

White Paper

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The New CEO

The Future of Customer Experience

As managing customer experience continues to gain importance with business leaders, it's time to understand who will lead the charge.

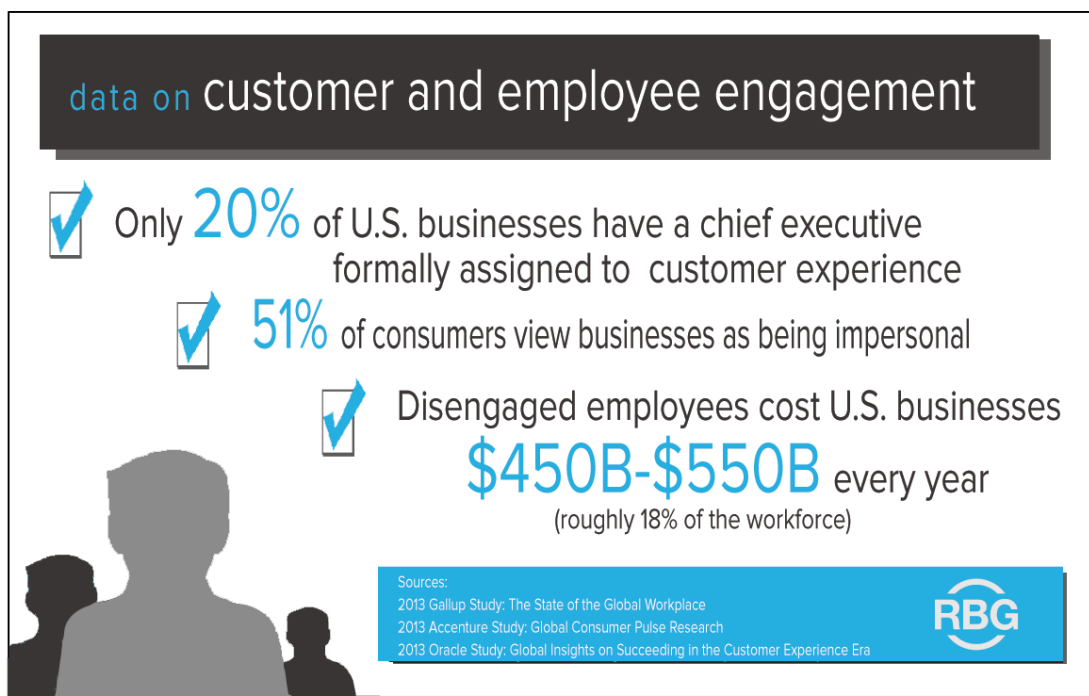
I have spent the last decade committed to improving the customer experiences that we all encounter daily. In doing so, I have had the privilege of working with some of the top companies in the nation. Ranging from regional businesses to Fortune 500 industry leaders, our objective always remained the same. Together, we were determined to improve the customer experience. Having the opportunity to work with such a large range of clients has provided me with a deep level of understanding and insight into the complex journeys that shape the customer experience.

As I worked with our clients over the years, I started noticing a pattern in what successful companies were doing right. I became intrigued. Determined to uncover the secret sauce, I started looking closer and learned that there was indeed a noticeable trend that could be causally attributed to the structure of how an organization operated. The commonality was simple and elementary, but its impact was substantial. We established that the majority of successful companies had a top leader who was fanatical about customer experience and who would not settle for anything less than excellence. Basically, someone at the top is not only talking the talk, but making sure everyone is walking the walk.

A Chief Engagement Officer is the person in your organization who is going to lead the efforts around customer experience.

The role of a Chief Engagement Officer should not be confused as being a title for an official position. In fact, the effectiveness of this role to be successful doesn't hinge on it being defined as an entity or being placed within an organization's hierarchy. Instead, it's an informal role that should be owned by a member of the leadership team. Whether it's your Chief Customer Officer, Chief Marketing Officer, VP of Business Development, Chief Operating Officer, or any other executive in your organization, understanding this role will yield improved customer retention rates, increased revenue, and higher profit margins.

Although expectations and parameters are needed to add basic structure, this role should exist freely as a living organism. They should be free to explore new avenues, to experiment with fresh ideas, and to be inspired by others within the organization. The purpose of the Chief Engagement Officer is to think outside the box and develop ways to improve interactions with the customer, to drive innovation, and to establish a competitive edge for the organization. And in short, to delight customers or guests, every time.



Without the proper levels of autonomy and support, this role has little chance to succeed and would minimize an organization's ability to stay ahead of the curve. This role should be structured to become the nucleus of an organization's customer experience strategy and be the driving force behind change.

The secret to success with any Chief Engagement Officer lies with their ability to engage with employees and to build an effective team.

I think we can all agree that a great team will drive great results. An engaged employee fully understands the organization's vision and mission and becomes an advocate for the brand. When employees are engaged on a regular basis with meaningful communication, they become less guarded and eventually develop a deep level of trust for the company. When done correctly, a Chief Engagement Officer can build a team of A-players that drives an increased level of revenue and profit.

An effective CEO will:

- Create a culture that fosters productivity and encourages team work
- Encourage employees to bring their ideas to the table and regularly remind them that their ideas are valued
- Build mutual trust with employees
- Create processes that allow employees to take ownership of their work
- Actively identify common challenges and pain points
- Walk the walk, which will provide everyone in the organization with a road map of an ideal customer experience
- Encourage professional and personal development in employees
- Install a training program and offer incentives to focus on customer experience
- Understand the importance of communication and employee engagement
- Continually assess core competencies

Engagement with employees leads to an increase in:

- Performance
- Productivity
- Profits
- Customer retention rates
- Customer experience satisfaction
- Proactive customer service
- Morale among team members

Simply put, a Chief Engagement Officer turns the dream of providing an outstanding customer experience into a reality.

As a whole, customer experience is evolving and it will continue to improve for quite some time. Although there are many factors that drive this evolution, one of significant importance is the rapid growth of our global marketplace. Every day, new competitors emerge and pose a threat to many established businesses. As a way to fight back, many organizations are leveraging this competitive surge as an opportunity to differentiate themselves as being customer-focused. By engaging more effectively with customers and by managing the customer experience, organizations can maintain a competitive edge in today's marketplace.

In closing, I urge every organization to find inspiration in the approach taken by top companies with exceptional customer experience and channel this inspiration as motivation when mapping out your customer experience strategy. If your goal is to build a system that adds value to your customers, then start by centralizing all aspects of managing the customer experience with one trusted leader. By doing so, you send a message to your employees, shareholders, and customers that customer experience is front and center and a priority for your organization. It will provide employees with something to believe in that is real and something they can work towards accomplishing on a daily basis. Finally, it will provide your organization with a road map to success by exceeding the expectations of your most valued assets – your customers and employees – thus ensuring an exceptional customer experience.



Evolving Customer Experience.

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