Never Lose a Customer Again

By: Joey Coleman

- To never lose a customer again, you must meet your customers (whoever they are) where they are in their emotional journey.
- **In SaaS, 20% of newly acquired customers don't make the 100-day anniversary before leaving.**
- Companies spend incredible amounts of time, money, and energy to obtain new customers, but are hemorrhaging customers after the sale.
- You lose customers because they feel neglected after the sale is made.
- There are many reasons why customers leave, but the main reason is that businesses systematically ignore the emotional journey of the customer.
- Even if a prospect knows, loves, and believes in a company's offerings, after they become a customer, fear, doubt, and uncertainty will plague their thoughts.
- The information shared with a salesperson is rarely transferred to the account manager – leaving the new customer feeling unheard, underappreciated, and insignificant (not to mention irritated that they will need to explain everything again to the next customer representative they speak with).
- With 0 product defects, customized offerings, bargain basement pricing, and ubiquitous availability becoming the norm across all industries, the only thing left for a business to differentiate itself from the competition is the customer's experience.
- **Customer service is reactive, while customer experience is proactive.**
- Customer service – the assistance and advice provided by a company to those people who buy or use its products or services
- Customer experience – how customers perceive their interactions with your company
- A customer usually needs to use a service or product for a fair amount of time before they consider the purchase "worth it". **The customer must get their desired result before they can become a true fan of your company.**
- In an increasingly digital world, physical communication is more valuable today than ever before.

The 8 Phases of the Customer Experience

1. Assess – The customer is deciding if they want to do business with you
2. Admit – Begins when the customer admits they have a problem or a need and they believe you can solve it
3. Affirm – "Buyer's remorse", the customer begins to doubt the decision they just made to work with you
4. Activate – Begins with the first major post sale interaction, when the relationship first materializes in a meaningful way and the business begins to deliver on the promises made during the Assess phase
5. Acclimate – The customer learns and grows comfortable with the company's way of doing business

6. Accomplish – Occurs when the customer achieves the result they were seeking when they decided to do business with you in the first place. In order for the relationship to advance, the customer must accomplish their original goal.
7. Adopt – The customer takes ownership of the relationship, leading the charge on deepening and strengthening the bond. You want the customer to adopt your way of operating and take an ownership stake in the relationship.
8. Advocate – Customer becomes a raving fan, zealous promoter, and eager referral engine.

Phase 1 - Assess

- The best companies in the world take the customer experience offered after the sale and infuse it into marketing and sales, so the customer gets a flavor of the good things to come. This not only incentivizes prospects to sign on the dotted line, but it properly sets the expectations for what will happen after the sale.
- Doing the 'homework' to tailor the experience to your prospective clients is an incredible way to show them how much you actually care. By investigating the individual's interests, likes / dislikes, hobbies, and habits, you can easily craft a series of interactions that will light up the prospect on an emotional level.
- Selfless acts prove to the prospect that you are interested in a long-term relationship as opposed to making a quick sale.

Phase 2 – Admit

- Co-creating an experience establishes buy-in quickly. Memorializing the moment with a physical memento of the new partnership ensures that the new customer won't soon forget the decision to work with you.
- "Of course the salesperson is happy, they just took my money!" The customer worries that their new 'friend' is most likely unconcerned with and unmoved by the customer's own emotional state.
- Most companies miss a golden opportunity in the Admin phase to honor the shared excitement and capitalize on the customer's emotional peak by matching or echoing the euphoria.
- Celebrating milestones, sharing physical mementos, and providing the illusion of joining an exclusive club combine to elicit powerful feelings of inclusion and collaboration.
- Use playfulness, humor, and unexpected surprises (that may have nothing to do with the actual product) to make the experience remarkable. Your customers are human, and so are you. Remind them with your actions and behaviors and in the process give them a taste of your company culture.
- Mark new customer entry points by creating rituals and meaning. People search for (and buy) products that promise to transform them. Give customers the overt experience of a ritual that marks a change from one state (the time before they were customers) to

another (their life going forward as a customer) and you go beyond the claim of “your life will change with us” to begin showing them how.
- Individual thank-you calls within 24 hours of a purchase differentiate your brand from almost every business.

Phase 3 – Affirm

- “Now right behind us here, Frank, you can see we have our Raving Fan wall – with lots of signatures from our happy clients. Hopefully one day you’ll get in here and sign the wall as well. Our goal in the coming months or years is to provide such an incredible experience for you that you’re proud and eager to sign the wall.” --- Video idea
- By reaffirming the customer’s decision through a series of positive, high-energy communications, you can counter the chemically induced feelings of doubt.
- Make the required remarkable.
    - Every company has aspects of its business that are “required elements” of operation. Confirmation emails, out of office auto-responders, contracts, invoices, voicemail messages, and email signature lines are some of the required elements of doing business in the modern era.
- Turn current customers into evangelists and then use their enthusiasm to counter a new customer’s feelings of buyer’s remorse. Connecting them with current customers is one of the most effective ways to make new customers feel welcome and confident about their decision.

Phase 4 – Activate

- Activation by the very nature of the word implies a sense of energy, enthusiasm, and excitement. These emotions should be implicit in the interactions during this phase.

Phase 5 – Acclimate

- The secret to achieving success in the Acclimate phase is to guide and assist your customer as much as possible during the entire relationship. At each step in the process, you need to explain what is happening and what is going to happen next.
- Customers want to know every step in the process. When they can see you do the things you’ve promised to do, it reduces uncertainty and allows them to plan their lives better, and it makes their overall satisfaction rate at the end of the engagement significantly higher.
- When customers see you “working” for them, they feel more confident about their purchase and the care you are taking to deliver it.
- The goal in this time period is to get early buy-in and habit formation before the novelty wears off and/or the customer slips back into old behaviors.

Phase 6 – Accomplish

- The mere fact that your customer achieved their desired goal or result is worthy of noting and celebrating. Not only does it show you were paying attention all along, but it lets you share in the successful achievement.
- Keep in mind that both you and the customer should feel that the previous engagement was successful before seeking new opportunities. The best way to do this is to identify the customer's goals at the beginning of the customer journey (ideally in the Assess phase but no later than the Activate phase) and then track your progress against completing those goals throughout the relationship.

Phase 7 – Adopt

- Give your fans a name
- Lady Gaga calls her fans her "little monsters" and in the process gives them a way to self-identify as being part of her tribe.
- Unique words and phraseology creates a sense of belonging within your customer base. By focusing extra attention on your most loyal fans and adopters, you increase their personal commitment to you while growing your word-of-mouth support and promotion. Giving your raving fans a special name and encouraging them to spend time together acknowledges their support and loyalty to your brand.
- Reward your customers for continuing to do business with you.
- People think it's sexier to go chase new customer blood. They don't get it. The magic is pouring on gas to ignite existing relationships. I'd rather have a massive bonfire of my most loyal adopters than constantly light little sparks here and there.

Phase 8 – Advocate

- The best referrals come from happy current customers. Make your referral program easy to understand, even easier to participate in, and worthwhile for the referring customer's investment of time and effort.
- Advocacy is the holy grail of business. Why? Because advocacy creates word-of-mouth referrals, which is the very best marketing available.
- Most businesses will never reach the stage of advocacy with their customers. Though they make valiant efforts to convert the customer to an advocate, they're usually unsuccessful because they ask for referrals too soon, destroying their chances of ever getting one.

Additional Notes & How to Implement:

- Ink fades slower than memory (Use OneSource CRM)

- Customer Surveys – make them short, relevant, and efficient to increase the likelihood of completion
- Surprise the spouse and family
- Remember the assistant and team members
- Give the best you can afford
    - Rule of thumb on gifts – 2-10% of net profits used for gifting
- Let employees co-create the experience
- Give employees autonomy to create their own experience
- Track and celebrate the small wins
- Remarkable customer experiences have the potential to create a happier world
- Happier customers lead to happier employees