



Increased Customer Churn

By Guy Arnold

The world is becoming more and more competitive and the market is now truly global. Customers, previously disempowered by misleading marketing and over enthusiastic advertising, have become cynical and disloyal: and now they have global choice and price transparency like NEVER before.

No wonder so many long standing 'entrenched' businesses are struggling and failing!

On top of this **the customer is now empowered as never before**: with social media and feedback enabling them to check you out before buying from you, and feedback to the world how you performed ... without your knowledge or involvement.

With reputation being the mainstay of profit and success, businesses are getting more and more lost and confused because this is such a threat and an issue to them.

In effect, **the world has been turned upside down, and in order to deal with this effectively, you have to be putting in place 'upside down processes'**.

Without clear differentiation, customers will be driven on price alone: but we know that, in reality, we, as customers, value attention, trust, feeling valued, and ease of use or ease of life, above money: so why is money becoming such a major competitive area?

The answer is of course: **BLINDINGLY OBVIOUS COMMON SENSE**: go back to basics and 'treat the customer like

you would want to be treated if you were in their shoes'. But, with 400 years of business working contrary to these principles, and being driven by 'Marketing and Selling', old habits are VERY hard to change!

And the result is that very few organisations know how to act effectively in this new world of customer empowerment, feedback and global competition.

The answer is counter intuitive again: **embrace competition, embrace feedback, embrace customers and listen to them more**: make sure that you put some really good customer experience measures into your business and use them through your 'go the extra inch' practices to continually improve and continually focus on your customers' real needs.

And, of course this must all be driven through a clear and passionately supported customer focused mission.

Doing this sort of thing will build customer loyalty and repeat purchases, up-purchases, cross purchases and referrals.

Increased risk of negative reputation, affecting our image and therefore sales.

Now the customer is empowered both internally and externally, you are vulnerable to them talking about you behind your back: be it on social media or feedback sites.

Despite what the lawyers, internet reputation management systems and quick fix merchants tell you, **you cannot hope to control this.**

Nor should you: you should look to empower it and make it happen in your favour by doing all the right things: adopt the aikido approach.

Aikido is a synthesis of his martial art, philosophy, and religious beliefs. Aikido is often translated as "the Way of unifying (with) life energy" or as "the Way of harmonious spirit." Aikido is performed by blending with the motion of the attacker and redirecting the force of

the attack rather than opposing it head-on. This requires very little physical strength, as the aikidka (aikido practitioner) "leads" the attacker's momentum using entering and turning movements.

This is exactly what organisations should do today with social media and online reviews.

The issue is that we are not used to this:

- we are not used to not having control over our PR:
- we are not used to customers being able to say what they think about us whether we think the customer is right or wrong:
- we are not used to our staff being able to tell the world about what we are really like inside.

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And we so often take this as a threat, and react in the 'fight or flight' way: we either react angrily or complain and become victims, because in the past we have been able to control these things to a certain extent and today because we are not able to, it is of course, perceived as a threat.

And then EVERYTHING goes pear shaped. But it **isn't a threat: it is a massive opportunity**, and those companies that see it as such will be the winners going forward in the 21st century. Again, a counter intuitive situation: encourage feedback: empower your customers internally and externally, but make sure before you do this that you have your clear, customer focused mission in place, you filter all of your processes through needs, you adopt the 'go the extra inch' processes and you have simple, clear, empowering measures, both lead and lag measures, that make it clear for all to see what you are and you aren't doing.

A good example of this working well, was an internet company we were working with who started to publish all their reviews on-line

transparently: they put these reviews on a new web-site and added comments as to what they thought of the reviews, i.e.:

- When they got it right they said, thank you that's very helpful and mentioned other things they were doing.
- And when they got it wrong, they held their hands up and said, you're quite right we got it wrong.
- Or if they felt they hadn't got it wrong, and the customer was being unfair, then in a straightforward head-on way, explained what they were trying to achieve and how they felt misunderstood and what their business stood for.

The net result of all of this was a doubling of internet enquiries over twelve months, just by being transparent and publishing it in an open and honest way.

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About the Author

Guy Arnold is a Self-employed business adviser and coach, delivering business support across the UK: specialising in:

- Building sales via consistent delivery of outstanding customer experiences
- Personal and Organisational effectiveness
- Empowering and motivating teams

He is a flexible, independent, constructive, and diligent person, known for his focused & positive approach to issues, and thrives by helping others get the best out of themselves.

Guy's two main business interests:
1. His own training and consultancy company, specialising in organizational and personal effectiveness, leadership, customer service, sales and time management: either working independently, or in conjunction with Franklin Covey Europe.
2. Authoring & publishing material on building sales through service in the customer empowered social media world: following 4 years research into 1 question: 'If GREAT customer service is blindingly

obvious common sense, why isn't it common practice?'

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"An entrepreneur assumes the risk and is dedicated and committed to the success of whatever he or she undertakes."

Victor K. Kiam (1926 – 2001)
US entrepreneur and the owner of the New England Patriots football team.



"Follow your instincts. That's where true wisdom manifests itself."

Oprah Gail Winfrey (1954 -)
is an American media proprietor, talk show host, actress, producer, and philanthropist.

How simple can it be?

You and I know some 'stuff', don't we?

Yes – there, lawn-mowing around the inside of our minds/brains/higher-selves - are 1000s, nay 1,000,000s of ideas, methods, techniques, systems, ways, paths to do - nigh on anything

And yet...

I wondered just how much of it we actually know to use as well as we might-um?

Let me explain:

My oft -quoted guide, Deepak, would say:
"Organising power is inherent in knowledge"

And true he is.

However - organising power and an ability to get others to be able to use what we know are two different ends of the same telescope.

You see...

If you can't make it simple - you don't know it well enough!

Cogitate on that for a mo.

If you can't make it simple you don't know it well enough.

When we can explain it simply we can use its complexity.

So here's what to do...

Pick an idea you just love - one of your favourite ones.

Imagine you're taking to a young child; say about 6 or 7 years old. Explain it to this imaginary person.

Could you?

If your answer is "yes" - great!

If your answer is "no" - then it certainly needs a revisit to simplify it.

Remember:

When we can explain it simply we can use its complexity.

Go on then

Peter

Peter Thomson
Editor and Publisher

tgiMondays
"Making the World a More Positive Place"