

# The bigger your business is, the smaller you need to act

I recently witnessed a reminder of the power of a truly intentional experience—the kind of experience that really impresses customers and, in some cases, doesn't cost the company very much at all.

The companies we love to do business with are the ones that demonstrate day in and day out that they care about us as consumers, and they prove it by striving to at least meet if not exceed our expectations. A simple concept that all businesses from the small mom-and-pop to the multinational corporation should embrace is, "The bigger you get, the smaller you need to act." Doing so ensures that your company doesn't lose sight of what's most important: taking care of the customer, the very customer who will enable your company to thrive into the future.

I experienced a truly intentional experience at a recent stay at the Courtyard Marriott in Philadelphia. It was 10 p.m. and I was ready to put a long day of travel behind me. I checked in for two nights and was looking forward to kicking back and relaxing before an early start the next day; I was scheduled to speak at a conference for business leaders. My plan was to turn on the TV, watch for about 10 minutes and then fall fast asleep. I quickly unpacked and got ready for slumber. I hopped on the bed, and it was then that I met the remote control (cue dramatic music). I picked up the remote that was sitting on the bedside table. It was clearly old and in need of replacement. The letters on the primary buttons were faded. I turned the TV on but the channel buttons wouldn't work. Given that I was so tired, I decided to just shut off the TV and go to sleep.

The next morning as I walked past the front desk to exit the hotel, the concierge greeted me with a warm hello and asked, "How was everything with your room?"

"All was good," I replied, "except the remote in my room was not working properly."

"So sorry to hear that. What room were you in?" was his response.



## ON PERFORMANCE

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I let him know and continued on to my presentation. Four hours later when I arrived back at the hotel, I was greeted by a brand-new remote, a personalized note of apology and two candy bars. What a fantastic and seemingly simple experience!

Let's examine this experience a bit more.

- It only took a few minutes to execute. The delivery of the personal note and candy bars probably took five minutes or less.

- This act helps empower the staff that gets to deliver it—employees welcome the opportunity to "make someone's day."

- It only cost a few dollars at the most, including the hourly wage of the employee's time.

- The "experience is the marketing." An experience like this gets customers talking in a positive way about your company, which leads to increased business in the future.

- The Courtyard Marriott is a big operation with about 1,700 employees; however, the experience they delivered shows that they understand the concept of, "The bigger you get, the smaller you need to act."

What I just described was completely staged. It was a way for the Courtyard Marriott staff to go above and beyond and let me know they care and want me to have a great experience. And the beauty of it is that it cost so little to do. It's organizations like this that we love to do business with.

Take a moment and think about what you love about doing business with certain companies. If you are like most, you love doing business with companies that have

engaged employees who know what the desired company experience is, are willing to deliver it and, even more important, perform the experience consistently. The companies you are thinking of simply behave better than their competition, which leads to consumers (like you) becoming incredibly loyal.

And how do you show you loyalty? Well, you buy more, you buy more often and you are most likely a bit less price sensitive. I'll bet you also reward this company you love with the ultimate compliment: you refer others to them. In essence, you become the company's unpaid marketing department, helping it to get new customers.

Leaders in these companies recognize that all employees must know the desired experience and take pride in performing it for customers. They realize this is a requirement to ensure not only a strong work culture, but also more profitable customer relationships. Employees in these companies realize they are on stage orchestrating an experience. They appreciate that they have the ultimate responsibility to perform for each other and customers.

Ask yourself: How might your workforce deliver an experience worthy of customer love? What low-cost, easy-to-implement (with a little focus) idea might position your company to deliver an experience, just like the Courtyard Marriott did for me?

Remember, regardless of the size of your company, "the bigger you get, the smaller you need to act" to personalize an experience customers will love you for.

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