



Growing the Sweet Spot

A Balanced Strategy Produces Top Results

Winning with your customers, your employees and your shareholders

Balancing the customer experience, the employee experience and your business results is critical to a successful strategy. Today, more than ever, your goal must be to provide the best affordable customer experience possible, hire, train, and retain customer centric employees, and develop and implement business plans that maximize today and build for the future.

Out of Balance - Results Centric

If you get out of balance by focusing on business results over both the customer and employee experience, you may be successful in the short term but risk alienating customers and employees over the long run. If employee training and communication focuses purely on Business Results there is a high likelihood that the overall customer experience will suffer. Focusing on selling products or high margin skus versus satisfying customer wants and needs will not build loyalty.

Out of Balance - Customer Centric

If you focus on the customer experience over both employee experience and business results, you may not even make it in the short run. Unhappy employees will not provide great customer service. Without sound business strategies that produce results you will not last for long. Training your employees on providing a sensational customer experience and building relationships without training them on how they can impact the business will keep your business out of balance and minimize your return.

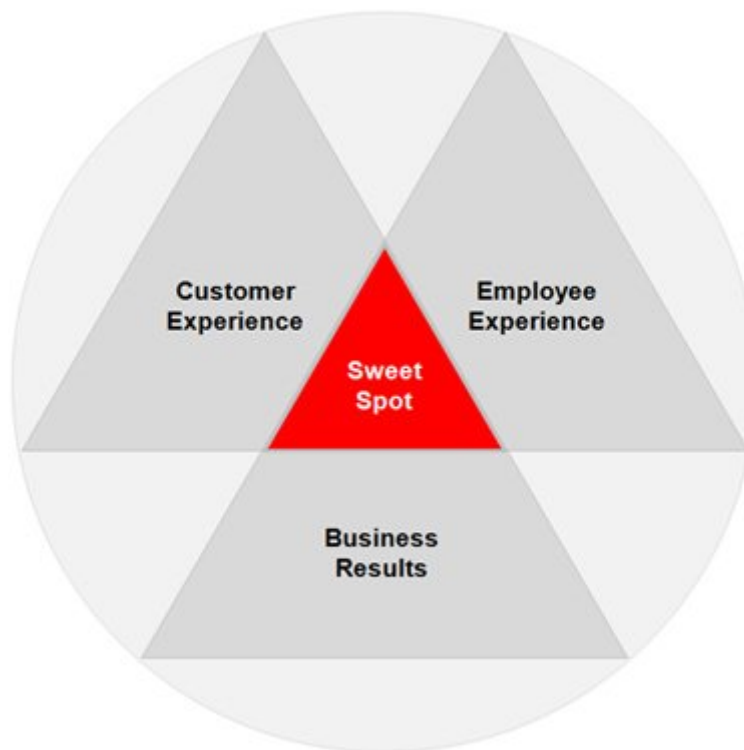
When you advertise to your customers exciting new technology, top brands or hot values that drive traffic and do not train your employees, equipping them with the product and technology knowledge and selling skills, you consistently cannot deliver on your promise.

Out of Balance - Employee Centric

If you focus on your employees at the expense of customers and results, you will have a happy group that has more fun at work and enjoy their jobs but don't focus on providing a great customer experience or held accountable to outcomes and growing the business.

If employees are trained to ask questions so they can understand the customer's wants and needs and taught how to build a trust relationship but do not make ties between customer responses and products and services, you limit the ability to maximize the customer experience, sales and profit.

The Sweet Spot



Growing the Sweet Spot

Maintaining a balance between the customer experience, employee experience and business result is required to maximize the outcomes of any strategy or initiative.

Leaders must understand what current conditions and culture exists and how they impact the sweet spot. Business plans can be tailored and training/communication plans developed and implemented that assure that outcomes are balanced and maximized. Without balance outcomes will be minimized.

By leaders understanding and impacting the current state and culture, they can enable and leverage employee talents and skills to improve the employee experience, creating better solutions for customers and improving business results.

By building relationships with the customer, the employee can identify wants and needs and offer solutions that impact the customer experience and profitable outcomes.

Elements of a Great Customer Experience

- Your Brand Promise is clear and understood. Through consistent customer experience and messaging, your customer clearly understands who you are, what you are and where you are. Your brand is differentiated from the competition.
- Your Value Propositions
 - Assortment – assortments are tailored to fit your proposition
 - wide assortments offering best selection and choice
 - top sellers – limited assortment, focused on best skus
 - Price
 - guaranteed lowest prices
 - great values
 - hot promotions
 - Services
 - instore services provided
 - after-sale services – in shop, in home

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- Brands
 - top national brands
 - private label brands
 - Technology
 - first to market with newest technology
 - Multi-channel retail – stores, Internet, eCommerce
 - The Instore Experience
 - clean and bright store environment
 - exciting merchandising and compelling presentations – make it work
 - interactive endcaps
 - Exciting and informative signage
 - Instocks – products are available to satisfy the customers wants and needs
 - Great, customer centric employees
 - The After Sale Experience
 - Follow-up on complex purchases
 - In-home services – a continuation of the brand promise
 - Returns, exchanges and adjustments – make it easy for the customer

Elements of a Great Employee Experience

- Hire the best you can afford – be very selective and screen
- Train them

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- New hire training – On-boarding
 - Compulsory and self directed training
 - Blended training – instructor lead and Intranet
 - Training content accessible when the employee needs LMS
 - Provide future opportunity – career ladder
 - Hold them accountable to complete their personal/position training agenda – on time
- Respect them and their ideas
 - Employees are a great source of ideas. For every 100 they offer, maybe one can be implemented
 - Asking them to help and making them feel appreciated and a part of the team improves experience
 - Great communication
 - Communicate often but keep it clear and concise. Over time, excessive communication is lost in the noise
 - Get to know them as individuals – build trust, respect, and loyalty
 - Hold them accountable
 - Recognition – with sincerity for accomplishments and providing great customer service
- Competitive compensation and benefits
 - You do not need to over compensate, just keep up with the market
 - Pay them right and pay them on time
 - Make sure benefits are delivered – health plans, vacation time, insurance claims

Elements of Great Business Results

- Development of a comprehensive business plan – Strategies
 - Macro-economic view
 - Growth, innovation, category, product, assortment, sales and margin, marketing, multi-channel, inventory management, supply chain, vendors, services, merchandising and signage, operations, real estate, store design, organization structure, people, legal, financial, costs, ROI, IRR, EVA
 - Competition and differentiation
 - Update, build out, and support your value propositions
- Fix foundational issues first
- Limit new initiatives to 3-4 based your capacity to afford, the capacity of your people to succeed
- Link with customer strategies
 - Customer experience, loyalty programs, loyalty growth, multi-channel touch points, after sale services, mutli-media touch points
 - Employee training and development is critical to business plan success and assuring a great customer experience
- Measure performance and forecast trends from actual business results

Leadership development is critical to sustained performance. Change management starts with leaders at all levels.

The Bottom Line – Grow the Sweet Spot

Consistent, year over year, improvement of shareholder value is only possible if the customer experience, the employee experience and your business strategies and results are totally linked together. All elements working in harmony not in conflict / in balance not out of balance.