



Michelli's Musings on Mirthful Matters

What's going right...

Consistent "Easy" Service THEN Customer Delight

Did you happen to catch the recent Harvard Business Review (HBR) article entitled "Stop Trying to Delight Your Customers?" The article, based on research with 75,000 customers who had interacted with call-centers or self-service portals like on-line chat, email, or voice mail prompts, offers findings that address 3 key business questions:

- 1) How important is customer service to loyalty?
- 2) Which customer service activities increase loyalty, and which don't?
- 3) Can companies increase loyalty without raising their customer service operating costs?

In a nutshell, the answers from the research are as follows:

- Delighting customers doesn't build loyalty,
- Reducing your customer's effort to get their problem solved does make them more loyal, and
- Acting to reduce your customer's effort can reduce service costs.

To save your customer unneeded effort, the HBR researchers suggest that you:

- Don't just resolve the current issue but also head off the next,
- Equip customer service professionals to handle the emotional side of customer interactions,
- Minimize channel switching by increasing self-service "stickiness." For example, make changes on your website so the customer doesn't feel that the only way to really get served is through a call to your call-center,
- Use feedback from disgruntled or struggling customers to reduce customer effort, and
- Empower (and incentivize) the front line to deliver a low-effort experience.

If that isn't enough to think about, let me throw out a way of measuring customer effort through a simple tool called the CES or Customer Effort Score. The CES is a single question to ask your customers:

On a scale of 1 to 5, how much effort did you personally have to put forth to get your needs meet?

Ask your customers....you might be DELIGHTED by what you hear and if not they may be DELIGHTED that you are looking for ways to make their experiences more consistent

and EASIER!

News and Resources

Last quarter, I announced my newest book deal "**The Zappos Experience: 5 Leadership Principles for Serving Billion Dollar Outcomes**" to be released as a lead business book for McGraw-Hill in the fall of 2011. My team and I have spent a considerable amount of time with Tony Hsieh, Zappos CEO, and his team and we are still looking for your stories or insights about Zappos for possible inclusion in that book.

Prior to the Zappos book, look for my book with the working title "**UCLA's Healing Humankind...One Patient at a Time: Business Lessons for All From a Leader in Patient Care.**" That book is wending its way through the publishing process and I will keep you posted on its targeted release date.

Next Newsletter

I will visit your inbox in about 90 days. Until then, thanks for all the people who have come out to my events this quarter in places such as Bolivia, Singapore, Manila, Kuala Lumpur, Hong Kong, Cape Cod, Lake Tahoe, Portland, Denver, Columbus, Los Angeles, Toronto, Lansing, and Tucson.

In your *service*,

Joseph