



**Different thinking**  
for **changed** outcomes

## Transform your business by changing the Customer Experience

If you are looking to improve your business, give yourself a competitive edge – before you spend a \$ on advertising or promotion, I recommend you take a step back and look at your business through the eyes of your customers - systematically review all your customer “touch points”. You have probably been told to do this many times in the past!

Whilst it is an easy concept to understand, translating it into practical steps that can easily be adapted to the real world - can be something of a challenge.

An approach I have found to be useful and which can be used by businesses, regardless of size, to achieve fundamental and progressive change within a business involves:

First to recognise:

- That every time a customer comes into contact with your business in any way is a “customer touch point”
- That every “customer touch point” counts – no matter how small!

“Customer touch points” will vary from business to business, some examples could be:

- The greeting the customer receives when they enter a store or office.
- The way the telephone is answered.
- The visibility of signage to passing traffic.
- The availability of parking.
- The way a store looks from across the street.
- Window displays.
- What a customer sees when they enter the store or office. The ambience.
- The way stock is displayed. Accessibility. Range.
- Presentation of staff. Name badges.
- Pricing transparency
- Helpfulness of staff
- The way complaints are handled
- Promotional material
- Pricing
- Advertising
- Website & navigation
- After sales service – follow up
- Etc.

The reality is for most businesses there are literally dozens of “customer touch points”. It doesn’t matter whether you are a retailer, a professional or service provider - how you manage each “touch point”, no matter how minor, will either add to, or detract from, your customer’s experience!

This in turn will influence whether they return, go elsewhere or tell others – either good or bad!

Too often I see businesses from, small up to corporates, spend significant monies and effort on advertising and promotion - only see its impact be dissipated due to a lack of attention to the basics – the “customer touch points”!

So where do you start?

### **Step 1 – Identify all the “customer touch points” as they relate to your business**

- Involve your whole team.
- Ask the team to record the customer touch points, no matter how small, on large yellow “Post It Notes” as they come to mind – place them on a wall out of customer sight.
- Do this over a period of two weeks
- At the end of the two weeks – sort the notes into sequence aligned to the customer journey
- Then transfer them to Word or Excel

### **Step 2 – Rate yourself against each “customer touch point”**

- Using a score range of (1) Poor to (7) Exceptional, rate yourself against each “touch point” – through your customer’s eyes.
- Note, it is crucial this step is completed through *the eyes of the customer* – not as you would like, or hope it to be! Done properly this can be quite a reality check. A sobering experience!

### **Step 3 – Rank each “customer touch point” in terms of importance**

- Again, this step needs to be completed through the *eyes of the customer*. The key is to prioritise the “touch points” from the *customer* perspective.

### **Step 4 – Develop Action Plans**

- Starting with the most important (highest priority from the customers perspective) - ask what can we do or change this week to improve this specific “touch point”?
- Progressively work your way through the list over subsequent weeks/months.

When starting on this journey the task can appear daunting – however most businesses quickly find many high priority items are also low cost “quick wins”, as they usually relate to the way you deal with and interact with customers – or involve, cleaning, tidying up displays, windows, reception areas etc.

To maintain momentum and enthusiasm, I suggest you try to improve at least one item per week – there clearly will be some that will take longer to resolve – but for most businesses, at least one item per week should be the goal.

My experience is that once a business and its staff become attuned to looking at their business through the eyes of their customer, the appetite for change increases and ideas for improvements start to flow – the business begins to change!

### **Step 5 – The Reality Check!**

When you have tackled the major items and believe you have “got it nailed” – now is the time for a reality check!

- Using the list you have developed, construct a Customer Survey and ask key customers to rate each “touch point”.
- Important to pick those clients that will give you honest feedback. Maybe also ask customers who have recently complained, to complete the survey.

Getting customers involved in this way not only shows that you care – but also based on the writer’s experience, can be a good reality check.

Finally, it is important that you also ask the customer to add and score any other “touch points” not included in the Survey, as there may well be important items that you have overlooked or simply of which you were not aware!

### **Summary**

Using “customer touch points” to improve your business can be a simple but exciting and rewarding journey. Approached the right way it can truly transform a business and lead to insights that will provide you with a real edge in the marketplace.

Give it a try – you may be surprised by the insights it delivers!

**Bruce Hall**