

Are You A Coward? I Was.



Author: Colin Shaw, Founder of Beyond Philosophy






Beyond Philosophy Services:

Beyond Philosophy is recognized as the worlds thought leaders in Customer Experience. We have written three international bestselling books on the subject. Formed in 2002, Beyond Philosophy works internationally with organizations such as IBM, FedEx and American Express to name a few, from our offices are in London, England and Atlanta, Georgia, USA.

We help improve our clients Customer Experience by harnessing our knowledge and experience of practical implementation around the globe. We have proven expertise in de-risking implementations, increase speed of project delivery and saving costs through our engagements. Our tools and techniques are renowned for their practical application and have been tried and tested in many sectors.

Our services are:

Strategic Guidance – We work with all levels of management in an organization and guide them on the decisions that need to be taken to improve their Customer Experience. We start by asking three key strategic questions:

-  What is the Customer Experience you are trying to deliver?
-  What emotions are you trying to evoke?
-  Is your Customer Experience deliberate?

Our consultants work with the organizations to answer these key questions and put in place actions that will improve the organizations revenues, retain customers and save costs.

Training – We have well developed training programs for organizations from senior leadership to front line people. We also have developed specific training for Customer Experience professionals, whom we train and certify on our tools and techniques. We believe in “experiential” training, getting the delegate to feel what their Customer Experience is really like. We use real-life case studies to demonstrate our key points.

Market Insight and research – We specialize in conducting Customer insight on the subconscious and emotional aspects of the Customer Experience. We have developed models, with London Business School, that can predict revenue benefit an organization can enjoy through improving their experience. We put in place measurement tools that can measure the total Customer Experience.

Conference speaking – We have a team of people who deliver high quality conference speeches around the globe on how to improve your Customer Experience.



Are You A Coward? I Was.

Over the last month, I have come to hate emails and voice mail; not because I get 100 emails every day but because emails and voice mail are fast becoming the tool of the coward.

At Beyond Philosophy we worked with a client a while ago whose account managers and sales teams never used to speak to anyone! They just used to send emails. If the customer called in they were greeted by voice mail which were kept on all day. You see the sales teams were all busy doing “real” work. The customers were just interrupting them. Surely this must be the height of “inside out” behavior.

But why do people do this?

Primarily, it is because we all feel we can say things in emails that we would never say face to face. In my experience this never works how people would expect. No matter how hard you try, you think you have written one thing and the person reads something else. Before you know it you have lost a customer or lost a friend. We seem to forget that that all important ‘relationship’ with the customer is built on human contact, not emails!

One example springs to mind a few years ago when I worked in a multinational organization and was involved in a large internal project. Things were not going well. I decided to send a “broadside” to the party who were driving me nuts! I took great delight in constructing the email. It was actually quite therapeutic. I worked on it to get the right message across so they would absolutely read between the lines and understand what I thought. I pressed the button and off into the ether it went. I remember thinking, ‘Great I have told them what I think’. COWARD! How stupid I was, how naive, how self-righteous I was, and how wrong I was! I lived to regret it. The email caused a big argument. I had said things that were misinterpreted despite my best attempts to be clear. I ended up upsetting a lot of people and ended up regretting sending it. I was wrong. Since that day I now have adopted a few rules with emails that I would like to share with you.

1. Insist that all calls are answered by people and voice mail is banned other than outside office or closed hours.
2. Never reply to an email when you are emotionally charged. DO NOT type a reply and press the send button, until you have had a cooling off period. Put it in your “Draft” emails and look at it the next day. I always end up changing mine.
3. When you think “Shall I talk to them or shall I send them an email? It is at that moment when that little voice in your heads says; “No, just send them an email that’ll be simpler, you don’t want to talk to them it may be embarrassing....” That is exactly the time I know I MUST talk to them. So pick up the phone and talk! It’s never as bad as you expect and people always appreciate it.



4. Finally a plea. When anyone sends you an email, please reply. Don't just ignore it. Reply even to say "GO AWAY". I find it amazing that you can send an email to someone and they don't even have the courtesy of replying. What's your thought? If you have a view, drop me a line!

About the Author

Colin Shaw is the Founder of Beyond Philosophy, a consultancy, training and Customer research organization. They are recognized as thought leaders in the Customer Experience and are located in London, England and Atlanta, Georgia USA. Colin is an International bestselling author and widely acclaimed public speaker. For further information on the Customer Experience, and to read Colin's blog and videos, please visit Beyond Philosophy at www.beyondphilosophy.com