

Experience This! Show Podcast
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Earth Day Episode

Introduction: 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 attention expert, Joey Coleman and social media expert, Dan Gingiss, serve as your hosts for a weekly dose of Positive Customer Experience. So hold onto your headphones. It's time to Experience This.

Joey Coleman: Get ready for a very special earth day episode of the Experience This show.

Dan Gingiss: Join us as we discuss cell phone cases you can bury in your garden. Special privileges for those that make green choices and the shifting expectations of thirsty customers.

Joey Coleman: Composting, selecting and hydrating. Oh, my.

[Dissecting the Experience] Pela Case

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.

Joey Coleman: A little disclaimer about this environmental episode of Experience This. For some reason in the last few years here in America, we've increasingly decided to make environmental issues into political issues. While Dan and I feel that there are certainly political and economic considerations that need to be brought into the conversation about the environment, the environment is something that impacts all of us regardless of political affiliation. The environment is something that is changing regardless of why we think it's changing. We believe that it's time to spend less time discussing the why and more time discussing the what now. The fact that the matter is we all live on the same planet and all of our customers live on the same planet and if we're going to continue to create remarkable experiences for our customers and remarkable experiences for our employees, we're going to need to have a planet to live on.

Joey Coleman: Have you ever heard of compostable cell phone cases, Dan?

Dan Gingiss: I can't say that I have, Joey.

Joey Coleman: I had a feeling that this might be a newer concept for you because frankly, it's a fairly newer concept for me. And I wanted to talk about it because I was so intrigued by the story of the company that makes these, that I had to purchase one for myself. Now, in the interest of full disclosure, Pela Case are the makers of the world's first compostable phone cases. The company's run by three of my friends, Matt Bertulli, Brad Peterson, and Jeremy Lang. And to be clear, they didn't ask me to talk about their products on the show. In fact, prior to us recording this, they have no idea that I'm going to talk about their products and nor are they sponsors. But my experience with their product was so compelling that I needed to tell our listeners about it.

Dan Gingiss: We talk about in almost every episode that if you create a remarkable experience, you're going to create people that not just want to talk about you, but need to talk about you to their friends, family, and in this particular case, podcast listeners. So it sounds like that's what Pela did here.

Joey Coleman: They absolutely did, Dan.

Joey Coleman: So let me set the stage for you. I purchased a new iPhone that was a different size from my previous phone and so I needed a new case. Now it bothered me that while I was able to trade in my old iPhone to Apple for them to resell to a new customer, the change in phone size meant I had to throw out my old cell phone case and get a new one. And I hadn't had that phone for that long. But as it turns out that wasn't true.

Joey Coleman: Enter Pela Case. Pela was founded in 2011 by environmental consultant Jeremy Lang after a trip to Hawaii left him shocked to see how much plastic pollution had washed up on the beaches. So Jeremy took action and after much research, trial and error, he created a material called flax stick, a unique blend of plant based bio polymer mixed with flax shive. An annual renewable waste product of the flax oil seed harvest in Canada. Now using this flax stick, Pela created its flax shive phone case, a case that comes in both iPhone and Android model formats. The cool thing about this case, it completely breaks down into carbon water and organic biomass. In short, that means you can put your phone case into the compost or bury it in your garden when you're finished with it and it will naturally and quickly decompose.

Dan Gingiss: And I'm sitting here with Joey and recording studio and actually looking at his phone case and it's pretty cool. It looks like it has almost, you know those plantable cards that you get that have the seeds in them and you can grow something. That's kind of what it looks like except I am guessing this is flax shive.

Joey Coleman: Those are the flax, that's actually the flax shive that you can see in the case. They're kind of little flecks of yellow on a black case. Which interestingly enough, if you'll notice on the case, it has a honeycomb design with bumblebees on it. And this particular case, when you purchase it, they make a donation to support honeybees because they're a huge part of the ecosystem. And if we could go do a whole segment on honeybees and how the impact that they play-

Dan Gingiss: But I will say just before you move on that it actually looks like a pretty normal case. I'm not sure if you had told me it was biodegradable or compostable that I would have known because it looks like it's a black case, rubbery in texture. It feels pretty strong so it doesn't look any different.

Joey Coleman: Yeah, and it's very strong. It protects the phone. It's got great grip to it, which I know is something, especially with the new iPhones that feel like you're holding a wet fish in your hand, they're so slippery, you want to have a little grip. What I thought was really interesting about this whole setup is that it gave me the opportunity to not only make an environmental choice, but Pela Case did something with the old phone case that was interesting too.

Joey Coleman: They have a program called Pela 360. And this program accepts other company's plastic phone cases that are then either up cycled into Pela products or properly recycled. So when a customer purchases a Pela Case, they also receive in the package an envelope that allows them to send their used Pela case when they're done with it or a conventional plastic case back to Pela's sustainability studio.

Joey Coleman: Now several national retailers are also interested in this program as well and plan to offer Pela 360 in their retail locations later this year.

Dan Gingiss: Mr. Coleman, I have a question. So why would somebody want to mail back their Pela Case if they can just plant it in their garden?

Joey Coleman: For some reason, if somebody might live in a place where they don't have a garden. They might live in an urban environment where for them to go out and find a shovel and dig something and put it in, that's a challenge. What's really cool about the case though, here in Boulder, it's filled with environmentally aware folks. We have curbside compost,

for example, like in the same way that the trash is picked up on the curb every week, every other week the compost is picked up. So when I'm done with my case, I'll be able to just throw it in the compost and that's easier.

Joey Coleman: But they're trying to think through all the reasons why someone wouldn't make the right choice to eliminate those barriers and to make it very easy to make an environmental choice. What's crazy to me is the impact that cell phone cases has on the environment. I have to admit, before I purchased my Pela Case, I had no idea how big this problem is. More than 1.5 billion phone cases are discarded every year. The majority of which are made with conventional plastic. And to make matters worse, the plastic recycling system isn't working as well as it needs to, as less than 5% of all plastic gets recycled, the rest ends up in landfills.

Dan Gingiss: Yeah, and this is clearly a problem. I've been a big recycler my whole life, but even I have grown fatigued over the years as you find out that companies don't know what to do with all of the recycling that we're generating, and China no longer wants to take our recycling. There's been stories of entire townships that have taken recycling and it's all landed in the landfill anyway. And so it's a huge problem and it's a problem that a lot of companies are trying to address in different ways. I've used straws and silverware and coffee cups that are compostable or at a very least recyclable. But now coming up on biodegradable.

Dan Gingiss: I think it's really interesting when it works. There are other times where I've had paper straws over a plastic straw and I find myself sucking on paper shards. And so the product itself doesn't work very well. And I think that's why I made the comment about your case is that we can't forget, especially as experienced people, that the products we create still have to work.

Joey Coleman: It still has to work.

Dan Gingiss: It can't just be environmentally friendly.

Joey Coleman: Just like any [inaudible 00:09:47] to sit down at the game is the product has to work.

Joey Coleman: And Dan, you're so spot on. Increasingly more and more companies are looking at how can every facet of their business be environmentally aware. And it's one of the things that I love about Pela because their commitment to the environment truly cuts into every interaction they have with you. The inset mailer that I received with my new phone case, which you can see some photos of on our show notes page for

this episode at Experiencethisshow.com reads as follows, "Welcome to the Pela family. Thank you for helping us keep the planet clean and healthy. You'll notice that your Pela case did not come with a package. We decided to eliminate this step to further reduce unnecessary waste. With the money we save on our packaging, we can donate even more funds to clean ocean initiatives around the world." When I read this, I absolutely loved it.

Joey Coleman: I mean everywhere you look, people are paying more attention to use and reuse and the disposal of the things that are used. And it's not just consumers that are interested in this. Okay. A few months ago, Marcy Venture Partners, co founded by American rapper Jay-Z, invested \$5 million in Pela Case.

Dan Gingiss: Wait, wait, wait. Is this our first Jay-Z reference?

Joey Coleman: This is our first Jay-Z reference, I think. Definitely this season, maybe ever. And it's not surprising to me that pillowcase case is catching the attention of consumers and investors alike, given the significant environmental improvements they're making. So here are a couple of stats about this one little company. 25 employees, and what they've been able to do in terms of their environmental impact. Pela Case prevented 147,180 pounds of plastic from entering the waste stream. They protected 14,890 feet of coastline with the Surf Rider Foundation. Over 530,000 people have switched to using compostable phone cases, and the company has grown 3,509% in the past five years, and averages four million visitors to their website per month.

Joey Coleman: We talked in an earlier episode about the Musee d'Orsay in Paris. They've had four million visitors to their museum since they opened. This website's getting four million visitors per month.

Dan Gingiss: So the learning here for our listeners is that environmentally concerned companies are drawing the attention of consumers. Consumers are seeking them out. And so it is one of these things that if you're not thinking about, you really should be because especially with younger generations, but I think starting with our generation, Joey, with Gen X and younger, this is a hot topic. And people are choosing to do business with companies that are at least paying attention to this and trying to be environmentally conscious.

Joey Coleman: They are. And what's great is when you start to pay attention to this a little bit in your company, it naturally takes on a life of its own. I mean, Pela started by making cell phone cases. They now make biodegradable sunglasses because that's another thing that people

often buy. They buy a new pair every season or every other season and what do they do with the old pairs? Well lots of times they end up in the trash. So Pela has made biodegradable sunglasses that work fantastically and are incredibly beautiful from an aesthetics point of view.

Joey Coleman: In fact, I was speaking with the CEO, Matt Bertulli not too long ago, and he said something to me in passing. "Joey, many companies have a mission. We're a mission that happens to have a company." And it's absolutely inspiring to me what the folks at Pela are doing to make the world a better place. They're designing beautiful products, they're growing their business, they're taking great care of both their customers and their employees. And in fact, Bertulli said, "Since day one, we've been focused on the most sustainable options when making our products, making products more easily accessible to our customers and lowering our carbon footprint are high priorities for us. The mobile phone industry is a great example of where quite a bit can be done to create better, more environmentally friendly products. Put simply, as a consumer, you can protect your phone and the planet. There doesn't need to be a compromise."

Dan Gingiss: I love that part about they're not needing to be a compromise because what it means is there's still profitability that can be had and they're still satisfied customers that can be had, et cetera. So if you're interested in learning more about Pela case, and of course, as Joey said, they're not a sponsor. We don't get anything for you going to this site. We're just sharing it as a courtesy. It's P-E-L-A-C-A-S-E.com to look at their phone cases or their biodegradable sunglasses. And again, the takeaway for you is think about what you can do to align what's right for your business, what's right for your customers and what's right for the planet. It's the earth day trifecta.

[Required Remarkable] Green Parking Spaces

Speaker 1: Just because you have required elements of your business doesn't mean they need to be boring. It's time to get creative, have some fun and make people sit up and take notice. Get your customers talking when you make the required remarkable.

Joey Coleman: Have you ever been rewarded for the car you choose to drive, Dan?

Dan Gingiss: Rewarded how? I don't think so. But why do you ask?

Joey Coleman: Well, recently I had an experience where I got special treatment for choosing a specific rental car, something that had never happened to me before. So here's what happened. I flew to Washington DC for a series of meetings and speaking events and as such, decided to rent a car because most of my engagements were happening outside the city in Virginia and Maryland. DC has got a great public transportation system but I knew I was going to have to be going here, there and every there. So I rented a car. And as I went to the car rental place, I was thinking about the case and I was thinking about my increased effort to try to be more environmentally conscious. And so I decided to rent a Prius.

Dan Gingiss: That's cool. I'm not even sure I've ever been offered the chance to rent a Prius, but I probably would take them up on the offer if it was there.

Joey Coleman: Yeah. And it was comparably priced to the other rental cars. And of course in the back of my head I was thinking, "Well, I'll help the environment. Plus I won't have to pay for as much gas when I go back to the airport. So this'll be a net win for everybody involved." And then I headed out for a series of meetings. The day of meetings culminated with an event and dinner near the HEC warehouse in Ivy City, which is an up and coming part of Northeast Washington DC. And when I pulled into the parking garage and started to look for a spot, my eye caught something I'd never seen before. The very best parking spots in the garage, the ones that were closest to the stairs and elevators were painted green and reserved for low emitting fuel efficient vehicles.

Dan Gingiss: I love that. That's a great reward for driving green. Although I have to tell you where my mind goes here. The only downside is it requires the non efficient cars to drive farther.

Joey Coleman: Fair enough. Fair enough. True, true. But I imagine it also creates a scenario where the non efficient car drivers see that and whether consciously or subconsciously they're reminded that the choice they made there could be a benefit for making a different choice. So it was also interesting that it was painted next to the elevators. So I took the stairs, not the elevator, but that was the setup. And here's what I thought. I made a decision the day before on what car to rent and now I was getting special treatment for picking the environmentally friendly choice.

Joey Coleman: If you want to see what these parking spots look like, by the way, go to our show notes at Experiencethisshow.com and you can see some photos that I took. But what I found impressive is that almost every business with a physical location has some type of parking option for their customers that are visiting. And yet how many businesses have made the time to think about making this required component, i.e. Parking spaces for your visitors into something remarkable.

Dan Gingiss: Yeah, I'm reminded of some other parking options. I mean obviously handicapped parking has been around for a long time and I would put that as a required part of your business because it tends to be regulated and mandated. But now there's some places that have special parking for expectant mothers or for veterans or for other things. And again, I'm somewhat split. I love the idea in concept. I think it is great for an expected mother, for example, not to have to walk quite as far. I'm also on the flip side, sometimes confused slash perturbed when I'm driving around in a parking spot and there's so many allocated to different things. I literally can't figure out which spot I'm supposed to park in.

Dan Gingiss: There was one recently where I could see the word veterans, but there was like four sentences of copy on there that I think had something to do with how you prove you're a veteran with an ID card or whatever. And I'm like, "I don't know what this is but I'm going to go find a different spot." Because it just was sort of too confusing. So I think it's something to watch out for but I think it rewarding for the green choice is a great way to get more people to choose green.

Joey Coleman: Right, I agree. And as with all initiatives you might adopt around making a required element of your business more remarkable, the goal is to make it remarkable, not complicated. And so I think there is definitely something to pay attention to there. What surprised me or kind of it reinforced for me maybe, is that every business has the opportunity to think about the environment in a different way and think about how their business footprint could contribute to making the environment better.

Joey Coleman: I also think it's the case that there isn't a business on the planet that doesn't have at least a percentage of their customers, and that percentage may differ depending on the industry that you're in, that aren't increasingly committed to environmental causes. So I think you get the opportunity to build affinity with certain segments of the

customers you serve by showing that you too are paying attention to this stuff.

Dan Gingiss: Yeah, and to give another example, my local grocery store not only rewards you for bringing your own grocery bags, the reusable grocery bags. I think they knock off like, I don't know, ten cents per bag on your order, but they also have a monthly drawing for a gift card to the grocery store that you can only enter if you brought reusable bags. It's a similar concept where they're not pushing it.

Dan Gingiss: And I'll be honest with you, much to my dismay, I'd say 90% of the people, maybe 95% of the people still choose the plastic bags. I mean, I wonder how much of an impact it's making. But that said, when I put my name and phone number into the drawing box, the drawing box is full. So that means some people are making the choice to bring their own bags.

Joey Coleman: Absolutely. So one tip and two stories. The tip, whenever I don't take the plastic bag, like even if the gas station, you decided to grab a candy bar before a long road trip and they say, "Would you like a bag?" I always say, "No thanks. I'll do my bit to help the environment." I actually say that with the thought being that slowly but surely, the more we can work this into our conversations, the better it is for all of it. Two quick stories.

Joey Coleman: One, in Switzerland, not too long ago, they decided to start charging for garbage pickup by the pound. So they installed scales in all of the garbage trucks that would drive around and pick up people's garbage. And they weighed your garbage and your bill for garbage collection was based on how much garbage you handed in. This was an effort to make the country more responsible about waste. In 60 days it dropped 90%.

Dan Gingiss: Wow.

Joey Coleman: 90%.

Dan Gingiss: Because people are just stashing it in their basement?

Joey Coleman: I think it's because people looked at it and they said, "Oh my God, if I have to pay for it, I don't want to do this." A lot of jurisdictions have moved, the second story, have moved to you have to pay for the plastic bags. The more you have to pay, the more it will condition the behavior. When it's you have to pay five cents for the plastic bag, well there's not as much of an incentive. When you have to pay \$5 for the plastic bag, it changes the conversation.

Dan Gingiss: Yeah. In the town that my parents live in, you have to buy stickers for every garbage bag and you have to pay per garbage bag but recycling is free. So it does give you that incentive.

Joey Coleman: I love it. I love it. So how can all of this apply to your business? Well, let's ask a couple of questions. Are there extra little perks you can give to your favorite customers? Can you treat customers better that align with your mission, vision, and values? Can you use design in positioning to court customers that fit a specific demographic you're trying to attract?

Joey Coleman: All too often, companies are afraid to do something special for one type of customer at the risk of alienating another type of customer. But the best companies realize that it is important to know what you're against as what you stand for. The more you narrow the types of audiences you serve, at very least, the more comfortable you get with celebrating according specific types of customers, the more successful your business will be. And the more your customers will start talking about you. When is the last time someone remarked about the parking spaces in the garage or a parking lot next to your building? Every interaction is a chance to stand out. Every touchpoint offers the chance to do something special. Every required element of your business can be made into something remarkable.

[This Just Happened] Water at the Hole

Speaker 1: We love telling stories and sharing key insights you can implement or avoid based on our experiences. Can you believe that this just happened?

Joey Coleman: I noticed something while traveling in the past few months that I think represents an interesting conversation about how brands and companies are responding to changes in customer expectations and behaviors. And I was hoping to illustrate this point by talking about water.

Dan Gingiss: Water?

Joey Coleman: Yes, water. So allow me to explain. In the past when I travel for work, water was something that I didn't really think that much about, at least consciously. I drink water in route to the airport and then throw out my plastic water bottle when I got to security because you're not allowed to

take it through security. I then go through security and on the other side I had purchased another plastic bottle of water. I then drink that bottle of water before getting on the plane. And then once on the plane I'd ask for water, which the flight attendant would pour out of a plastic water bottle into a plastic cup.

Joey Coleman: I then get off the plane and head to my hotel. Usually to discover that the hotel had provided several plastic bottles of water in my room, some of which are complimentary, others of which required me to pay an arm and leg to purchase.

Dan Gingiss: That is a lot of water and many plastic bottles. So I will, as a PSA to our listeners, let you know that you can take through an empty plastic bottle.

Joey Coleman: Yes, you can.

Dan Gingiss: If you've already drunk the water.

Joey Coleman: Yes, you can. But you have to drink all the water real quick and then take it through and then where do you fill it? Which actually brings me to the point that I wanted to make in our conversation today. But before I get to that, let's talk about how big this problem is. Okay, first of all, buying all that extra water, it's like \$5 to \$10 a bottle, right? So it's expensive, but what's worse than that is the impact it has on the earth of having that much plastic being only used once.

Joey Coleman: It's estimated that Americans use over 50 billion plastic bottles of water per year and only 23% of those get recycled. In Lake Michigan alone, an equivalent of 100 Olympic size pools full of plastic bottles get dumped into the Lake every year.

Dan Gingiss: That's my lake you're talking about.

Joey Coleman: Your backyard. Over 100 Olympic size pools filled with plastic bottles. That's how many plastic bottles get dumped in each year.

Dan Gingiss: And Joey, I don't want to get you riled up here. And we did say at the beginning of the show that we weren't going to get political or talk about the why of climate change. But I do think this particular issue is fascinating because when you and I were growing up, there was no such thing as bottled water.

Joey Coleman: It didn't exist.

Dan Gingiss: So in one generation, humans have created this problem. That's a fact.

Joey Coleman: 100%.

Dan Gingiss: You can't argue that. It's not about science, that's a fact. We created this problem.

Joey Coleman: And I'll go one step further, corporations have played a huge part in creating that problem because corporations have messaged out, "Well, the water in your tap, oh, it's not as purified and isn't electrolyte filled and as wonderful as this water." When the reality is if we actually test the water, the stuff you're drinking out of the plastic bottles, in most jurisdictions now, not in Flint, Michigan, oh my God, fix that problem, but in most jurisdictions, the water out of your tap is healthier and better for you than the water in the plastic bottle that you're buying at the grocery store.

Joey Coleman: So I thought this was ridiculous. I wanted to stay hydrated, but I realized the impact I was having. So I set a goal in 2019 to try to make it through the year without purchasing a single plastic bottle of water. And the way I did that is I took one of those metal water bottles that I'd received, this swag at an event I had spoken at. I clipped it to my backpack and as I set out on my various trips. I started looking for water fountains where I could refill my reusable water bottle instead of stores selling single use plastic water bottles.

Dan Gingiss: And now that we're in 2020, how did you do on your goal?

Joey Coleman: Well, to be honest, I did fairly well, especially considering my prior behavior. And I think it's important when we think about environmental initiatives that improvement is better than perfection. So across 2019 I purchased less than ten plastic bottles of water during my travel, which when I think back to the fact that prior to that in 2018, I might've purchased ten in a single trip. That felt like really good progress.

Joey Coleman: And each time I did purchase one I felt a pang of frustration and made sure that I properly recycled that bottle. So at least I was doing a little bit better. But to be honest, this segment really isn't about my personal water consumption or sustainability goals. It's about finding what you're looking for and having someone make it easier for you to find it.

Dan Gingiss: So what did you figure out through this experiment?

Joey Coleman: Well, I learned several things, but there are two significant things that I wanted to share and discuss in this segment. Number one, what happens in your space when customers shift their behaviors? And number two, what can brands do to cater to these shifting behaviors? So first of all, let's talk about what happens in your space.

Joey Coleman: I've noticed that in the last few years, more and more water fountains that are located in public spaces and particularly airports are being retrofitted to include filling stations where it's easy to fill a reusable water bottle. Now these filling stations even display a counter that

shows how many disposable plastic water bottles have been saved by you using the water fountain instead of purchasing the water. And as I travel around, I regularly see filling stations touting over 300,000 bottles saved. Now I don't know exactly, I've seen the counters rollover, it's based on the amount of water they do. So I have to believe that these numbers are fairly accurate. And in fact, the Atlanta airport recently partnered with Delta Airlines to help keep a local river flowing. And they pledged to restore 1000 gallons of water for every water bottle filled at one of the fountains in the airport.

Joey Coleman: To date, they've restored 23.3 million gallons of water based on the behavior of Delta customers and people flying through Atlanta.

Dan Gingiss: Which I love because obviously in Atlanta it's mostly Delta customers.

Joey Coleman: Well, that's true. So it's a nice little co-branding opportunity for them.

Dan Gingiss: But I'd also say the next step in that, because I've seen these filling stations too, they're at my home airport of O'Hare and there's actually a lot of them if you don't have to walk very far to get one, et cetera. I think the next step though is that the stores in the airports have to stop selling plastic bottles and only sell reusable bottles. And then you will have an ecosystem that continues to work.

Joey Coleman: Right. And what we've learned about humans, and we talked a little bit about this with the garbage bags, while we all want to make the right choice, sometimes the convenience of the bad choice is just too overwhelming for us to make the change.

Dan Gingiss: But think about that pang that you said about buying a plastic bottle. What if the pang instead was having to pay \$19.95 for a reusable bottle, which is going to annoy a lot of people, but it actually might change the behavior because they sure don't want to do that the next time they come to the airport.

Joey Coleman: Absolutely. And I think the crazy thing about reusable bottles, and I don't know if you've had this experience, you've got to find the one that works for you. Like for me, because I carry a backpack when I go, I wanted a bottle that I could clip to a carabiner on the outside of my backpack so I didn't get water on my computer. And finding a bottle that would fit the Caribbean or that looks pseudo professional on my backpack was something important. So it's almost like we have an opportunity to think about the aesthetics and the packaging of these solutions as well when we're designing these types of products.

Dan Gingiss: Which ironically has been going on in the backpack industry now for a while, right?

Joey Coleman: Correct.

Dan Gingiss: Because now backpacks are not just for school children anymore. I use one as well. They're very stylish, they're meant for business people to carry around laptops and other type stuff. So there's no reason why this space couldn't go in that direction.

Joey Coleman: It's also become acceptable to wear both straps or the backpack instead of having to go visit a chiropractor every day. But I digress.

Joey Coleman: The second thing I noticed around the water is that certain brands are changing their behaviors to cater to their customer's desires. So I stayed at two hotels last year, one in Miami and one in Baltimore, that had large water coolers in the lobby where they encouraged guests to fill their reusable water bottles before heading out for the day or heading to their room for the night. There were no complimentary bottles of water in the guest room. And the staff went out of their way to point out that the water was available. In addition to a hotel in Miami that we spoke about back in episode 70, the one hotel has a filtered water spigot in the guest room. So there's the sink where you can wash your hands and brush your teeth. But next to it was a separate filtered water that said for your drinking pleasure. So they actually built that into the hotel room experience, which made finding my water very, very easy.

Dan Gingiss: And it's interesting you mentioned that because I've been meaning to tell you this, Joey. I've been staying at the same hotel in one particular city that I continue to visit a consultant client at. And what's happened is every day, I try to usually refuse the housekeeping, but sometimes you can't. And when the housekeeping comes every day, not only do they make up the bed and replace the towels, but they're now replacing all of the soap. So I've opened up a bar of soap, I've used it once to wash my hands and they're giving me a brand new bar of soap. And not only that, but there's always the sign that says, "Hang up your towel if you want to reuse your towel." So I'll do that and they take the towel anyway. So when I was checking out the last time, they said, "Is everything okay with your stay?" I said, "Actually, no. I have a complaint and-

Joey Coleman: And I've got to say I love that you couched it as a complaint because if you would've said, "I have a suggestion," it probably wouldn't have done it. It doesn't alert the mind to the average front desk employee the way a complaint does. But you obviously did it in a professional and respectful manner.

Dan Gingiss: Oh, yeah. I said, "Look, I don't think that you need to be taking my soap every day. The bars are designed to be a certain size to last for a few days in a hotel. That's exactly their purpose." And what's interesting is this person immediately told me that it was a policy of the parent company, which I know not to be true because I stay at these hotels all the time and I've never seen it happen.

Joey Coleman: I think the opportunity then is to ask for the manager, speak to the manager directly, especially since it's a place you go to regularly. And if not, write the letter to corporate saying, "This manager, this location quoted me this is your policy. I've stayed at other places where it's not." Like we get the opportunity potentially to become activist.

Joey Coleman: So friends, loyal listeners, please don't get caught up in the specifics of the water that we talked about during this segment, but rather see this as an analogy that you can apply to your business. How is your business adapting to the shifting behaviors of your customers? Your customers likely use their cell phones all day, every. Do you have free chargers available in your lobby or waiting room? Your customers probably love to be online. Do you have open WiFi for people to use when they're in your space or waiting to meet you? And some of your customers are likely looking to fill up their reusable water bottles.

Joey Coleman: Are you there to help them meet their needs and in the process, show them that you're ready to cater to their future needs as they may arise. Go grab a glass of water and talk to your colleagues about ways to do this in your business. You'll surely come up with some great customer experience enhancements and you'll get hydrated in the process.

Speaker 1: 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 Experience This.