

Better Than Gold: The Value of the Platinum Rule

Editors Note: During our August focus on Guest Experiences, we are honored to have some of the best voices in the world of Customer Experience provide guest posts for the Vision Room. As you read the content below, simply think "Guest" in terms of the "customer" the author is talking about - and you will benefit from the knowledge and expertise of some great minds.

Here's another age-old debate... gold or platinum?

Personally, I prefer platinum.

Oh wait. What are we talking about? LOL.

Rules. I'm talking about rules.

I still prefer platinum!

On the heels of my [recent post about imagining that you're a human](#)... I thought I'd take a look at which one, the Golden Rule or the Platinum Rule, puts us into more-human and more-empathetic shoes.

You're probably well aware of both rules I'm referring to. The Golden Rule states that you should treat others the way that *you* would want to be treated, while the Platinum Rule shifts the focus a bit and says that you should treat others the way that *they* want to be treated.

I'm positive the Platinum Rule was created by a customer experience professional! While the Golden Rule ignores the feelings of others and assumes that we all want to be treated the same way, the Platinum Rule recognizes that we don't, that we want to be treated the way we want to be treated. It acknowledges that we all have different needs and want to be respected as individuals. It's quite the improvement to the Golden Rule. It's much more empathetic.

The Platinum Rule speaks to customer experience professionals. We are constantly preaching that companies need to be more empathetic and do a better job of understanding customers wants, needs, pain points, problems to solve, jobs to be done, and more... so that they can design the products and the experiences that customers want - or that solve customers problems and painpoints.

Put differently, I think the Golden Rule perpetuates [inside-out thinking](#), while the Platinum Rule inspires [outside-in thinking](#).

What's the best way to perpetuate the Platinum Rule? Three ways that I write and talk about all the time are:

1. **Listen.** Don't just ask customers about the experience, listen, as well. There are a lot of different channels and ways for customers to tell you about their needs and desired outcomes and how well you are performing against their expectations. Understanding these expectations and identifying key drivers of a great customer experience are important outcomes of this exercise.
2. **Characterize.** Research your customers. Identify the jobs they are trying to do. Compile key personas that represent the various types of prospects and customers that (might) buy from you or that use your products or services.
3. **Empathize.** Walk in your customers' shoes to get a clear understanding of the steps they take to do whatever job it is they are trying to do with your organization. Map their journeys to understand the current state of the experience.

These are all critical learning exercises. We walk away from each one with a lot of knowledge about customers wants, needs, problems to solve, etc. Use that information to live the Platinum Rule with your customers.

If you still think the Golden Rule is the better rule, consider this golden rule: *He who has the gold makes the rules.* Your customers hold the gold, and they will spend it elsewhere if you don't take the time to get to know them.

I've said it [before](#): maybe it goes beyond those rules to just simply doing what's right. But does that mean we need to rely on [common sense](#)? And [how common is common sense](#)? Maybe that's the problem.

> [Read more from Annette.](#)

Learn more about the power of the Platinum Rule in your church's first impression - [connect with Guest Experience Navigator Bob Adams.](#)