

Deliver the experience with a 'living the brand' mindset

Allow me to take you on a journey of love. On this journey, you will discover what leads someone to love doing business with a company and what benefits are derived from such a love.

To prepare for this journey, close your eyes, take a few deep breaths and consider the one company you absolutely love to do business with. This is a company you love to do business with because their people live the brand every day. When you interact with employees from this company, it is clear that they know what their company is and what the branded experience is all about.

Employees in this company not only know the branded experience but consistently act in conformity with it. This company you are thinking about is "out-behaving" the competition, which leads to incredible customer loyalty. Customers (like you) buy more and more often and are less price-sensitive.

Employees in this company also seem quite loyal. Employees recognize their company as a great place to work. They are productive and happy.

This company you are thinking about is managing an experience. You love to do business with it so much that you've probably rewarded it with the ultimate compliment—your referral. Perhaps your confidence in the experience you received led you to suggest that others should try this company. Or maybe you tell others about the company because it just feels good to do so. In essence, you've become an unpaid member of this company's marketing department.

After reflecting for a few moments, make a list of all the companies you love to do business with and note why. What is it that they do to deliver that experience to you?

Leaders in these companies understand that knowing the brand and doing the brand lead to a stronger work culture and more profitable customer relationships. That is why these leaders do what it takes to define and manage the experience. Employees in companies you love doing business with recognize that they are on stage, orchestrating an experience. They appreciate that



ON PERFORMANCE
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they have the ultimate responsibility and opportunity to deliver an experience that makes customers happy. And in most cases, it makes them happy too.

Here is an example of a company that consistently delivers great customer service and outbehaves the competition, leading to stronger business results.

On a Tuesday morning last month, I arrived at Detroit Metro Airport—stressed and very late. Delta had canceled my flight the night before, and I had been rebooked on a 6 a.m. flight. I was scheduled to speak to an audience of senior executives at 9 a.m. It was 8:15, and my drive to the event was estimated to be 40 minutes. I had speaking engagements in the surrounding area over the next several days, so grabbing a cab wasn't an option.

There I stood—nervous and panicked—waiting for the Enterprise Rent-A-Car shuttle to pick me up and take me to the rental car facility. I am about to share with you a completely orchestrated experience that employees love to deliver and customers love to receive.

The shuttle pulls up, and out steps Bill. "Hi, folks. Welcome to Detroit. We are glad you are here. My name is Bill, and I will take you to get your car. Does anyone need help with their bags?"

I took my seat along with several other passengers.

Bill continued with his speech: "We appreciate your renting from Enterprise. I will have you safely to the rental car facility in about 4 minutes. When you get there you will find fresh coffee and snacks waiting for you."

Four minutes later we pulled up to the facility. I rushed off the shuttle and was first to walk into the facility. There I was

greeted by Wendy.

"Hi, I'm Wendy. Welcome to Enterprise. What's your name? Welcome, Gregg. Step right up to the counter. Elisha is ready to help you get your car."

Elisha introduced herself, and I shared my dire situation. She was sympathetic, and less than a minute later she was leading me out to my car. She helped me carry my bags and did the walk-around to check for unreported damage while I got situated for the drive.

At this point—because of the friendliness of Bill, Wendy and Elisha—my trust in Enterprise was high enough that I didn't think twice about not doing the inspection myself. I was confident Elisha would take care of it for me and act in my best interest, which she did.

At the exit, I had to stop to hand over paperwork to the gate attendant, Sandy. We had a quick dialogue about customer service.

"Hi, I am Sandy. How was our customer service?"

"It was great."

Sandy handed back the paperwork: "Terrific. Thank you for renting from Enterprise. Have a great day."

I responded, "Sandy, what if I had told you that the customer service was not good?"

"Well, I would have asked you what happened," she said, "and if it wasn't something I could have resolved for you, I would have connected you to one of my managers who would make it right."

When I returned to Enterprise two days later, I had equally positive experiences with the drop-off attendant and shuttle driver. They were friendly, helpful and attentive—clearly demonstrating the brand.

Enterprise employees recognize that they are performing in front of customers. They have been trained to orchestrate an ideal experience at each point of interaction by playing the role of host. In doing so, they realize they are performing an experience—from the shuttle driver to the gate attendant and everyone in between.

This managed experience is created by a system for living the brand, an approach

to defining an experience that employees can orchestrate at critical points of interaction—and an experience that will create customer love.

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rity Inc., is a professional speaker on the customer experience, leadership and culture change. He is an adjunct professor at the University of Rochester's Simon Graduate School of Business and the author of

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