things they can do is what we talk about all the time on this show, which is create remarkable experiences. Because people want to talk about remarkable experiences. A lot of times when you say social media and experience people think that it's only complaints, but the reality is is that people like to share on both ends of the spectrum. It's just that we don't have as many remarkable experiences as we have crappy ones. As companies continue to shift that ratio, I think that there is an opportunity to change the sentiment of how people talk about your brand an end to really create this army of marketers as Mark talks about.

Joey Coleman: I agree with you, and what I also loved about Mark's hypothesis, right, that technology was changing so fast that people were falling behind but then, yes, our customers had moved ahead of us as well. It never ceases to amaze me how many brands are operating in the past. I had an experience this weekend I was walking along a street I saw retail home goods establishment that was kind of, you know, very kind of like high end interior design store type thing. And on the door like etched into the glass. Not a sign they had stuck in and but this was like part of the same branding if you will as their hours. It said, "No Photos." I turn to my wife Berit and I said, "How insane is it that a company that is selling looks for a home, right? Views of a home, images of what a home should look like or be like, doesn't want me as a visitor to their store to take a picture and post it to social media, or even take a picture to take home to remind me that I want to go back to that store to buy something? It blew my mind.

Dan Gingiss: Yeah they're probably not going to like the technology that's already here in virtual reality that allows you to take a picture of your own room with that piece of furniture in it before you even buy it. They're going to probably hate that. So anyway, one of these we like to do on the show just to be different from other shows is to also have authors share with us their favorite passage from their own book. And so we asked Mark Schaefer to please share his favorite passage, and this is what he said.

Mark Schaefer: One of my favorite parts of the book occurs right in the middle of the book. I sort of put the book on pause and summarize some of the main takeaways of the book up until that point. I call it, "A Manifesto for Human Centered Marketing," and it's 10 points, and I would talk about those 10 points. That might be something that would be interesting for you to discuss. Number 1: stop doing what customers hate. Get out there and discover what customers love. Go do that at least. 2: Technology should be invisible to your customer and only used to help your company be more compassionate, receptive, fascinating and useful. 3: You can't own customersm a buyer's journey, or a sales funnel. Claim the market space and help people belong to it. 4: Never intercept, never interrupt. Earn the invitation. 5: Be relevant, consistent, and superior. Build trust

into everything you do. 6: Be fans of your fans. Make them the heroes of your story. 7: Transcend the public's inherent mistrust of your company through relentless honesty. 8: Don't be in a customer community, be of the customer community. 9: Marketing is no longer about your why. It's about your customers why. 10: The most human company wins.

Dan Gingiss: Now normally, Joey and I would share our favorite passages from the book. And we do have many of them. But what we actually thought we do instead is do what Mark suggested which is to discuss some of the 10 points that he shared. Because I thought they were so interesting, and any one of them could probably be an entire segment. But I thought that maybe you and I could talk about a couple of those. How about it, Joey?

Joey Coleman: I like it. I like it yeah. And as fun as it would be to give our own passages, and there were definitely some great ones, I agree. One of the 10 that jumped out the most to me or the quickest was the, "Be fans of your fans. Make them the heroes of your story." So many companies miss the opportunity to celebrate their customers, right? They claim that their customers are part of their family. They claim that they care about their customers, but you know and we see cutting edge examples of companies using, like, customer generated content and promoting that. But I think what Mark's saying at least, and I'm reading in between the lines here a little no pun intended, that you really need to be a fan of your fans. You need to go the extra step and not just use their content to promote you, but become supporters of them and their brand, and how they do things. I'm reminded years ago of a gentleman who had created a series of construction plans for how to build furniture out of FedEx boxes. Right? And he had all these plans you could download online, of like, go to your FedEx store for free, get a bunch of these boxes, and turn them into furniture for your living room, or your kitchen, or wherever. You know as a college student who didn't have a lot of money to spend on furniture. And as I recall FedEx got irritated about this and kind of shut the guy down. I would have made him the star. I would have made him our spokesperson for the next year or two and said everybody should have a FedEx chair.

Dan Gingiss: Exactly. Great marketing.

Joey Coleman: Right!

Dan Gingiss: You know I may be, I don't know, my attention isn't as long as you're so I actually got caught by the very first one I want to go back to that one which is, "Stop doing what your customers hate." And I love that because of course we want to get out there and do what our customers love and find remarkable experiences. But this idea of stopping what customers hate? This is the low hanging fruit in customer experience management: is finding the small parts of your experience that cause pain points, that cause people to stop, that cause frustration, that take too long, that are an extra click or an extra tap, whatever it is. These are things that drive your customer's nuts and they might be little things, but a thousand little things added up is one giant thing. And so figuring out the things that your customers dislike about your business and being honest about that and then fixing it is, I think, one of the biggest keys and the easiest ways to improve your customer experience score. So go out and check out Mark Schaefer's new book, "Marketing Rebellion." Of course we will share a link at the show notes on www.WxperienceThisShow.com Episode 57, and please come see Mark, and me, at Social Media Marketing World next month in San Diego. Mark will be doing the closing keynote, as I mentioned. And I'll be presenting on how to get customers to talk more positively about your brand on social media.

Joey Coleman: We'd love telling stories and sharing key insights you can implement, to avoid, based on our experiences. Can you believe that this just happened?

Dan Gingiss: So I recently came upon a tweet from Darren Rovell, who is a sports business

reporter, and it was such an incredible example of customer experience that I had to share it here. And honestly I think this example kind of speaks for itself. So just to set it up: a little girl named Riley Morrison sent a letter to NBA star Stephen Curry and he sent a letter back. And both of these letters are handwritten and they're included in the tweet and I'm going to read Riley's letter in its entirety, and then Joey is going to read Stephen's response in its entirety. So here's her letter:

Dan Gingiss: Dear Stephen Curry, My name is Riley (just like your daughter (smiley face)). I'm 9 years old from Napa, California. I'm a big fan of yours. I enjoy going to Warriors games with my dad. I asked my dad to buy me the new Curry 5's because I'm starting a new basketball season. My dad and I visited the Under Armour website and were disappointed to see that there were no Curry 5's for sale under the girl's section. However they did have them for sale under the boys section, even to customize. I know you support girl athletes because you have two daughters and you host an all girls basketball camp. I hope you can work with Under Armour to change this because girls want to rock the Curry 5's too. Sincerely, Riley Morrison.

Joey Coleman: And Riley's handwritten letter was responded to with a handwritten letter that read as follows:.

Joey Coleman: Hey Riley, I appreciate your concern and have spent the last two days talking to Under Armour about how we can fix the issue. Unfortunately, we have labeled smaller sizes as "boys" on the website. We are correcting this now! I want to make sure you can wear my kicks proudly- so I am going to send you a pair of Curry 5's now and you'll be one of the first kids to get the Curry 6. Lastly, we have something special in the works for International Women's Day on March 8th, and I want you to celebrate with me! More to come on that. But plan to be in Oakland that night! All the best! #RuinTheGame. Stephen.

Dan Gingiss: Now one of the very first comments to the Darren Rovell tweet, which by the way, got 47,000 tweets and 221,000 likes, was Vicky Winters on Twitter wrote, "Classy AF." Now I'm not going to explain what AF means, but I think that sums it up don't you think, Joey?

Joey Coleman: Absolutely. I mean here's what I love. This is such a beautiful display of customer experience and also how to engage with a brand. What I love is Riley's 9 years old and she gets it. She states very clearly what the problem was, she explains that she's disappointed, she goes in for the, "Hey I know you support girl athletes because you have two daughters," right? Which is a subtle little like, "come on dude, you can help me out with this. Let's get this figured out," and, "You host an all-girls basketball camp." And then says, "Well I hope we can work it-" so she doesn't get irate when she can't get what is a very reasonable request of having the shoes available in girl sizes and on the girls section of the Under Armour website. And then Steph Curry responds in kind. It's a handwritten letter, delivers, gets the shoes, gets the better shoes, and steps it up. What's interesting is, at the time this episode is being released were just a few days before International Women's Day. Now, Dan and I, regrettably, have no idea what Steph Curry has planned, but I would highly, highly encourage folks to pay a little attention on March 8th to that game and see what happens. If it goes the way that we kind of think it's going to go, I think there might be a follow up segment on this because this is pretty sweet and I love the way it was addressed immediately.

Dan Gingiss: And you know what? Again, if an athlete, a star athlete, can do this, so can you at your company. And it doesn't mean you have to answer every single customer this way, but I think, I'm not sure, but I think Riley is probably going to be a Stephen Curry fan for life.

Joey Coleman: We've talked, you've listened. Now it's time to act. There are many things you could do to take what you've learned in this episode and implement it. But at times that can feel

overwhelming. Instead, why not just focus on three takeaways.

Dan Gingiss: Takeaway #1 - Is your company doing anything to contribute to the greater good while also making a profit? The founders of Imperfect Produce identified a major agricultural waste problem and turned it into an elegant solution by providing excess and "ugly" fruits and vegetables that would otherwise have gone to waste. And they do so with levity and humor in their communications. What is your company doing to solve bigger problems than just making this quarter's profit numbers?

Joey Coleman: Takeaway #2 - Are you participating in the marketing rebellion? Have you acknowledged yet that the power in marketing has shifted from brands to consumers, or are you still trying to shout over every one with more and more marketing? By treating your customers well and providing remarkable experiences (something we talk a lot about on this show) you can create an army of marketers on your behalf. What are you doing to listen better and talk less?

Dan Gingiss: Takeaway #3 - Are you listening to all of your customers? NBA star Stephen Curry didn't have to answer little Riley's handwritten letter with one of his own. But how do you feel about him now that he has? Brands have the same power to connect with their customers. And all it takes is a little time and effort and who knows you might even discover your next best seller in the process.

Joey Coleman: And those are the three takeaways for this episode.

Dan Gingiss: And remember, we've got a brand new listener bonus since Season 3. We're calling it the, "Take It to the Team Worksheet." The worksheet reviews the three takeaways from this episode and helps you ask these questions internally with your colleagues. We heard from a number of listeners that they were doing this on their own and thought we create an easy to use, easy to download worksheet to make that process more convenient for you. Go to ExperienceThisShow.com Episode 57 and get your worksheet today.

Joey Coleman: Wow! Thanks for joining us for another episode of Experience This!

Dan Gingiss: We know there are tons of podcasts to listen to, magazines and books to read, reality TV to watch... We don't take for granted that you've decided to spend some quality time listening to the two of us.

Joey Coleman: We hope you enjoyed our discussions and if you do we'd love to hear about it. Come on over to ExperienceThisShow.com and let us know what segments you enjoy, what new segments you'd like to hear. This show is all about experience and we want you to be part of the Experience This! Show.

Dan Gingiss: Thanks again for your time and we'll see you next week for more...

Joey Coleman & Dan Gingiss: Experience This!