



First Things First in the Customer Experience

Last month Chipotle announced it was partnering with the Wu-Tang Clan's RZA to establish a microsite that brings together music and images based on a guest's selection from the Chipotle menu. Fascinating customized technology, right?

The problem, just a few hours before the microsite launched, Chipotle faced (yet another) in what had become a string of health concerns. In fact, a number of people reported becoming ill after eating at a Chipotle in Sterling, Virginia - forcing a temporary closing of that store.

The timing of these two events (the microsite launch and the store shut down) should serve as a reminder to us all that customer experiences must first involve **meeting the needs** of those we serve. In the case of Chipotle those needs begin with proper food handling, preparation, etc.

Once basic needs are met, brands have a chance to elevate experiences by removing effort or **pain points** experienced as customers seek to acquire products or services. After needs are competently and consistently fulfilled (and effort is reduced) leaders can then seek to add **personalized/wow-filled** enhancements.

The most personal microsite in the world can't make-up for perceived breakdowns in fundamentals; particularly, when those breakdowns can affect brand reputation, customer well-being, revenues, and overall brand health.

I have no first-hand knowledge of the cause of purported recurrent illnesses that guests have linked to Chipotle. Additionally, I don't wish to impugn the quality of their products or offerings. I simply want to highlight a hierarchy:



Timeless Wisdom

"A business that makes nothing but money is a poor business."

- Henry Ford

From the Blog:



Differentiation Strategy: Flying on Segmentation, Experience Design, & Relevant Messaging

There must be something wrong with me. I am generally content with my airline experiences and I have a lot of them. I've also been willing to forgive many of the service breakdowns I've experienced as a traveler - as long as I can get to my venue safely and in advance of the time I actually need to arrive (not necessarily what it says on my itinerary).

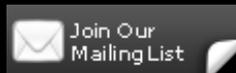
The Future of Air Travel?

That said, maybe airlines are moving even further in the direction of "experiential offerings." Here is the contender:



In case you missed it, Joon is the new airline brand of Air France. With the announcement of the launch, Air France has communicated its intention to go after a clearly defined market segment and purportedly has designed an optimized experience for that sizable group.

[Continue reading the full blog post.](#)



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