

Reality TV – Distance Learning For Consumers



Author: Colin Shaw, Founder of Beyond Philosophy






Beyond Philosophy Services:

Beyond Philosophy is recognized as the world's 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 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, increasing 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.



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By Colin Shaw, Founding Partner, Beyond Philosophy – June 2003

I'm sitting writing this on a flight from Heathrow to New York – on my way to conduct our first Beyond Philosophy seminar in the USA. As I entered the terminal at Heathrow it reminded me of the Reality TV show I'd caught a glimpse of the previous evening. At check-in I overheard an argument between a passenger and the check-in clerk.

I won't bore you with the details, but it was the closing line that had such great significance....."You did this for a passenger last night on TV so why are you telling me that you can't do it for me now? Do you only act nicely to customers when the cameras are around?"

Wow! The power of TV! After a while the situation was sorted out and I chatted to the manager behind the desk. It turns out that since the introduction of Reality TV they have seen the number of complaints increase. The issue is this.

Reality TV is educating people on how to complain successfully

Consumers are seeing people successfully complaining on TV and realize that all they have to do is to follow the same tactics. The company is in a difficult position. Not wishing to be seen as intransigent on TV or not Customer focused, their people err on the side of caution and become more Customer focused than normal. Thus an expectation is set with customers watching TV and they, quite reasonably, expect to be treated the same when they are in the same position.

But it gets worse. We all know that advertising plays an important role in the Customer Experience. In our view

The brand makes the promise and the Customer Experience delivers against that promise.

So let me paint you another scenario. I'm sitting at home with my lovely wife Lorraine. We're watching TV and the adverts. On comes an advert for company XYZ.....their brand advertising is making a promise to me and setting my expectation of what my Customer Experience will be like with that company. The next program I watch is Reality TV. The company who has just advertised has its "real" Customer Experience being played out before my very eyes, and to millions of people.

In research we conducted for the Marketing Forum, and available free of charge on our web site www.beyondphilosophy.com, 82% of consumers said they don't expect the Customer Experience they would receive from a company to be the same as that portrayed on TV in their advertising. A key finding was that this evoked feelings of disappointment and mistrust in them. Powerful emotions! And emotions companies are paying to evoke!

If the TV pundits are to be believed, Reality TV is here to stay - certainly for the short term anyway. Some of our clients are already asking us to help them think this issue through..... We would be fascinated to hear of any observations or thoughts you have on this subject.



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