



## Immersion Events

# Capturing Customers' Hearts

A powerful one day workshop exploring the twelve components of creative customer service. The event is based on the popular book *Capturing Customers' Hearts*, written by the presenter, Brian Clegg. This is Harvard Business School's assessment:

*In an increasingly competitive business market, building customer relationships can differentiate your business from the pack. Capturing Customers' Hearts explains how companies can build relationships through customers' emotions. For example, Clegg discusses ways to make customers feel ownership toward a business—they don't just like the hardware store, they feel it is their hardware store. With the increased use of technology-based customer service practices, companies must remember that in the end, the best customer service comes down to people dealing with people. The implementation of a good CRM system is positive step toward improving service, but becomes much less of an asset if customers don't feel good about the person using the CRM system. Clegg's use of best and worst case scenarios—"Good News" stories and "Horror Story" anecdotes—enlivens the book. Make a point to take the "Where are You Now?" assessment to gauge your company's charisma, and get pointers on avoiding "junk service."*

### Goals

- To explore the basics of customer service, and understand how adding creative components to this can go beyond simple delivery to develop customer charisma
- To provide an understanding of the process of dealing with your organization from a customer's viewpoint, establishing key points for improvement
- To find areas where your customer service can and should be taken to the next stage
- To develop creative initiatives to enhance customer service in these key areas
- To put the passion into your customer service.

### Outline

- **Brief introduction** – Why customer service is important and why it's not enough just to deliver.
- **The challenge** – The attendees estimate average, smallest and largest known lifetime value of a customer – each fills in a slip and the results will be used later in the session.
- **The 12 components** – a brief presentation on the basis of customer charisma: a foundation of delivery with built upon it, the twelve components of creative customer service.
- **Where are you now?** – Quick assessment of your organization's current state.
- **Components 1-4** – if working as a single group, choose two of the first four components – *going the extra light year; if it's broke, fix it; I'm in love with my car; they know me* – to work with. If the group is large enough to split, take two components each for an exercise on building these aspects of your customer service.
- **Timeout** – a brief activity to boost creativity

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- **The customer chain** – Exploring delivery. Half the group take the role of customers, the other half your organization, and develop a picture of a typical customer interaction, end to end.
- **Lunch**
- **Components 5-8** - if working as a single group, choose two of the second set of four components – *star power; they're people like us; surprise, surprise; technical wizardry* – to work with. If the group is large enough to split, take two components each for an exercise on building these aspects of your customer service.
- **The challenge II** – The results of the exercise are compared with the actual data.
- **Components 9-12** – if working as a single group, choose two of the final four components – *they're mine, all mine; cute and cuddly; we keep in touch; the twelfth component* – to work with. If the group is large enough to split, take two components each for an exercise on building these aspects of your customer service.
- **Pulling it together** – a short summary presentation seeing how to take the output from the sessions and use it, finishing with a final brainstorming exercise (emphasising the need for creativity in building customer charisma)
- **Q&A**

## Practicalities

The *Capturing Customers' Hearts* immersion event lasts one day – typical running time is 9.30am to 4.30pm with two 15 minute coffee breaks and a 45 minute lunch break, but this can be adjusted to suit your requirements.

It can be staged with up to 20 attendees, but for best results we recommend a maximum of 12 attendees, seated in horseshoe format. The location should have a data projector, pads and pencils for attendees and floor space for all attendees to be able to stand in open space. As always, we can quote for provision of resources, but many clients prefer to provide them.

## Pricing

The *Capturing Customers' Hearts* immersion costs £2,000, or for small groups we can provide our individual-based rate of £295 per attendee (minimum of three attendees). This includes the presenter, all materials, handouts and a copy of *Capturing Customers' Hearts* for each attendee. The only additional costs are travel expenses for the presenter to the venue, and overnight accommodation if required to fit the start time at the venue. Prices exclude VAT.

## The Twelve Components

### 1. *Going the extra light year*

In a way, this first component pulls all the others together. It's an attractive trait if someone goes out of their way to help you. Equally it's attractive if an organization goes that extra mile. But for true charisma, to stand out like a beacon, you have to do more – to go the extra light year, the first component of capturing customers' hearts.

## *2. If it's broke, fix it*

We all get it wrong sometimes. Zero defect is a fantasy beloved of quality circles, but it is not a fact of human life. However good our systems and procedures and staff, things will go wrong – and then the customer measures the company's worth on how well we fix things. All too often, service recovery is grudging, set about with conditions and rules that make the hard-done-by customer feel like a criminal. If this is how you treat your customers, you are missing a huge opportunity for building up charisma.

## *3. I'm in love with my car*

There are some products and brands that produce a reaction in the customer that is wildly disproportionate to their nominal value. It's true of some cars, for instance, which have an almost fanatical following. Often these aren't the best products by any conventional measure – instead they have a certain quirkiness that seems to generate such affection. You can't engineer a product to be charismatic, but you can encourage it in that direction – and make sure that you maintain the benefit once you have a product that has achieved this status.

## *4. They know me*

The whole field of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) has built up around the thesis that you can give customers a better experience if you know about them and make use of that knowledge in the way you serve them. Unfortunately, all too often, CRM has been driven by systems (and systems manufacturers) rather than the realities of human relationships. But this shouldn't be allowed to cloud the reality that the company that really makes the customer feel recognized and welcome has a big stake in the charisma game.

## *5. Star power*

Companies who don't have a star figurehead tend to be cynical about those who do. The key figures are regarded as unrepentant self-publicists for whom the limelight is more important than the success of the business. Yet this overlooks the fact that the public like a recognizable human face for a company. You can't identify with a corporation – you can with a famous chief executive. For that matter, you can with any famous employee – or maybe the whole team. Perhaps everyone can be a star.

## *6. They're people like us*

As a gross generalization, people like people. They like dealing with real people. They have relationships with real people, not with companies. So the more it is possible to make your customer contact staff into real people, the better. That means staff who behave like people, not like automata. It means real people with real enthusiasms – especially those that are shared

with the customers. And it means people we have to trust to get it right. There can be no charisma from staff in a strait jacket.

### *7. Surprise, surprise!*

Dullness and charisma don't go together. Once upon a time, consistency was a customer service god, but if everything is the same, if everything is predictable, there can be no excitement, no charisma. The element of surprise, provided it is a pleasant surprise is a key component to keeping your customers intrigued and coming back for more. Don't bore them until they run over to the competition – keep the creativity and fun flowing.

### *8. Technical wizardry*

It's often said that men don't really grow up – they remain enthralled by toys for their whole life. Whether your customers are men or women, technical flair will appeal to their male side. Sometimes charisma needs a little gloss – used correctly, technical polish is a valuable addition. Technology needs to be optional – some customers are turned off by it – but for many it is an effective attractor.

### *9. They're mine, all mine*

To call someone parochial is usually an insult, and yet we all have a degree of positive parochialism. It doesn't matter if it's my town, my country or my football team – we like to see our own do well. The more we can bring customers to feel that they own the company, the more they will feel inseparable from the company and its fortunes. Make the company theirs and loyalty is no longer an issue – it's a fait accompli.

### *10. Cute and cuddly*

If technology appeals to the male in us all, there's something about being cute and cuddly that tugs at our female side. To be charismatic is not necessarily to be loveable, but companies that give their customers that warm glow are inevitably charismatic.

### *11. We keep in touch*

Communication is at the heart of human relationships and is equally important in fostering the relationship between a human being and a company. So often the things that go wrong are a result of a breakdown in communications. Keeping up a dialogue and making it obvious that you enjoy that communication makes it difficult for a customer to resist. You should never let up on communications.

## *12. The twelfth component*

That's eleven out of the way, but what of the twelfth? I have to confess that consideration of a twelfth component arose initially out of a sense of order. There's something lumpy and unsatisfactory about the number eleven, compared to the serried order of twelve. When I began to think about what a twelfth component could be, I realised it was just as well that I had undertaken the exercise, because I had missed something big. Most people would accept that some companies have attributes that make them unique. What I came to realize, however, is that this statement can be generalized. Every company has its unique attributes, and these form the twelfth component that can bring charisma.