

How Do Your Customers Experience Your Company Culture? 5 Ways to Create Customer Loyalty

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Building a positive company culture is one of business owners' greatest leadership challenges. There is simply no universal formula or shortcut to building a thriving company culture. It is hard and deliberate work, though just about every business with a flourishing culture does share one thing in common. They all possess clarity surrounding values and then honor them throughout their organizations.

This is truly the secret sauce in employee satisfaction, engagement and productivity – all of which are tremendous telltales of a successful company culture. But it shouldn't stop there. Why not extend that collaborative and empowering environment to the soul of your business, namely your customers?

Most cultural efforts are designed first and foremost to provide a positive employee experience (EX). EX design is one of the fastest-growing HR initiatives today. At its core, it refers to a strategic approach to creating a positive and engaging work environment. And it works. EX design quantifiably increases employee satisfaction and decreases churn. So, how about we extend that value-based culture approach to our customer experience?

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If an organization truly embraces the importance of its identified values, it only makes sense that its CX reflects those same values. Apple is a great example of an elite company that has successfully implemented CX design based on its company culture and values. Apple's commitment to innovation, clean aesthetics and user-friendliness are echoed in its products, branding and stores.

Notably, visitors to Apple's brick-and-mortar locations are welcomed to a minimalist, stylish and bright space filled with many customer service and technical support reps. Every inch of the store and interaction reflects a very well-strategized CX design. Can you imagine the disconnect if Apple stores resembled a RadioShack or Walgreens instead? Not to throw either of those organizations under the bus – their core values are simply not the same – but suffice to say, CX in both companies is vastly different than that afforded to Apple customers.

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Create customer experience based on company values

Customer relationships are fundamentally founded on a quid pro quo arrangement. Customers want your business's goods or services and compensate you with money. But developing customer relationships is much more dynamic than that, as there are perhaps hundreds of competitors out there offering the same or similar products as you do. Allegiance runs deeper than a successful transaction.

To attract customers and build loyalty, it is imperative to distinguish your business in an often-crowded marketplace. So

why not leverage those values that already bear meaning and impact throughout your company culture by infusing them into an enhanced CX strategy?

1. Shout your core values from the rooftop

Infuse your values and culture into all customer communications. This includes messaging on your website, marketing collateral, advertising, packaging and social media. Avoid ambiguity in expressing those values. Your customers should never have to dig for your guiding principles – those values should be reflected and apparent in all your communications.

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2. Maintain consistent values-based branding

Every customer touchpoint, from the design of your business space to the way your point of contact answers the phone, should align with your company values. Remember the Apple example. Their visuals, messaging and tone are consistent regardless of where their customers meet them. Consistency in branding works consciously and subtly to reinforce company values and provide comfort and familiarity to the CX equation.

3. Infuse values into your customer service

Ideally, your entire team embraces and models your core values, but customer-facing employees must interact and communicate in a way that underscores these tenets. Create

best practices and train your customer service people to engage in meaningful, values-centric conversations and problem-solving.

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4. Integrate loyalty programs with values

Customers tend to appreciate loyalty programs. By aligning your reward system with a deeper meaning, you underscore the importance of both the customer relationship and your company values. You might consider increasing customer rewards based on their engagement with causes you care about. Get creative in designing other ways to connect loyalty and values.

5. Community engagement initiatives

Your community is undoubtedly rife with activities that align with your company's values and culture. While your business may already participate in these opportunities, you can foster connection and a shared sense of community with your customers by encouraging them to join you in these community events. Alignment related to the causes you care about makes CX substantially more meaningful.

Remember, your company culture will never thrive independently of your customer experience. By integrating your core values into your CX design, you manifest a more comprehensive and unified approach to customer loyalty and business success.

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