

Experience This! Show Podcast
Hosts: Joey Coleman & Dan Gingiss
ExperienceThisShow.com

Official Show Transcript
Originally Aired: April 2, 2019

Episode 62:

[SHOW INTRO]

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, and social media expert Dan Gingiss serve as your hosts for a weekly dose of positive customer experience.

So hold under your headphones it's time to Experience This!

[EPISODE 62 INTRO]

Get ready for another episode of the Experience This! Show!

Dan Gingiss: Join us as we discuss: new tactics to up level your customer service in social media, how one school district deals with frustrated parents on snow days, and the airline that saved a wedding.

Joey Coleman: Responding, rescheduling, and recovering. Oh my!

[SEGMENT INTRO][CX PRESS]

Joey Coleman: There are so many great customer experience articles to read, but who has time? We summarize them and offer clear takeaways you can implement starting tomorrow. Enjoy this segment of CX Press, where we read the articles so you don't need to!

[CX PRESS: Connect With Every Customer Using Social Media]

Dan Gingiss: For today's CX Press, we are looking at the TSC Digital blog from our friends at the Sitel Group. TSC Digital is the digital customer experience group within Sitel and they recently published a series of blog posts on... anyone? Customer service in social media!

Joey Coleman: Wait a second! Didn't you write an entire book on that topic, Dan?

Dan Gingiss: As a matter of fact, Joey, I did. Which is why our friends at Sitel asked me to contribute to two of the three blog posts in the series.

Joey Coleman: Wait a second does that mean we're doing a CX Press about you?

Dan Gingiss: No not exactly.

Joey Coleman: A topic it's near and dear to your heart.

Dan Gingiss: Yes thank you. Okay so there's actually three articles within this series so we're going

to touch on all three briefly in the first one which is called, "How to Improve Your Social Customer Service in Three Easy Steps." I talk about something that is indeed near and dear to my heart, Joey, which is responding to everyone on social media now that includes people complaining, people asking questions, and people complimenting your brand. A lot of companies miss the last one and they focus especially on complaints which then makes them more fearful of social media and meanwhile they're ignoring the people that are actually taking time out of their day to say nice things about them and often just a simple thank you or like or a retweet is all that's needed. Now responding to everyone has only one of the three easy steps you ought to check out the blog post on your own to get the other two. And of course we'll include links in our show notes.

Joey Coleman: If I can call bit of an audible here, Dan. I've got a question and this is an honest question. I agree with you that there's difficulty around how to respond to a compliment to your brand. What would you recommend, hypothetically, for an author who gets positive reviews on Amazon? I presume you would say that that author, hypothetically, should go in and respond positively. But here's the question in presuming that first point is correct. When is too late to respond to a review or a comment? So like can you go back to a comment from I don't know a month ago, six months ago, a year ago, and say, "Hey thanks so much for the kind words." Or at that point. Is it better to let it go. Honest question.

Dan Gingiss: Yeah it's a great question. Hypothetically of course... I think it is never too late to respond to a comment, or compliment, or complaint, and you should go in and say I mean I do that with my book on Amazon. Everybody that leaves a review. Obviously they're almost all positive. But you know what? Somebody left a three star review and had some issues with the book and I responded to that one too and thanked him for the honest feedback. So I think the fact that you as the author are engaging with people who bought your book, and spent time reading it, and wanted to make a comment on it. That is impressive and it's a great thing to do. No matter when you do it.

Joey Coleman: Awesome. So if anybody sees comments coming back on reviews on my book and wonders geez it took them a long time to make that review. It's because I followed Dan Gingiss as advice that I even made the comment.

Dan Gingiss: Oh.

Joey Coleman: I'm complimenting you. That was actually mean. It may have been a backhanded compliment but it was meant as a compliment. I love it. All right, all right. The second post in the series is called, "Four Ways to Speak to Your Customers Effectively on Social Media," and as the article notes, "When you respond to everyone you should take the time to make every response personalized. There's nothing worse than going on a company's Twitter page-" That's what the article says. You just made me read that direct quote. Yeah there's nothing worse than going on Twitter. Actually the quote says, "There's nothing worse than going on a company's Twitter page and seeing the same pre written response on hundreds of messages. Not only does that show the company has put very little thought into how to communicate with their community but it also implies that the company has no real interest in considering feedback." Dan I've had this experience not on Twitter obviously but on other social media platforms where I've seen comment after comment after comment that's the same thing. And I understand it's difficult to come up with something different or creative to say but it's not that difficult.

Dan Gingiss: No it isn't. And you know you can have- even if you have 10 or 12 responses and you rotate between those that's fine as well. But yes the same thing over and over again... It sticks out and people notice it. So the third in the series was, "How to Take Your Customer Care on Social Media to the Next Level." And in this article there are 10 tips for long term success in social customer care. Now these include things like social listening, expanding your availability which is

the hours that you are responding on social, recruiting digital natives to be your social responders, and perhaps what I think is the most important thing, which is integrating your marketing and customer service teams. Now I have seen this firsthand at three Fortune 300 companies. When marketing and customer service are not working together things go wrong. And when they're working well together it's a much smoother experience for the customer. Let me just explain really quickly. Marketers have to let the customer service teams know what's going on so that they're able to respond and they are prepared for, say, a whole bunch of paid media going out the door that is going to elicit lots of responses. Likewise customer service teams have to give feedback to marketing teams. Sometimes you have a situation where people are offended at a commercial or they don't like an ad out there or it's interrupted in some way. People are tired of pop ups or that sort of thing. Those are things that the customer service team has to bring back to marketing so that they can do a better job of creating experience.

Joey Coleman: Indeed. And I have to say although when the CX Press we covered three different articles as opposed to the usual one article. What I love about these, and you know, they were written by Dan so I could be a little bit biased...

Dan Gingiss: Well they were not written by me...

Joey Coleman: Dan was quoted. Is that a better way of saying with the expert authority? OK. Moral of the story what I really liked about these articles is that they're very how to content. You know lots of times when we share articles on the show it's kind of a think piece. It's something that strikes our fancy or we gets us thinking in a different way. What I love about these three articles is you can follow along in these and know what to do. Even a social media novice who frankly, like me, I skew more towards that end of the spectrum really got a clear play by play: here's what you do to be better on social media. So as somebody who read the articles didn't know about the articles while they were being written but read them after they were done. I learned a lot. I appreciated it.

Dan Gingiss: Well and I think likewise on the other end of the spectrum which is probably where I said a little bit more, I think that the thing about social media is it's a continuously changing environment. I mean it seems like every month Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Snapchat, somebody introduces a new functionality or some sort of a new feature and a lot of those have an impact on businesses that are on those channels. So it's absolutely critical that you stay up to date. And in fact one step ahead of your competition by understanding what's coming and then using that functionality as soon as it's available.

Joey Coleman: Now obviously we couldn't cover all of the great tips included in these three articles. So we encourage you to go check them out and apply some of the techniques to your business. Now you can find all of these three articles in one easy to find convenient spot: Explore.Sitel.com/ExperienceThis (Explore.Sitel.com/ExperienceThis).

[SEGMENT INTRO][SAY WHAT?]

Joey Coleman: It's shocking how often people used 38 words to describe something when two would do the trick. We're looking at you lawyers and accountants. Words matter. And there is no excuse for trying to hide what you mean. We explore words and messaging in this next iteration of Say What?

[SAY WHAT?: Too Cool for School - Treating Everyone as a Customer]

Dan Gingiss: So earlier this winter you might have heard about some bitter cold temperatures here in my hometown of Chicago. Just to give you a little sense for it there was one particular day in

which the high temperature was negative 13 degrees.

Joey Coleman: That's definitely chilly. I grew up in the Midwest. I understand chilly when the high is negative 13. That's chilly.

Dan Gingiss: Yeah and that's before wind-chill, my friends.

Joey Coleman: It was like negative 2000!

Dan Gingiss: Something like that.

Joey Coleman: It is the Windy City, folks.

Dan Gingiss: It is and it was dang cold. And so one of the outcomes of this bitter cold weather was there were some school cancellations. So oftentimes you think of school cancellations as happening when it snows and certainly that occurs too in Chicago. But in this particular case, school was getting canceled because it was simply too cold to go to school. And obviously this creates some frustration with parents because, especially working parents, they're trying to plan their day and all the sudden school is canceled. Everything has to change. And so the superintendent of our school district sent out an e-mail to parents and I thought it was really, really interesting. And I thought it was a great example frankly of customer experience which is why I wanted to share it here. So the e-mail started by saying this: "The decision to close school is more complex than most people realize. With the safety of our students and staff foremost in mind, decisions to close our circumstance specific." All right. So then you ask well, what kind of circumstances are we talking about here?

Joey Coleman: What kind of circumstance specific situation do we have?

Dan Gingiss: Exactly. So what was neat was the e-mail went into specific circumstances so some of the things that they consider before they decide to cancel school include the following, and I'm reading this from the e-mail: "Dangerous temperatures that can quickly cause frostbite with minimal exposure, the accuracy of weather predictions, the ability of school bus drivers (and I'll add presumably teachers) to report to work on time, how long a student can safely wait at a bus stop for a bus that could be delayed, the potential for a bus breakdown in extreme weather, building conditions such as heat, water, electricity, access to the parking lots, salt on the sidewalks, and then finally the safety of students who walk to school." So I'll first say there was a longer list than I expected.

Joey Coleman: That's a much longer list! I have to admit there were some of those, that to be candid, and call me foolish, such as like in my life experience: I didn't catch the one about the student waiting at the bus stop for the bus, right? Because like I grew up in the country. When the bus came to pick kids up in the country, usually it was stopping kind of right in front of your house. So you could just kind of wait inside until you saw the bus coming and then run outside. Not for every house in the neighborhood but for a lot of the houses.

Dan Gingiss: Yeah. And here it's like you know five or six kids gather at the same spot in somebody's driveway, yeah.

Joey Coleman: You could be there for a while.

Joey Coleman: You know now that I think about it so yeah there's a lot of different things that could factor in there.

Dan Gingiss: Yeah the one I hadn't thought about was it was the bus drivers and the teachers like getting to work because maybe their car won't start. Maybe there, maybe they're snowed in at their house or whatever. I thought that was pretty interesting. So besides from the specific circumstances, which I thought was educational, no pun intended because we're talking about school.

Joey Coleman: He's here all week ladies and gentlemen! Nope just kidding! Just for this episode. One episode a week.

Dan Gingiss: The other thing that the superintendent did really well, which we always recommend to customer service agents, is she displayed empathy. And here's the sentence that particularly stood out to me. "We recognize that a decision to close schools often requires alternative plans for childcare and other work arrangements." OK good. Thank you. You're putting yourself in my shoes you understand that this is a pain in the neck for me. Then she goes on and says, We can all recall forecasts of snow that never fell and know that the media can make all day news of an anticipated storm. For those reasons, my announcing a closing for snow the day before is unlikely." So I thought that was really interesting and informative too, Remember we started by talking about cold, which is a little bit more predictive or predictable, excuse me, but certainly we have all been there where the media is going not saying it's going to be 12 inches of snow and then there's like a little tiny sprinkle.

Joey Coleman: A dusting. Yeah.

Dan Gingiss: And then if schools closed on that day parents are really unhappy. So I kind of I felt for her like I understood like this is a complicated decision and I thought that her sending this e-mail out and how many parents read it, but obviously I did. I thought it was a really great move and I have to say it made me less frustrated that we were having all these cancellations due to the cold weather.

Joey Coleman: I have to say and I'm not surprised that that was your reaction because that was my reaction. Even just hearing you tell about the letter to even receiving it and having it affect my kids, although ironically enough we just got a text message tonight saying that school is canceled tomorrow here in Colorado. This is a timely message. What I think is fascinating is the e-mail really sets the appropriate expectation for the parents so they can plan to the best of their ability. I love that it also recognizes, you know, a school cancellation not only impacts parents that work outside the home but parents that may be a stay at home parent. It impacts them too. They probably had other plans other than watching the kids all day. So I appreciate that. You know I've got a buddy from law school, Steve Cologne, who lives out on the East Coast. And every time that school cancels in the district he's in, he does these incredible rants on Facebook about how everybody's just sitting home on the school board having Margarita's, like they want the day off, because they cancel really early. They'll cancel like the day before and then nothing happens. So this thing that the superintendent in the letter you're referring to you know kind of references that idea of oh yeah and sometimes there's a cancellation before and then nothing happens, happens all the time and it drives parents bonkers. But what I really love is the superintendent pulling back the curtain so to speak, to show you how the decisions are being made. Like look this is about safety. There's a lot of factors that go in here and it really acknowledges the different things that can contribute to a school closing or cancellation.

Dan Gingiss: Yeah I agree. And I think the learning here for people listening is that every organization has customers. It's just not that they're not always the people that are walking down Main Street with shopping bags. Right? That's what we think of about a customer. But here the customers of the school there's actually many of them you've got the students, you've got the

parents, you've got teachers, you've got bus drivers, custodians, administrators. These are all people who have some skin in the game in terms of whether school's closed or not. And I think it's really interesting and impressive that this particular school district is kind of taking all of those people into consideration when they're sending this message. Think about a hospital for example very similar you know a hospital, you might think that the customers are the patients. But the other customers they have are their doctors and nurses and their staff. So if you had a similar thing with cold weather or a bad weather event and those people couldn't get to the hospital well that's obviously going to affect the downstream customer. So I think it's really important to realize that no matter what business you're in, you've got customers. And they may not necessarily be the types of people that we generally think of as customers. So the next time that you have the ability to communicate with people who do business with you and you can be proactive about it, do it and your customers will appreciate it.

[SEGMENT INTRO][THIS JUST HAPPENED]

Joey Coleman: We'd love telling stories and sharing key insights you can implement, or avoid, based on our experiences. Can you believe that This Just Happened?

[THIS JUST HAPPENED: Going the Extra Mile for Your Customers]

Dan Gingiss: So, Joey, you asked me in the last episode if it was OK if we talked about a credit card company other than Discover. So now I have to ask you, can we talk about another airline besides Delta.

Joey Coleman: Ah ha ha ha. If we must. Fine.

Dan Gingiss: Well thank you because I have an amazing story to share that happened with Southwest Airlines recently and those of you listening might have seen this on Twitter. I know you didn't, Joey, but-

Joey Coleman: Fantastic, because this is news to me!

Dan Gingiss: So this is in late February and Southwest Air gets an urgent, and I mean urgent, tweet from Taylor Cannie who says, "Help! My friend is in a wedding on Saturday in Costa Rica but she left her bridesmaid dress here in Houston. Can we get her dress on Flight 1734 tomorrow? #WorthATry #BestCustomerService"

Joey Coleman: Oh I like the way she buttered him up put the #BestCustomerService, right? Taylor, well played on pre-framing the customer care team at Southwest Airlines.

Dan Gingiss: Indeed. So Southwest which is known for fantastic service on Twitter responded-.

Joey Coleman: They have fantastic service in the air too, I'll give them that, they've got a great reputation.

Dan Gingiss: Absolutely but they responded very quickly and they said, "We like where your heads at. Mind sending us the direct message with her info." By the way that response alone received 525 likes. So we talked about earlier in this episode about responding to everybody. People are watching this stuff, right? So they obviously went to direct messages of some of the rest of the conversation is not public but later on that day another Twitter user named Philip sent a message back to Taylor and said, "Did this work?" And Taylor responds back and says, "It totally did!!" Two exclamation points. "The dress flies out tomorrow morning." Now that is some customer service. Now I went

and looked up Taylor and a wonderful person that she probably is she's not a huge Twitter profile, right? So she's more like a Joey Coleman. Anyway that response about it totally did in the dress fly out tomorrow got one thousand five hundred eighty one likes. So what happens next? Well Southwest understands a PR opportunity when see one, and so cameras are rolling, and Taylor Layar tweets out a picture that says, "Love Southwest," and has a picture of the wedding dress. And then Southwest interestingly then gets a lot of questions about the dress, because it was a bridesmaid dress and a wedding dress and you know people want to know which was which, et cetera, et cetera. But what I love about this story is that Southwest saw an opportunity to help a passenger at I believe very little cost to themselves and they took it and they went for it. And what they got out of it was a ton of fans on Twitter jumping on and loving Southwest as much as Taylor does.

Joey Coleman: I absolutely love this story because you're right it costs them nothing. The plane is flying that route no matter what. And if the person's willing to bring the dress to the Southwest employee at the airport who can get it onto the plane, and the plane can take it there, and they can hand it off, you're going to make some very happy and loyal customers. We don't even know, or I don't know at this point, if the bridesmaid who was missing the dress flew to the destination on Southwest or not. But what we do know was that Southwest came to the rescue for the day, saved the day. What I also love is the I think Southwest ended up doing something where you could track the dress. And so their dispatchers, for people that are really geeky in the flight world you can log on flight tracker software and see where certain planes are. Their dispatchers actually added a special tag to the flight in the system so that officially it showed the flight moving through the air with the proper tag numbers and all the official details. But then it said, "Rescue The Dress," on it which I thought was yet another way for the entire company to get involved, not just the care team, but the entire business and what I loved about this is you know, Dan, you said earlier, "Oh well they they recognized a good PR opportunity when they saw one." Well fair enough, but what it also is a great opportunity is to get all of your employees in different departments engaged in delivering a remarkable customer experience. So the folks that got the dress at the original airport, which I think was in Texas or something, who delivered the bag or the dress rather I keep saying bag that got it from Houston all the way to Costa Rica. The people in Costa Rica, the people in the flight dispatched team, everybody got to be involved in this feel good story.

Dan Gingiss: Yeah I totally agree. And I think that again you don't have to do this with every single customer. I think a lot of times what people see examples like this they're like, "Wow there's no way we could ever make this happen. We don't have the operations that Southwest has. We don't know the number of employees," et cetera, et cetera. And I would argue that you can because most companies are receiving at least some questions or comments from customers, and they're desiring a response. And you can respond and sometimes the answer is something that simple or you can go above and beyond. And I think there are a lot of companies out there, let's be honest, they would have said not publicly but would have basically said, "Tough luck. That dress... you know it's your problem not our problem." Right" And I love that Southwest said we're going to make it our problem and we're going to do something for a loyal customer.

Joey Coleman: I'm reminded of the line we've referenced on this show before. It may not be your fault, but it's your problem. Southwest said yes to the dress. Are you going to say yes to your customers' needs?

[SEGMENT INTRO][THREE TAKEAWAYS]

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.

[THREE TAKEAWAYS: Questions to Consider for Episode 62]

Dan Gingiss: Takeaway #1 - Are you doing all you can to stay on top of ever changing trends in social media? It's an adapt or be left behind world out there, so it's critical to always be up to date on the latest functionality, techniques, and customer expectations. Blogs like the TSC Digital from Sitel Group, or books like my own, "Winning at Social Customer Care," can help you sort through the noise and identify simple initiatives you can lead at your own company. With social customer service, it's about listening, responding, and integrating with the rest of your business.

Joey Coleman: Takeaway #2 - Are you proactively setting expectations for your customers? A suburban Chicago school district recognized that school closures, while exciting for the kids, can be annoying for the parents. So the superintendent sent an email explaining the decision making process on both snow days and cold days. By setting the appropriate expectations, companies, schools, and other organizations can avoid having disappointed customers. When a customer knows ahead of time what to expect, they are much more likely to be understanding during an actual event.

Dan Gingiss: Takeaway #3 - Are you looking for opportunities to provide "feel good" socially shareable experiences for your customers? Sometimes all it takes is listening to what a customer is asking for, and delivering on it in a unique way. No matter what industry you're in, your customers have birthdays, weddings, anniversaries, and other events that can be leveraged to provide a personalized memorable experience.

Joey Coleman: And those are the three takeaways for this episode. Join us next week live in Fort Lauderdale, Florida for Sitel's Empower CX event, where we'll be recording our first live episode of the Experience This! Show with participation from the live audience. Did I say "live" enough to get your attention? Tickets are free and for more details visit Explore.Sitel.com/ExperienceThis.

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 enjoyed, 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!