

Why Airlines are More Interested in Themselves Than Their Customers.



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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.



Why Airlines are More Interested in Themselves Than Their Customers.

Did you have a good flight?' This is the usual question that everyone is asked when they come back from a long distance vacation. This year I have decided to write an email and send it to everyone so I don't have to repeat the answer 34 times! For an industry that has so much potential for making people happy, I am constantly surprised by their 'inside out' attitude towards customers. For those of you who haven't read our book, '[Building Great Customer Experiences](#),' our fifth philosophy for Building Great Customer Experiences is:

Great Customer Experiences are built 'outside in' rather than 'inside out'.

What this means is if you are 'outside in' you find out what your customer wants and change your organization to meet their needs accordingly. If you are 'inside out' however, you do what is good for your organization first and impose the experience that results on the customer.

Here are some 'inside out' behaviors from the holiday industry which demonstrate how they are more interested in themselves than their customers: 'The Times' – Friday 9th July 2004 'Travel light or face a ban says airline'. According to this article in the 'Times' newspaper, 'Ryan Air' has decided to 'ban heavy bags and force customers to only carry hand luggage.' The reason? Michael O'Leary, Chief Executive, 'Ryan Air', is reported to have said 'We want to find a way of banning hold baggage, which represents a large part of our airport costs.' Furthermore in this [article](#) on the 'Times' website Michael O'Leary comments, 'I can go away for two weeks with just my overnight bag.' So the normal 'kitchens sink' needs to be left at home and we need some form of incredible shrinking machine to get all our clothes in our hand luggage. Maybe we should buy all of our clothes at our destination and throw them away before returning home! Now you judge. 'Inside out' or 'outside in?'

Customer Coping Strategies

I am sure like me you have seen airlines starting to get stricter in how much luggage can be taken on board. When I was travelling back from Canada the other week I saw a family implementing an interesting 'coping strategy.' They emptied all of their heavy items out of their hand luggage as they got to the desk and either put the items in their pockets or just held them in their hands. When the hand luggage was weighed it was all okay apart from one bag. So they took an item or two out of that bag and put it into another bag which had already been weighed. It was like a merry go around! When they were then checked in away from the check in desk they emptied their pockets and put everything back in the bags! This is a classic 'coping strategy,' in the way that customers find ways around obstacles and problems.



What do you call your Customers?

Another airline's ground crew staff call their customers or passengers 'Self loading freight.' Think of what the culture of that organization must be like. Do you think they are focused on providing a great customer experience or on their own company? Think of the attitude this must generate. Are they inside out or outside in?

They don't care and their feedback form proved it! Finally when you are filling out your holiday feedback form, read what it says. It tells you what that organization is interested in. Last year I had a feedback form that said. 'If you had any problems whilst in the resort, did the representative adequately resolve them?' Yes or No. Let's assume I put 'No'. At the bottom of the form there was another sentence which said "Unfortunately we are unable to enter into any correspondence arising from this form". In other words they are not interested if my issue has not been resolved. They just want to find out if their representative is doing their job correctly. The fact that I am still annoyed or have a problem is irrelevant to them! 'Outside in' or 'inside out?' You decide. So, I hope you all have a great holiday and a great Customer Experience! I would be interested to hear of any other 'inside out' experiences you have.

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