

3 Ways Knowledge Sharing Improves Employee Engagement and Customer Experience

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Marriott International founder J.W. Marriott once said, “Take care of associates and they’ll take care of your customers.”

But many companies take the opposite approach; they put the customer first and largely ignore the employee experience. While prioritizing the customer seems like a logical strategy, it’s not the *best* approach. Instead, creating a positive employee experience can actually be more profitable.

Research shows that employee engagement and customer experience are directly related. Companies with highly engaged employees outperform their competitors by 147%. And 79% of employees at companies with above-average customer experience ratings report being highly engaged in their jobs, compared to only 49% of employees at companies with average or below-average customer experience scores.

Even without the numbers, it makes sense: When employees feel valued and are equipped with the right tools to do their jobs, they're empowered to perform at a higher level. Denise Lee Yohn, author of *FUSION: How Integrating Brand and Culture Powers the World's Greatest Companies*, points out that "employees can and will only deliver experiences to customers that they experience themselves. When you give your employees the kind of experience you want customers to have, they learn what it is and how it makes them feel, they appreciate how important it is, and they start to intuitively make decisions that support your desired CX."

But all too often, companies don't give their employees the tools they need to be successful — and as a result, employees struggle and don't deliver a good customer experience.

A Positive Employee Experience Starts with Knowledge Sharing

While perks like Ping-Pong tables and free snacks in the office can boost employee morale, creating true employee engagement starts with equipping your team members with the tools they need to do their jobs quickly and accurately.

Rob Maille, co-founder and head of customer experience and strategy at CommerceCX, put it this way: "When the back-office employee has better tools, they feel better about their job and the value they provide, which also translates into a better experience for the customer."

A knowledge sharing platform is mission-critical when it comes to empowering employees. For the uninitiated, a knowledge sharing platform is a software solution that centralizes all of your company's information in every form it takes (including written documents, slide decks, videos, and questions and answers) and makes that information searchable. As a result, employees know exactly where to go to find the most accurate, up-to-date information that can help them provide exceptional customer service.

Here are three ways a knowledge sharing platform improves both the employee and customer experience:

1. It Prioritizes Employees

We all know the mantra "the customer comes first." Company leaders develop products and processes to be convenient and easy to use for the customer. Content is personalized to target the customer's interests and preferences. From beginning to end, everything is designed to make the customer's experience as smooth as possible. But companies often don't put the same thought into making their *employees'* experience that smooth.

Effective knowledge sharing changes that. The right knowledge sharing platform provides employees with personalized feeds of relevant information and robust search functionality. Ideally, employees should have multiple intuitive ways to find information, such as

performing a keyword search, narrowing results down with filters, and bookmarking information they need to access frequently. If employees can't find the information they're looking for, they should be able to ask a question within the platform and get a response from a subject matter expert.

By implementing this kind of platform, company leaders can show that they want the employee experience to be just as personalized, convenient, and streamlined as the customer experience. And when employees feel valued, they're more likely to serve their customers well.

2. It Makes Employees' Jobs Easier

Employees are often measured on how quickly and completely they resolve customer issues — especially in a call center environment. But without a centralized database of knowledge, employees are limited in what information they can provide and what problems they can solve. That means more callbacks, more emails, and a lower first-call resolution rate.

The same challenge extends to employees in almost every department. Sales representatives, for example, need to be able to find the right collateral for each potential customer at every point of contact, no matter where he or she is in the buyer journey. Product teams need to be able to find research and customer feedback specific to their product lines to make informed decisions about how to move forward.

A knowledge sharing solution enables employees in every department and function to quickly find the information they need to accurately address customer issues and make data-driven decisions. And that kind of speed and accuracy — whether it's resolving an issue over the phone or providing a prospect with a case study that applies to his or her specific industry and business challenge — is exactly what customers are looking for.

3. It Connects Employees

Too often, employees within the same company work in silos, which gives each department a limited view of the customer experience. Market research teams, for example, may collect interesting data on what messaging may resonate with customers — but if that information isn't actively shared with other teams, it can't help your internal stakeholders better reach customers.

Similarly, customers may provide valuable feedback on your company's products during customer service calls. But unless your customer service teams share that information with your product development teams, nothing will be done to change the customer experience. With a knowledge sharing platform, employees essentially have access to every other employee in the company. They can share information, including customer feedback,

market research, and department processes, which can help teams collectively improve the customer experience. Employees become more connected, which helps them work as one unified team — all for the good of your company's customers.

The link between employee engagement and customer experience is undeniable. By providing your employees with knowledge sharing tools, you'll create a positive employee experience, which will translate to a superior customer experience.