

Experience This! Show Podcast
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ExperienceThisShow.com

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Episode 86
Discover How to Deliver a Truly Great Customer Experience

Dan Gingiss: Welcome to Experience This.

Joey Coleman: 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.

Dan Gingiss: Always upbeat and definitely entertaining, customer attention expert Joey Coleman-

Joey Coleman: And social media expert Dan Gingiss serve as your hosts for a weekly dose of positive customer experience.

Dan Gingiss: So, hold on to your headphones. It's time to experience this.

Joey Coleman: Get ready for the final episode of season four of the Experience This! Show.

Dan Gingiss: Join us as we discuss why customer satisfaction and profit might be at odds, a romance novelist who immerses herself in her characters, and how Lego builds, get it, builds customer loyalty.

Joey Coleman: Dollar, damsels and Dumbledore. Oh, my.

[CX Press] Customer Satisfaction vs. Profit

Joey Coleman: There's so many great customer experience articles to read, but who has the 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.

Dan Gingiss: Back in season two, episode 50, we shared an article by my good friend, Mary Drummond, the CMO of Worthix, a survey company that helps companies determine their actual worth to customers. Mary is a brilliant and prolific writer, so I thought it was high time we featured another one of her articles. Today's is called Which is Your CX Priority, Satisfied Customers or Profit?

Joey Coleman: Oh, that's tough. I can only choose one?

Dan Gingiss: Well, that's what the article's about actually. Mary laments that so many companies are having difficulty measuring the true value of customer experience, which of course makes it harder to secure resources for management, which then negatively affects the customer experience. Let's hear from Mary directly.

Mary Drummond: I spent a lot of time speaking to CX practitioners to executives inside corporations and to thought leaders on customer experience. One thing that seemed to be kind of an across the board message was that if that at some point executives and shareholders don't start seeing profit in customer experience, then they're going to start shutting down projects. That is probably the worst case scenario for our field, especially because we understand the value of customer experience. We understand the value of putting the customer first.

What we need to be able to do is find a correlation with those numbers that can be shown to the decision makers in our organizations so we can prove that customer experience is profitable. I mean, it's great to look at things from a holistic approach and try to see the big picture, but that big picture somehow has to tie into numbers or else it's going to be useless for the people who have to base their decisions on these metrics. Right?

So, I think that it wasn't about how profits are more important than customers, especially because customers are what bring profit in the first place. It was more about being able to tie customer experience, tie the experiences of the customers what drives their decision to actually give money to your organization, find the experiences that matter and be able to focus and metrify those so that corporations can make decisions based on numbers that actually tie into the bottom line. So, that's my point with this article. I hope you all give it a read, because it's a really important message.

Dan Gingiss: Mary goes on to say that, "If companies want to maintain and increase profits with customers buying and re-buying their products and services, what they need to provide is an overall experience in which the benefits, both rational and emotional, outweigh the costs, both price and effort or time.

Joey Coleman: Well, that sounds about right. But what's the catch, Dan?

Dan Gingiss: Well, Mary goes on to say that the success of your CX projects hinges on profitability. Why? Because it's pretty difficult to get corporate buy-in for a project that won't increase financial results. "This is a numbers game," she says, "So, if you want to get your board excited, you'll need to demonstrate the profit potential of designing and implementing experiences that positively impact customer's decisions." I think what she's saying here is that you can't just do CX to do CX.

Joey Coleman: Well, I totally agree with that, Dan. I think what's interesting is lots of times the customer experience conversation gets framed as, "Well, you just hug it with the customers, and everything's touchy feely and we'll all be happy." What's interesting is that type of messaging certainly works for a lot of people who work in customer experience, but it doesn't work for the bean counters. It doesn't work for the financial folks in the organization that are like, "Well, what's the value of a hug?"

I'm a big fan of some incredible research out of Harvard Business School and Stanford Business School that notes that just a five percent reduction in customer defection leads to a 25 to 100% increase in profits. So, lots of times the key benefit of customer experience is customer retention. If we can keep more of our customers, our profits go up. Why? Because most businesses are already operating at a profit. So, the incremental dollars that are spent by a customer who's been there for a long time are more profitable than the first dollars they spent because we've already recouped the acquisition costs. So, I do think there is a clear financial bottom line profits reason for focusing on customer experience. It's just about how we frame it in our conversations within our organizations.

Dan Gingiss: I'm going to give you another example that will make the bean counters happy, which was some research done by Watermark Consulting. Now, what they did was they looked at the Forrester Customer Experience Index, which comes out every year and ranks companies based on their customer experience scores. Watermark took a look at the public companies on the list and they compared the return in the stock market over 11 years of the leaders in customer experience to the laggards in customer experience.

Now, what was amazing was that not only did the leaders steadily and handily out perform the S&P 500 but they performed almost 3X what the laggards did. So, the laggards were also laggards in the stock market. The leaders were also leaders in the stock market, and the leaders performed way better multiple times than the laggards. There is a connection here. The companies that were rising to the top of Forrester's Customer Experience Index were also performing the best on Wall Street.

Joey Coleman: I love it because not only were they performing better than those who decided not to focus on customer experience or who had poor customer experiences, but if I understood the research right, they were performing better than the S&P 500 in general, which by the way, to be on the S&P 500 means that your business is doing well. As a general rule, those are the companies that are picked to be put into that 500 company basket. So, the fact that they were over-indexing on that group as well to me indicates that their dollars and cents really come together when it comes to focusing on customer experience.

Dan Gingiss: So, I think to summarize Mary's article, it isn't really a choice between satisfaction or profit. You have to invest in the CX experiences that create both, that make customers happy and satisfied and therefore willing to spend more money with you. So, the takeaway is that just like any other corporate initiative, you can't expect to get resources and executive buy-in without demonstrating clear results. So, make sure you have the analytics in place to track the actual impact of any customer experience initiative.

[What Are You Reading] Romance Novels!

Joey Coleman: We spend hours and hours nose deep in books. We believe that everything you read influences the experiences you create. So, we're happy to answer our favorite question. What are you reading?

Dan Gingiss: Joey, are you a fan of the romance novel genre?

Joey Coleman: Well, you know, that's an interesting question, Dan. Fan is probably too big of a word. I have read some romance novels, because I try to read across a lot of different genres. I wouldn't necessarily say I'm an avid regular reader.

Dan Gingiss: Well, I think after this segment you might become a bigger fan of one particular romance novelist.

Joey Coleman: Ooh-la-la. Tell me more. You have my attention, Dan.

Dan Gingiss: Well, her name is Allie Pleiter. She's the best-selling author of more than 40 books.

Joey Coleman: Wow, that's a lot. Dan and I have each written one book, and we know how much goes into writing one book. 40 books, good for you, Allie. That's a lot.

Dan Gingiss: Yeah. She is releasing an average of four novels per year. She has sold more than 1.4 million books around the world. Now, I had the pleasure of meeting Allie recently at The National Speakers Association Influence Event where you and I were both roomies as I remember.

Joey Coleman: Yes. We're not just co-hosts on the podcast. Occasionally when we're at the same event, we get to be roomies.

Dan Gingiss: As it turns out, she's from my home state of Illinois. So, we met at an Illinois NSA Chapter dinner because she's also a professional speaker and productivity coach. Anyway, I wouldn't normally have included a discussion of a bunch of romance novels on our podcast, but Allie told me something really interesting about her writing method. You know how we often talk about putting yourself in the shoes of your customer?

Joey Coleman: Yeah. I mean, it's basically one of the most repeated tenets of customer experience theory.

Dan Gingiss: Well, Allie puts herself in the shoes of her fictional character.

Joey Coleman: Wait a second. How does she do that?

Dan Gingiss: I think we should let her tell us in her own words.

Allie Pleiter: My primary customer experience is what a reader experiences when he or she reads one of my novels. I go out of my way to make sure that that experience is as rich and engrossing and enthralling as possible. Now, for me, that means that I need to do whatever I can to actually experience what I want my reader to experience. That's not only a good customer experiences, it's also a lot of fun for me. I've had a lot of tremendously fun adventures doing it.

I have talked to a circus and gone up onto a trapeze to get an idea of what that feels like. I've learned to work a ten foot bull whip, because I needed a character who used a whip as one of his weapons. That was an amazing experience. I've had a world-class barista show me how to work one of the most expensive and intricate coffee machines, espresso machines to show me what that was like and what it felt like to work that machinery or to wield that whip. One of my favorites recently was I was working on a book that involved a bison ranch. I had the opportunity to spend a couple of days on the bison ranch, and they staged a bison stampede for me so that I got to feel like what it was like to be in the middle of a hundred 2,000 pound animals coming at you.

Not only is that fun for me, and I think it shows up in the work in the fun that I'm having and the adventure that I'm not only going on but I'm pulling my reader on, but I think it makes for really vivid descriptions. It has a chance to bring a reader along with me and create a really visceral, emotional, wonderful experience for them as they read one of my books. That's certainly what I hope happens, and I certainly have a tremendous amount of fun while I do it.

Dan Gingiss: Isn't that absolutely awesome?

Joey Coleman: I love it. I love how she is flawlessly executing an important tenet of customer experience by replicating the experiences from a fictional world in the real world, at least if that makes sense.

Dan Gingiss: Yeah. My head's exploding a little bit, but yes it does. I mean, she's not just going to write about a character that performs on a trapeze. She's going to actually get on that trapeze herself. It's got to make her a better writer, because frankly I don't expect that many of her readers have been on a trapeze. There might be readers that could figure out that her description is not

entirely accurate. For example, I would imagine you being a recovering lawyer that you probably can identify some things in lawyers in fictional text that may not be really accurate.

Joey Coleman: Oh my gosh, Dan, all the time. All the time. In fact, there are many legal movies and TV shows that I just refuse to watch because they get it so, so wrong. Same thing with watching shows about the intelligence community or espionage. I'm looking at it going, "Yeah, that's not at all how it works." The authors that are really good at writing about certain scenarios, like John Grisham is a well known and quality writer in the legal space or Tom Clancy was a well known writer in the espionage space.

One of the things that made their fans such rabid fans is because they got the details right, the little things that no one would know. I remember years ago reading a Tom Clancy novel when I was working at the Central Intelligence Agency, and it was talking about fighting for a parking space. It was like this throwaway paragraph about fighting for a parking space at headquarters. I was reading this while I was on my way to work knowing that there was going to be a search for a parking space. So, the fact that he knew this little nuance said, "Oh, this guy's writing directly to me."

Dan Gingiss: Yeah. I mean, one of my favorite authors of all time was Pat Conroy, may he rest in peace. He spent much of his life in Charleston and wrote about Charleston with that same level of detail that literally put you there with him smelling the smells and seeing the sights. I think that's what made him such a good writer.

In the genre that Allie writes about, she's got all sorts of different characters doing all sorts of different things. That has resulted in her having all sort of really cool experiences by trying to experience them in advance of her characters.

Joey Coleman: Well, talk about creating a career for yourself that is based on experience. Not only has she clearly had a successful career as a writer and as a coach and an advisor, but she's had a really fun career doing all these things that she writes about.

Dan Gingiss: Absolutely. Check out Allie at AlliePleiter.com. That's www.A-L-L-I-E-P-L-E-I-T-E-R.com and her books including her newest one released in October on Amazon. We will include links on our show notes at www.ExperienceThisShow.com if you missed any of those. We are sure that you too will fall in love with romance novels.

[Start the Conversation] Avtex: Journey Mapping

Joey Coleman: Sometimes all it takes is a single question to get your company thinking about an improved customer experience. Here's an idea for how you can start the conversation.

This week's start the conversation topic is journey mapping. In order to deliver quality experiences, it's important to fully understand the paths that your customers take when interacting with your business. Creating customer journey maps based on real accurate data from real customers can help you visualize the steps that your customers must take to research your brand, seek assistance or information, and resolve issues and make purchases.

While many CX leaders are familiar with or actively engaged in the journey mapping process, many fail to create the truly effective customer journey maps necessary to enable experience improvements or experience design.

Dan Gingiss: When creating a journey map, be sure to, one, focus on one journey at a time. It's important to chart individual journeys rather than attempting to create a map of all potential paths simultaneously. Two, identify customer personas who are most likely to engage in the journey to be mapped. Three, use all data available to create depth and detail around the journey. Four, involve multiple departments to gain various perspectives during the journey mapping process.

Joey Coleman: Dan, we're here at the end of the year and thinking about 2020 to come, and I'm going to make a pretty bold statement. I don't think there is a listener to our show whose business couldn't benefit from going back and either re-looking at the journey maps they've already made or creating new ones, because what I've found, and I do a lot of journey mapping with my client, is that one of two things has happened. Either number one, the maps they made were made a long time ago and there's a whole lot of new inputs and new interactions that aren't showing up anywhere on the map that are affecting the journey dramatically. Or number two, they've actually never done a mapping process.

When we get them in the room to do the mapping process, I have yet to find a single employee at any company that can detail every interaction that happens in the journey. So, if you're going to do journey mapping, make sure you have stakeholders from all the different departments so that you can actually track and record against every interaction that they have in the lifetime of the customer journey.

Dan Gingiss: I too have done a lot of journey maps both in my previous jobs and with clients now as a consultant. One thing that I find is it's really important to also include the customer's emotion at each stop of the journey, because that's going to help you identify the places you need to work on. If the emotion is, for example, frustration, that might be one that you want to pay attention to.

Now for this week's question about journey mapping. Have we taken steps to truly understand the path our customers take to interact with our brand? We encourage you to start the conversation within your own organization and then continue it with our friends at Avtex at ExperienceConversations.com. That website again is ExperienceConversations.com.

[This Just Happened] Lego Customer Service

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

Dan Gingiss: Joey, we know from a couple of episodes last season that you and your family are big Lego fans. Tell me, do you also like Harry Potter?

Joey Coleman: You know, it's interesting, Dan. The Venn diagram I think between Lego fans and Harry Potter fans is pretty much entirely overlapping. So, yes, we are 100% Harry Potter fans. In fact, I've got a six year old and a three and a half year old. My six year old, he went to school this year for first grade and he came home the first day and he started telling us this story about a cat that could turn into a person and how they were sitting around class listening to this story about wizards and magic. My wife and I were a little bit disappointed, because it dawned on us that the school was introducing him to Harry Potter. It's great. We love the school. They're doing an amazing job-

Dan Gingiss: Even before you could, you mean.

Joey Coleman: But even before we could introduce him to Harry Potter, because we weren't sure it's that ... It's kind of like when you introduced your kids to Star Wars, it was while Wendy introduced them to Harry Potter. In short, yes, we are huge Harry Potter fans.

Dan Gingiss: All right. Well, you're going to love this story then, because it is about both Lego and Harry Potter. I want to stipulate that I found this example on social media, LinkedIn as it turns out. It involves a web chat discussion between Liam, a Lego customer, and Ronald, a Lego customer service agent.

It starts with Liam saying, "I'm looking for replacement building instructions for Hogwarts Castle. Please can you help? Thanks, Liam." The customer service agent, Ronald, responds and says, "Hi, Liam. How are you doing today? Thanks for getting in touch. Did Harry perhaps discard his invisibility cloak a bit carelessly, or did a jar of pumpkin juice spill over the building instructions?" Liam answers, "Haha, not quite. The cleaners at my father-in-law's nursing home used an expelliarmus spell on book one and it found its way into the bin. I understand how we can download them, but I was hoping to get a

replacement sent out if possible, please. It's just book one. We have books two to four still."

Ronald answers, "Oh, no. Sadly I'm only a muggle and won't be able to use a spell to make a new building instruction booklet magically appear on your doorstep in an instant, but I'm happy to send you a new book out from our warehouse in Demark. It will arrive within five to ten days. We have book one in stock. Can you please confirm your full name and address including postal code, email address and phone number? I'll then setup a free of charge order for the new book straightaway." Liam then answers, "I heard the flying car was out of order and that the owls are currently on strike. Snail mail will be absolutely fine. Thanks so much for your help. Muggles are definitely underrated. Here are my details."

Ronald answers, "Brilliant. I'll set everything up and you'll receive a notification from our house elves in the warehouse as soon as they've dispatched the new book to your Lego Hogwarts Castle set, and it will be complete again. Is there perhaps anything else I can assist you with today, Liam?" Liam says, "No. That is all. Thank you. You have been amazing. The best conversation I've had all year." Now, is that not one of the best customer service interactions you've ever seen?

Joey Coleman: I love it. I love it, love it, love it. When you have fans, and let's be candid, ideally we're striving for all of our customers to be fans, and you share a common affinity, which is very obvious here because the Lego customer is asking for the instructions for the Hogwarts Castle. So, we already know by default that there's some appreciation of Harry Potter. The fact that the customer service rep also has an appreciation of Harry Potter, it allows the interaction to go to a completely different level.

I love the personalization. I love the playfulness and the humor. It was almost like it seemed at one point they were trying to, I don't want to say one-up each other on their knowledge, but there was definitely some references to less common elements of the Harry Potter genre. So, I thought it was really great how they interacted back and forth. Just made for, as I think the customer finally said at the end, a fantastic conversation.

Dan Gingiss: Yeah. What I loved about it was that clearly Ronald, the agent, has the freedom to talk to customers in the way that he wants to. That allows him to express his own individuality, his own personality and his own fandom of Harry Potter. For someone else, it might be a Star Wars Lego that evokes that same kind of conversation.

I think too often companies are so concerned about scripting customer service agents and making sure they stay to the script that they wouldn't allow someone like Ronald to have fun with a customer like he got to do with Liam.

Joey Coleman: Yeah. The reality is scripts in a customer service or customer service representative setting are usually designed to make sure that the right messaging happens when the reality is, everything we see in this example from Lego is the right messaging. It's warm. It's fun. It's playful. It's connective. These are the type of interactions you would hope that all of your customer service reps are having with all of your customers.

Dan Gingiss: Again, people may ask, "Well, I can't possibly do this at my business, because I don't have anything related to Harry Potter." We would encourage you to look at your business, and more importantly listen to your customers, and find an opportunity to connect with them on a level that may have nothing to do with your business.

I mean, here, yes, it is a Hogwarts Castle, but truly they're connecting on their love of Harry Potter not necessarily on their love of Lego, which is the business. That's why I think it's so great. So, you too could have somebody call in and you may find out they're a coffee fan or you may find out that they're a sports fan of a certain team. Let your agents talk to them about that and establish that human relationship.

Joey Coleman: Well, and Dan, to kind of end up our season four, let me give some positive words about social media. One of the cool things about social media is you can use it as an investigatory tool. You can investigate your customers by going on their social media profiles, many of which are wide open, and seeing what they're actually interested in. It never ceases to amaze me when I get the opportunity to connect on a passion I have with one of my clients.

I found out recently that one of my good friends and clients from Australia also loves drinking root beer. So, now every time we connect, it's kind of a fun root beer interaction. How did I find that out? Not by talking to him about it. It could've come up that way, but I happened to see a post that he did about enjoying a root beer one night. I thought, "Huh, here's a guy that likes something that I like." So, I would posit that there are all sorts of points of commonality that you have with your customers if you're willing to look in the same way that Ronald did from Lego.

Dan Gingiss: The takeaway here is, let your employees have fun with customers when appropriate. If Ronald was forced to stick to a script or follow precise rules for answering customers, he never would have created, quote, the best conversation I've had all year, unquote, with Liam. Take it from Lego, this is how you lock in a customer for life.

As we reach the end of the calendar year 2019, we also come to the end of season four of the Experience This! Show.

Joey Coleman: Season four would not have happened without the support of many incredible people, including-

Dan Gingiss: Our partners at SAP Customer Experience, especially Federique Demonte Faginto, Margo Hilagmen and Jennifer Vandazand. Our friends at Yoko Co. who continue to maintain and update our website, including Stacy, Max and Chris. And the fantastic team at Avtex, especially Marshall Salisbury, Kurt Schroeder, Beth Ingbritzen and Andy Balgord who helped us start the conversation each week.

Joey Coleman: Our production team including Aaron Lasko and audio engineer superb Taylor Marvin from the incomparable Coupe Studios in Boulder, Colorado, Whitney, our virtual assistant and keeper of the show notes, and my law school roommate, Davin Sieman, who continues to serve as the composer of all of our show music.

Dan Gingiss: Last, but certainly not least, to you, our loyal listeners. We could not keep doing the Experience This! Show if you didn't show up every week on iTunes or Spotify or Stitcher or wherever you're listening today and listen to us two goofballs talk about experience.

Joey Coleman: Thanks for a wonderful season four. We hope you have a fantastic start to 2020. We'll see you for season five of the Experience This! Show.

Wow. Thanks for joining us for another episode of Experience This!

Dan Gingiss: We know that 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. 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. We'll see you next week for more-

Joey Coleman: Experience-

Dan Gingiss: This!