



# Colleague & Customer Experience

**Why is this important?** Every single day we are consuming and experiencing products & services. Perhaps you take the train or bus to work, your colleagues provide you with reports or information, or a new deli delivers lunch to your office. Equally, every single day you are delivering an experience to others. You may answer emails and take calls from various colleagues, or have meetings with customers. Every single experience we receive or provide has an outcome consequence which may be excellent, expected or poor and frustrating.

*Customer experience will get its deserved seat on the Board as organisations realise it is about everything they do, and everyone from cleaner to CEO has the opportunity to impact the colleague and customer experience. This will liberate people to deliver transformational experiences and make a difference.*

**Definition:** Quite simply it is about how it feels to be a customer of a business or the user of a service. That can be good, bad, indifferent, or, as is often the case, a combination of all three at different times in the journey.

Maureen of W2 shares her recent customer experience story.

*"My father is 85 years old and unfortunately his mobility is impaired. He was considering replacing his riser recliner chair. I had seen an advert for HSL and did some online investigation. Their website was very informative and I requested a brochure which arrived just two days later and I was extremely impressed with the quality of the information folder which even included fabric samples. They had a local store in Dundee and I called to make an appointment on a Sunday. They offered to bring some sample chairs to him, however we were keen to visit and try a range as my Dad is a tall man and we wanted something comfortable and large enough. We agreed on 11:30am and they would provide me with a parking voucher to display in my car and we could literally drive right up to the front door which would be very handy.*

*We were met at the door by two ladies who promptly provided the parking voucher and I helped Dad into the store with his walking aid. We were immediately offered tea and coffee and helped Dad to a comfy seat. We had our coffees and also a lovely selection of chocolate biscuits.*

*The ladies made Dad and I very welcome and we discussed what he was looking for and what was important to him. They happily helped him move around the store to try the chairs and choose the fabric. They answered all Dad's concerns and suggested a grand chair rather than standard given Dad is tall. Dad decided to go ahead with the purchase.*

*The paperwork was explained in great detail and they requested my details so they would contact me and not Dad. Delivery would be 4 weeks with a confirmation call. Their people would unpack the chair, set it up and show Dad how to work it and take all the packaging away.*

*The ladies then helped me get Dad back to the car and I returned the parking voucher, thanking them very much for being so helpful.*

*The very next day I had a call from the store advising me they had forgotten to put through a discount code, and offering instead, if we were agreeable to provide a set of arm caps free of charge instead. This was a very nice surprise and completely unexpected.*

*I was very happy and gave feedback to the lady on what a great experience we had the day before; how we were made very welcome and how they had gone above and beyond expected levels of service. She said she was pleased to hear that and it is always nice to get good feedback. This is what I would consider to be a great customer experience I would highly recommend this company and have written a review on their website. p.s The chair has now been delivered and Dad is delighted!"*

Now there is a story of a transformational experience that has created a raving fan!

✂ When did you last have a customer experience like this? When did you last receive some positive feedback for you or your company?



✂ Is it time for you to consider how you could improve the experience you provide to your colleagues and customers?

### Service Value Connection

When companies put employees and

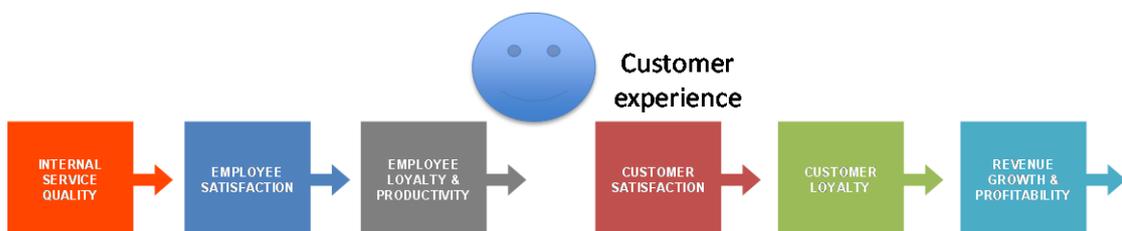
customers first, a radical shift occurs in the customer experience and in companies' success. The quality of internal service given to our internal customers/ colleagues has a direct effect on the external customer experience.

Internal customer is defined as "*anyone within an organisation who is dependent on someone one else within the organisation*"

Internal service experience is defined as "*satisfaction with the service and experience received from our colleagues as internal service providers*"

The Service Value Chain shows the relationship between customer loyalty and employee satisfaction and is used by successful companies including John Lewis and Virgin.

## Service Value Connection



## How can we improve our customer and colleague experiences?

Firstly think about the colleague or customer journey- their experience of you!

**1. Evidence:** Consider what makes a transformational customer/ colleague experience and write down the elements. Do the same for a poor experience. Think about how they made you *feel*.

**2. Perceptions:** Now stand in your colleague/ customer's shoes. Be honest with yourself and consider what they would say about their experience. Write down all the good things you think they would say. (Their motivational feedback) Then consider and list the poor things. (Their formative feedback) Be realistic and really see it from their perspective and don't be protective or defensive.

**3. Customer Journey Map:** Customer/ colleague experience approach is about designing the whole Customer Journey to be a series of positive interactions. This means we need to understand what it feels like to be a colleague/ customer at every stage of the process, and at every interaction, all the way from before they've made contact with us through to payment and beyond. Consider the "touch points" people have with you and create a map of reality.

**4. Now let me tell you.....!** Before we dive in and start redesigning their experience, let's take some time out to do some research and find out what our colleagues / customers *really* want. This is about gaining deep insight into how users interact with your product or service, how it makes them feel; what the pain points are etc. Use your Pure Listening and Feedback skills we covered in previous STEP Up tools!

**5. Design the future, innovate:** Solve users' needs & problems by working together to understand the impact your product or service will have on the people that use it. Your customers & your colleagues are at the heart of whatever you design. That means your design can't help but be user-friendly, so people can't help but like what you do. That's good news for your colleagues or customers, and good news for your business!

Visitors to Nasa asked three different employees carrying out the same tasks, "What is your role here?" The first said "*I am just a cleaner*", the second said, "*I am helping to create a clean and safe environment*" and the third said "*I am helping to put a man on the moon.*" We all need to understand our purpose, and how we contribute to the whole colleague or customer experience.

## **Develop the attitude and skills that really make a difference to others experience of you**

**Choose your attitude and behaviour every single day:** You choose your attitude each day. When you are working; who are you being? Are you being impatient or bored, or are you being world class? We cannot choose other people's attitudes or behaviours, but we can choose our response to it. Our choice of attitude plays a large role in how we perceive, engage with, and react to the world

**Be Present:** We can all get distracted. Many things take our attention. When we are present, being there for someone, they get **all** our attention, focus and eye contact. We actively listen and ask questions to explore to really understand.

**Make their day:** We know and can appreciate that all our colleagues and customers are different. To really make their day we have to focus on how we can make a positive difference for others. It starts with empathy, standing in their shoes and seeing the situation through their eyes.

**Play Professionally:** We are serious about our business. What we provide pays our salaries. However we can deliver experiences to colleagues and customers and still have a good time whilst we do it, in a respectful manner. We can bring our whole selves to work and look to make the day enjoyable for ourselves, colleagues and customers.

**Leaders who make a commitment to develop their knowledge and skills in delivering a best in class colleague and customer .experience can create differential in all that they do.**

### **Actions and Applications**

Take a little time to consider and write down:

1. Evidence: What does transformation experience mean to you? How do you measure up?
2. Perceptions: What do your colleagues/ customers think of your delivery? Give yourself some honest feedback!
3. Map the journey and touch points for your colleagues and customers
4. Research into the wants and needs of others
5. Design the future: What improvements or modifications could improve their experience of you and your services or product?

Good luck in delivering marginal gains and your improvements *every single day*