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Table of Contents

MONDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2014

KEYNOTE
Getting Personal with Your Customer: The Power of Authenticity

SUCCESS STORY
Understanding and Empathizing With Your Customer’s Pain

FIRESIDE CHATS
Track 1: From Customer Relationship to Customer Experience Management
Track 2: Beyond the Surface: Utilizing Deep Analytics to Further the Customer Interaction
Track 3: Leveraging Mobile to Better Engage and Serve Your Customers
Track 4: Customer Centric Innovation: Reaping the Loyalty and Advocacy Rewards of Putting the Customer at the Core of the Enterprise
Track 5: Igniting Agent Effectiveness
Track 6: One-on-One with Gamification

FROST & SULLIVAN INSIGHTS
2015 Customer Contact Market Predictions

THINKTANKS
Track 1: Leading with Brand Purpose and Culture
Track 2: Customer Segmentation, Personalization, and Messaging
Track 3: Facilitating Customer Channel Adoption and Preferences
Track 4: The Next Frontier of Workforce Management: Bridging the Gap Between the Front and Back Offices
Track 5: How Can You Drive Change to Employee and Customer Engagement Unless You Know Where to Look?
Track 6: New Horizons: Customer Personality Modeling

ASK THE EXPERTS! PANEL DISCUSSION
The Future Workforce: Imagining and Writing the Revolutionary Agent Job Description

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2014

KEYNOTE
The Customer Experience Battleground: Why Some Organizations Will Genuinely Become Customer Centric and Others Won’t

EXECUTIVE INSIGHT
Driving Memorable Experiences Through Consumer and Customer Insights

EXECUTIVE ACTION
Executing on Brand Experience: Making Customer Engagement Happen Across the Organization
PEER COUNCILS
Track 1: Strategic Thinkers Only: Forum for Seasoned Customer Contact Executives with a Core Focus on Strategy
Track 2: Creating Technology Vendor Partnerships that Deliver Enhanced Value
Track 3: Information & Communication Technologies Industry Meet-Up
Track 4: Financial Services Industry Meet-Up
Track 5: Continuous Process Improvement in Customer Services

ROUNDTABLES
Track 1: Embedding the Voice of Your Customer in the Contact Center and Throughout the Organization
Track 2: Real-Time, Personalized Customer Engagement
Track 3: The Customer’s Journey, in Their Eyes
Track 4: Actionable Intelligence in the Contact Center and Enterprise
Track 5: The Real Drivers of Agent Performance: How to Make Culture Pay

CASE HISTORIES
The A-Z of NPS
Knowledge Management Methodology – The Power of Real-Time, Knowledge-Centered Support

BEST PRACTICES
Track 1: How TXU Energy Drives Revenue and Competitive Advantage via the Customer Experience
Track 2: Delivering Premium Care for High-Value Customers
Track 3: Social Engagements: The Power of Social CRM
Track 4: QM-Driven Coaching: Driving New Behaviors for Best Outcomes

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2014
KEYNOTE
What Big Data is Truly of Value to the Customer Experience and the Contact Center?

ASK THE EXPERTS! PANEL DISCUSSION
How Do You Really Know if Your Customer is Satisfied?

SUCCESS STORY
How to Be an Effective Chief Experience Officer, Even if You Don't Have the Title

INTERACTIVE
Inspiration to Implementation: Developing Your Day-to-Day Business Action Plan
EXECUTIVE INSIGHT
Driving Memorable Experiences Through Consumer and Customer Insights

PRESENTER
Glenn Hartman, Senior Vice President, Channel Business Development, Starbucks

TIME
Tuesday, October 21, 2014, at 9:45 am

SESSION ABSTRACT
How do you create an enduring brand? Howard Schultz, Starbucks’ Chairman and CEO, believes that the most powerful and enduring brands are built with the strength of the human spirit, not an ad campaign. As Glenn Hartman discussed during this presentation, driving memorable experiences is critical to building brand loyalty and consumer, and customer insights are important foundations to enable these experiences. Starbucks’ Channel Development team is innovating to drive this human connection in the grocery aisle, a place not always known for memorable experiences.

TAKE-AWAY
Starbucks has 20,000 stores and 70 million customers around the world. Its mission: to inspire and nurture the human spirit—one person, one cup and one neighborhood at a time. According to Hartman, Starbucks is selling an experience, not coffee. The company builds an experience between the customer and the barista. The key to building an enduring relationship, he emphasized, lies not in selling an experience and building from the heart with the strength of the human spirit—creating a connection between your customers and your company that goes beyond the transaction of physical goods.

“We want to be there for their customers where they live, work and play,” Hartman explained. During the session, he discussed the company’s challenge to become relevant not only in its own stores, but also in grocery aisles and in digital media.

BEST PRACTICES
Making grocery items more lucrative was one of the company’s critical goals. That was a challenge because in the grocery store, Starbucks was just another brand alongside many others. In response, the company created the Starbucks signature aisle in grocery stores after hearing customers complain about the uninviting experience of shopping. This aisle is full of Starbucks products, embellished with the instantly-recognizable logo and touches of wood that recall the coffee shops themselves. A critical part of the
experience, Hartman said, is that the aisle has the familiar coffee smell. This innovation resulted in increased sales and improved customer experience with Starbucks in the grocery store.

**ACTION ITEM(S) TO IMPLEMENT**

Hartman shared some of the lessons Starbucks learned from this experience. The company needed to:

- Understand consumer needs and desires
- Utilize in-store insights to drive innovative solutions
- Enable one-on-one connections with the consumer

Hartman stressed the importance of assessing the customer experience at all points of contact. You need to figure out areas where customer satisfaction is lacking and view these as opportunities.

For any kind of expansion to be successful, it's important to grow in ways the customer wants. Anticipate customer needs based on existing feedback, and develop strategies to meet those expectations. Make customer experience part of the DNA of your company, Hartman said, so that it stays consistent no matter what else changes.

**TAKE-AWAY**

In addition to the retail experience, Starbucks also looks for ways to connect digitally with the customer.

**BEST PRACTICES**

“We see the explosion in digital to connect with our customer. We want a conversation with the person digitally,” Hartman said.

The company knew there was a downward trend in shopping malls; the traffic there has declined by 50 percent. You have to have some kind of connection with your customers. Today, you need to create a one-on-one connection digitally. The average person opens their phone 110 times a day. We spend more time on our phones than face-to-face communication.

**ACTION ITEM(S) TO IMPLEMENT**

One key part of the strategy was developing a rewards card that lets customers earn free drinks and other perks. That helps with digital engagement because customers
need to go online to register the card and check the points they are earning. Starbucks has also created an app that lets customers use the card digitally and even pay for their coffee in the cafes directly through their phones.

The rewards program allows for the acquisition of profile data and purchase history while simultaneously engaging the customer.

**TAKE-AWAY**

The overall Starbucks philosophy has created a different culture amongst employees and customers, Hartman said.

**BEST PRACTICES**

It comes back to the company's DNA. “We really want to do the right thing,” Hartman said. Starbucks wants to create people who say it's a different place, and the company wants to attract better people.

**ACTION ITEM(S) TO IMPLEMENT**

Employees come to Starbucks if they want to do something bigger than themselves. And if people aren't buying into that philosophy, it's addressed. Employees can be themselves and they are expected to respect other people as both a barista and as a consumer. It's all about the behavior and the mindset of people, Hartman said.

**FINAL THOUGHT**

Ultimately, what you sell to customers is not a product or service so much as your brand. Hire and train employees who agree with your mission statement to foster loyalty and authenticity.
You will benefit from a thorough and focused chronicle of the Frost & Sullivan Executive MindXchange, including key take-aways and action items to implement in your own organization. These collections, prepared mostly by your peers, ensure you don’t miss out on any of the sessions that run concurrently with those that you choose to attend. Simply stated, we pull out the golden nuggets of the event for you.

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