

How Great Can Your Guest Experience Really Be?

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.

The volume of a grand piano is determined by more than how hard the pianist presses the keys. The position of the piano lid can impact the decibel level of the sound coming from the instrument. All grand pianos have three positions: closed, half-way open and fully raised. The choice of lid positioning has to do with the priority the grand piano is to play in a performance.

Fully raised piano lids are used when the grand piano has center billing—it is the star of the show. You see this position used during a piano concert. Half open is used on those occasions a grand piano is sharing the spotlight with others in the performance. It might be the orchestra, a vocal soloist, or a choir. Obviously, closed is when the piano is more in the background as an accompanying instrument. Grand piano lids are alike to the priority of the customer in an organization.

[Customer-centric](#) is obviously wide open and fully raised. The customer is the star. Employees in customer-centric organizations seem to have unlimited authority to take care of customers and exercise obvious initiative to ensure customers get a consistently great experience. These organizations hire the best, expect the best performance, treat their employees as the best, and hold leaders accountable for achieving the best. Their over-the-top service creates a strong, almost cult-like following among customers who act like zealots.

Customer-focused organizations are those in which the customer is important, but must share top billing with others—like products, processes, or perhaps the bottom line. Customer-focused organizations get good marks from their customers. They not only do the basics exceedingly well, they periodically take actions that yield a story customers enjoy repeating. They place extensive effort on ensuring offerings are based on up-to-date customer intelligence and feedback. They ensure employees are resourced, supported and motivated. Their efforts produce customers who are generally loyal.

Customer-aware is “closed lid” organizations that desire customers to be more in the background. These organizations give enough lip service to customer service that it shows up in pockets of service delivery but not consistently. A friendly branch or store in one location, for example, and another simply going through the motions. Their efforts yield customers who are generally satisfied. However, satisfied customers only remain as long as a better (or sometimes simply different) option is unavailable. Customer-aware organizations struggle with growth but survive if they can keep the price-service-product (or outcome) in proper balance.

So, **where is the lid on your customer priority?** As you consider a level of service relevant for

your organization, consider these questions:

- What level of service do your customers expect?
- What level of service would your customers value and pay for?
- What level of service can your employees deliver?
- What level of service will leaders support?
- What level of service can your culture sustain?

Choosing the position of the “customer lid” can make all the difference in the harmony or dissonance of your bottom line as well as your customers’ desire to be at your next concert!

> [Read more from Chip.](#)

Learn more about the power of connecting with your Guests - [start a conversation with Guest Experience Navigator Bob Adams.](#)