

## Living Up To Your 'Brand Values' by Liz Moody

How do you engage a critical mass of staff to really create a customer focused culture? In this way being really 'customer focussed' simply becomes second nature and "how we do things around here".

Changing your brand values is a good start - at least everyone is clear where you are headed at the highest level but how do you actually make the change throughout your employees? Transforming the business as opposed to initiating another new, faddy initiative is the key.

*"The objective and true test of the change is when your customers notice the difference"*

When your customers finally notice a difference for the better and thereby keep coming back to deal with you, you have finally succeeded in creating a positive association with your brand and you are living up to its promise!!

### Cultural Change – Make it Sustainable

But how do you get to that point where customers actually feel the difference? Many organisations provide the goal of "customer focus" but few are providing their managers with the tools to really deliver it.

Your creative agency will see this as a branding issue, possibly suggesting a "customer value" amongst a new list of aspirational brand values. Perhaps some useful credit card sized gimmick will be created to hand out to staff. What follows is often a large scale and expensive communications plan where the "hope" is that managers will easily be able to translate this into a new style of managing and that somehow the people that "just didn't get it" before, **will** now - right? Wrong!

Two vital strands will ensure success.

1. Creating and managing employee engagement and
2. Making your processes into 'customer experiences'

*We'll deal with the first of these in this paper and the next is covered elsewhere.*

### Employee Engagement

Research tells us that there is a strong correlation between employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction. So where can we make positive interventions to promote both these things? Businesses need to:

1. Change recruitment and induction processes to ensure staff understand who the company exists for and how customers are

2. essential to its survival. They need to know who is important, why and how they should be treated.
3. Ensure that each member of staff is clear about their role in the organisation both in terms of delivery and also their impact on customers whether they be external or internal customers. Clarity of role and expectations is a must!
4. Define the specific 'customer' behaviours each role has to demonstrate with clear performance measures and goals. Where possible these behaviours need to be validated with customers!
5. Train and mentor the right customer behaviours at whatever level in the company - whether team leader, director or member of staff. Unfortunately not everyone is a natural at this so it is vital to give this training and support.
6. Communicate with staff as often as you can. Frequent communication helps staff do the job better and keeps momentum behind things.
7. Measure the progress in customer satisfaction and communicate the results to the business. This enables the organisation to prioritise and then train in the right areas, while remaining focussed on satisfying your customers.

From our experience of working with a number of organisations we amassed some great examples and practical means of assisting you to identify 'specific behaviours', placing them within your performance management framework, and where required we can even train some of your staff in the art of 'managing the customer'.

Give us a call on 07973 329669 or email us to chat this through [info@icd-partnership.co.uk](mailto:info@icd-partnership.co.uk)