



Michelli's Musings on Mirthful Matters

What's going right...

Time for Hope

Quality guru W. Edwards Deming once said, "Any manager can do well in an expanding market." In a similar vein, I'm convinced that what we "do" in a flat or contracting market defines our significance.

No matter where I have spoken/consulted in the past few months (Colombia, Chile, Peru, Canada, Puerto Rico, Singapore, or the USA), I've found two very different types of business leaders - those who are engaged in fear-based discussions and those who are leading from a position of hope.

It's important to clarify that leaders communicating a hope-based message do not see hope as a "strategy" but instead are leveraging the talents and passions of their people to create solutions for frightened consumers by inspiring them to look to a positive future.

Increasingly, I find myself talking to leaders and frontline employees about how recession has been a positive force in history. Did you know that economic downturns led to the innovations which produced McDonald's, General Electric, Walt Disney and IBM? Often abundance lulls business leaders into complacency and scarcity drives creativity! In rich economic times, leaders can prop-up bad ideas with money and allow those ideas to languish well-beyond viability.

In a new presentation entitled "**Now More Than Ever**," I've been focusing on the critical importance of creativity and innovation for delivering customer value. Every staff member needs to understand that the current economy represents a "major and significant" emotional event that affords transformational opportunities for those who maintain hope, and generate solutions that connect with customers on practical and emotional levels.

"Yes Virginia, There is Customer Loyalty"

Recently on Twitter, I've engaged in and watched some heated debates about customer loyalty. Some great thought leaders have taken the stand that customer loyalty is a myth! To support their assertion, they use data of declining customer loyalty and examples like Starbucks (where "so called" loyal customers who used to visit 18 times per month are now only visiting 12 times a month).

While I've conceded that customer loyalty is more difficult to secure in a more commoditized, price-conscious economy, I've continued to argue that most businesses do not understand what it takes to build loyalty. Using Gallup's pyramid of loyalty as a starting point for the discussion, I suggest that most businesses are content to be

viewed as "competent" by their customers. Loyalty-building businesses, by contrast, additionally strive to connect with customers through their integrity, pride and passion.

Loyalty is a matter of loving your people; then they will love your customer! Customers in turn will not only view you as competent but feel you have integrity, feel pride in being connected to you, and ultimately share their passion for your company with their social network. So, what are you doing to drive integrity, pride and passion?

New Resources

As promised in the last newsletter, I am proud to announce my new book project. The book will feature UCLA Health System. (You know they must have a terrific patient experience - since I am a USC alumni!) The working title of the new book is "**No Debate about it - Put Care back in Healthcare - How UCLA Health Systems Heals One Patient at a Time.**"

In addition to the new innovation presentation mentioned above "**Now More than Ever,**" I've also created a keynote/workshop that has been well received in Canada, the US, and South America entitled "**It's Not Success - It's Significance.**" That presentation focuses on maximizing personal, leadership, and business legacy. Starting with Bob Cialdini's work on "influence" and building off of Galford and Marcia's writings on "leadership legacy," audience members are challenged to use a personal legacy statement to create a life of significance and a future committed to maximizing their influence by "developing leaders who develop leaders."

What does service have to do with customer spending? I recently discussed this issue in an interview aired on CNBC.

<http://www.cnbc.com/id/15840232?video=1313192640&play=1>

Next Newsletter

Thanks for reading and for all your support. Until next time, it's time for hope dedicated to loving those we serve, with an eye to leaving a significant legacy!

Joseph