



"When you aim for the right target, you have a much better chance of being successful."

~ Captain Obvious

The Path to Competitive Advantage – A Culture Focused on High-Value Experiences

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A few thoughts for leaders...

Things move fast in the environment you've staked your reputation on. You and your team(s) are frequently juggling multiple competing priorities, working to avoid distractions with new problems to solve and opportunities to capture. *At the speed of your business, do your people ever lose sight of what's most important?* We would argue they most likely do (and more often than you think) based on what we observe in the diverse, fast-moving client environments we work in.

We have a particular perspective on *what's most important* in organizations. Over the last 30 years we've seen enough to know what really works over time and what fades quickly in organizations that have good intentions around being customer centric. We have observed that in the end, the simple and obvious outcome of **delivering**

noticeably more value to customers is what's most important. Noticeably more value is a perception by the customer (not you, the leader, or someone else on your team that participates more directly in delivering actual value).

Speaking of Customers

When we use the term "customers" we're referring to stakeholders that can range from traditional-end user customers, to your distribution channel, to internal customers (other departments). When we refer to their target experience, we mean the **total experience** your people create and manage for anyone they serve and support, no matter what their role is or the context they're working in. *The target your people should be aiming for at all times is creating a High-Value experience as perceived by the people they serve and support.*

High-Value experiences are the sum of all of the tangible and intangible elements that impact the perceptions and expectations one has when working with you.

The Opportunity

Consistently delivering High-Value experiences (for key stakeholders) leads to competitive advantage and sustainable success. With the right leadership, a significant focus on High-Value Experiences can be a call to action and a catalyst for innovation. When you invest the appropriate amount of time and resource, the payoff(s) will dwarf the investment.

As obvious as the objective may be, the challenge always lies in execution. Achieving consistency in delivering High-Value experiences isn't easy. If it were easy, all of your human touch points would already be delivering your brand promise perfectly. The key is starting with a *healthy obsession* and doing what it takes to "shape" your culture. A shift in culture makes the biggest difference in getting a sustainable payoff and requires patience, because changing culture always takes more commitment in time and other resources than anticipated.

Establish *Cultural Norms* to Influence the Collective Mindset of Your Organization.

Determine what "High-Value" means to your customers and communicate that to your team using behavioral terms. Then establish the standards, mindset, skills, strategies, practices, incentives, accountability and processes to transform them into consistent reality.

As your organization works over time to make High-Value experiences the primary objective, it will become a key part of who you are. Remember that your culture is "How we really do things around here including when the boss isn't looking".

Below is a short explanation about the 3 most significant High-Value experiences (stakeholder groups) we focus on to maximize competitive advantage.

Experience 1: The Customer Experience

When customers perceive their experience with you to be of noticeably higher value than their other options, it increases their willingness to continue buying from you, buy in additional categories you offer, and enhances their willingness to refer you to others. This is ultimately the goal of every investment you can make in service quality. If you are currently measuring Net Promoter Score (NPS) and buy into its value, then you're well on your way.

Experience 2: The Prospect (Sales) Experience

Over the last three years, we've reviewed two highly credible, independent research studies on measuring the prospect experience. One conclusion was already obvious: if a prospect recognizes a sales experience to be of *noticeably higher value* with you than with other options, it significantly impacts the probability of you earning the business.



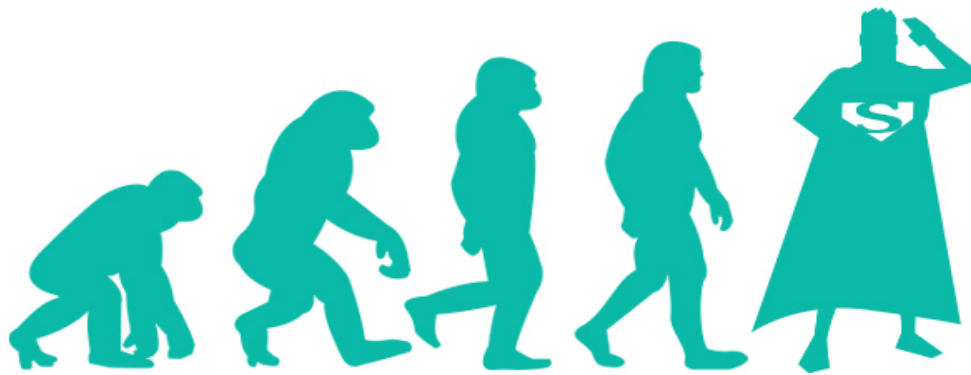
Two of several new insights from this research are the impacts of a High-Value sales experience on the **size** of the agreement and the probability of that prospect becoming a customer with a significantly higher Net Promoter Score (NPS) (measurably more loyal).

Focusing all of your sales improvement efforts on creating *High-Value prospect experiences* creates more wins in the short and long-term. Develop a healthy obsession with this objective and look at it as the path to a significant competitive advantage. It will help you earn and retain more profitable customer relationships.



Experience 3: The Team Member Experience

Sales and service teams make the biggest difference in the quality and consistency of sales and service experiences (excluding e-commerce experiences). This is why we encourage you to develop a healthy obsession for selecting, training, performance managing, and incentivizing the very best people you can find. Then do everything you can to keep them. **You retain employees the same way you retain customers: by consistently delivering High-Value experiences for them.**



UNMOTIVATED – BORED – HAPPY – LOYAL – SUPERHERO!

Collective mindset, or *culture*, dominates everything. Over time it trumps strategy, structure, technology and products. The right culture leads to powerful competitive advantages that can't be duplicated as fast as product and system advantages can.

Increasing High-Value experiences for your target audience(s) leads to competitive advantage and achievement of your growth and profit goals. What matters most to your company? Consistent delivery of High-Value experiences to customers, prospects, and the team members that deliver them. Make it a priority and a reality by making it a cultural norm.



Where to begin? Start a conversation in your organization about the three experiences and your leadership decisions (including investments, initiatives and messaging).

You are also invited to call us at no obligation to explore your competitive advantages, growth and profits.

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