

# The Branded Customer Experience



Author: Colin Shaw



## 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.



## **The Branded Customer Experience – “We never say no”**

**Colin Shaw urges you to ensure that your branding and marketing activities are aligned with your Customer experience.**

I work with a client in the North of England. Whenever I visit them I always stay at the same hotel. At this hotel their slogan is “We never say No”. All the employees wear badges saying “We never say no”, and there are even posters and flyers in your room saying the same thing. So ask yourself this, do you think the people “never say no”?

Of course not! This is marketing hype, and so far from reality it’s ridiculous. The marketing people have sat in a darkened room and come up with a great slogan that is totally impractical to implement on the shop floor. The contrast is vivid. You talk to an employee who is saying “No” to you about something and yet their badge tells you that they “never say no”.

You hear customers point out the inconsistencies - “I would like a non-smoking room, are there any available?”. The employee replies “no, I’m sorry they are all gone” - and inevitably the customer says “but I thought you never said no”? The employees get into games saying everything but the word “no” like “not really” or “that is not possible” to avoid saying the word “no”. When a customer points out they are really saying “no” I’ve actually heard an employee say, I didn’t say no, I said “not really”. It becomes like the game show where you cannot say the words “yes” or “no”. It made me think, “what are the brand values of this company?”. Given the scenario above I guess they maybe:

1. Create an expectation that is not fulfilled
2. Treat customers as if they are stupid

Now clearly these are not their brand values. But why have a slogan that is so obviously incapable of being implemented?

These examples are all around us. Only this week I wanted to buy some travel insurance. Therefore, after seeing an advert on TV, I decided to call this company – their slogan was “Quote me happy”. The images portrayed on the advert are of customers rolling around the floor laughing, and being very happy, with a telephone glued to their ear as they receive their quotation - and of the company’s call centre staff happily dealing with the customer’s enquiry. SO I thought I would give it a go.



The first thing I was greeted with was an automated service! The message said that **when they collect my data to give me my quotation that they would use this information** to send me further information about their products and services! Does that make me happy? No it doesn't. The message also says that if you don't want this to happen that all you have to do is tell the agent, when you do get through to them, and they will take you off the list. Do I trust that will happen? I eventually got through to the agent and asked for travel insurance. I explained that I didn't want to give my details as I don't want to be mailed with 20 million emails or letters and that I simply want travel insurance. Their reply was they couldn't provide it to me as their process is to collect the data before the quote. Does this make me happy? No. Were the people really friendly and happy? No. Were the messages happy? No.

So why do marketing departments sit on one side of the fence and the people who actually deliver the reality sit on the other? The creative people in agencies and marketing departments have great fun in creating marketing campaigns without any thought to how these actually get delivered, and the subsequent impact on the Customer Experience. In my experience, most employees do not even know what their companies brand values are. These are something that marketing do. They mean nothing to the people in the front line. Therefore what happens is that an expectation is created by marketing which is then not fulfilled by the people who touch the customer.

I would urge you to ensure that your branding and marketing activities are aligned with your Customer Experience.

## 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](http://www.beyondphilosophy.com)

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