

8 Edgy Quotes and Notes to Gain a Customer Experience Edge

By Ron Kaufman



A Customer Experience Conference in New York was one of the best I have attended, so far. The speakers and ideas presented were world-class. Enjoy this collection of quotes and notes from The Conference Board's annual event.

1. "Can you summarize your service strategy in 35 words or less, and would your colleagues put it the same way?"

This question stopped me in my tracks. Everyone at UP! Your Service is committed to customers, to service, and to each other. But I'm not sure our team would pass this test with flying colours. Would yours?

2. "You can only engineer quality so far without pulling down the customer experience."

Focusing on speed, costs, and reducing errors is good, but be careful not to engineer the process so far along that the customer experience declines. The right point of focus is not "How to improve a process?", but rather "How to improve an experience?"

3. "If you cannot be the customer, you must work harder to see the customer."

If you work in a business to consumer (B2C) industry, it's easy to imagine yourself as the customer. We all eat, shop, buy, fly, and use various products and services. But in a business to business (B2B) environment we don't have this natural advantage. It's harder to imagine yourself buying a power plant, or working in a purchasing department, or many other roles. Mapping a customer's Perception Points is even more essential if you work in B2B.

4. "New generation customers align their purchase choices with their values."

The millennial and aspirational generations are growing up with more choice, more social media and global news, and many more opinions. They feel good when they buy what they believe in, so it's more important than ever to share the causes your company supports to make an emotional connection. Do you make donations? Do your people volunteer? Do you sponsor the local team? Don't just do it, let your customers know about it.

5. "Motivate doctors to improve service by appealing to their competitive nature."

Doctors can be notorious for arrogant behaviour towards nurses and patients. Stimulating their competitive spirit can

cultivate better bedside manners. First, let problematic doctors know their "communications score" was low. Then share comparative data about higher-scoring doctors. Point out this data is becoming more transparent to everyone: professionals, patients, and the public. Next, let them know that a communications course is available with data showing doctor's scores increasing after attending. Finally, ask "Do you want to take advantage of this?" But do this over time, not all at once. Doctors like to think. And they like to win.

6. "You find out if you have a friend when you have a problem."

USAA does such an amazing job handling insurance claims that their customer retention rates after claims are near 100%. A company executive said "If everyone could have a claim, no one would ever leave." A female customer said "If USAA was a man, I'd marry him." What's it like to be your customer with a problem?

7. "Business in the front, party in the back"

Zappos doesn't pay high salaries, but they do put high effort into building a work culture where people want to keep on working. Zappos is in business, and in Las Vegas, for the long term. They've adopted the African proverb: "If you want to

go quickly, go alone. If you want to go far, go together."

8. "It's not my job to fix your attitude." One hard hitting speaker was asked "How do you motivate an unmotivated person?" His answer was immediate: "I don't. I fire them." The same speaker was asked "What keeps you up at night?" by an interviewer. He told her it was lousy question. The much better question (and the one he answered) is "What gets you up in the morning?"

Which of these quotes and notes resonates most strongly for you? Share your views in the comments section at:
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