



## Customer Experience Management – The ultimate CUSP

The hottest Marketing topic I can think of must be **Customer Experience Management (CEM)**. Why? Because that's what the *customer-centric marketing-concept* is all about. If your customers are delighted, surely that's the ultimate **Competitive Unique Selling Proposition (CUSP)**? CEM is positioning...how you want to exist in your Customer's mind?

**What is CEM?** (Based on Tom Peters, "Re-imagine. Business excellence in a disruptive age.")

- Humans have **five senses** – target all of them!
- Humans also have a **psychological/emotional 'sense'**, and also have a **logical/rational 'sense'** too
- There will **always** be a Customer Experience – it's a given! So make it reflect your **desired brand essence**. (Product & psychological positioning.)
- You must **design** the desired Customer Experience!
- Customers **will pay** large amounts for that experience!

**Rational & Emotional disaster zone:** I bought a computer workstation from Game...a gift for my father. It looked great on display, but I was made to pay for it first...on paying for it the teller stated, "they were out of stock...and pick it up at their depot!" It took 30mins to drive to the depot where I waited another 20mins for them to process my order! Eventually a *chipboard DIY-kit* was dropped into my trailer! It was so compact that it would have fitted on my back seat...and that's not all...it took the entire evening to piece it together (terrible instructions)...the cold-glue, borrowed from my neighbour, required another 24 hrs to dry.

### Here's the point:

The **Rational** CEM was appalling, however, the **Emotional** CEM was even more disastrous. At each contact point, the service staff merely operated like inefficient robots. They showed no empathy, responsibility or responsiveness. At no point was it either made clear that this was a DIY-project (luckily I do woodwork!). I had towed a trailer there to check that it was roadworthy!

### Tips:

Erik Vermeulen ([www.erikvermeulen.com](http://www.erikvermeulen.com)) suggests that economies are fast moving away from 'knowledge' economies to businesses driven by relationships and experiences, dubbed the *Exeprience Economy*. Erik has cited that we are motivated more by freedom, flexibility & relevant experiences ... and our Customers want the same treatment too! This is especially relevant to Generation X (born 1960-1981), Y (born 1982-2001) and Cybergenerations (born 2002-current).

Good, bad or indifferent opinions are made by customers at EVERY contact-point. This concoction of experiences becomes emblazoned in your customer's mind...[your control over their defection or loyalty!](#)

If products are similar, it's the CEM experience of the desired brand values that will be your CUSP. (Think FTCPOV: From The Customer's Point Of View, "As you wish Ms Customer!")

CEM is bigger than CRM (Customer Relationship Management). CEM is the full experience.

## Major CEM Tips & Points-to-Ponder

1. As products are reaching parity/proximity, **emotional CEM** will differentiate you more-and-more. There is very little difference between banks, credit-cards, and retail stores, - the one's you will like will be the Emotional CEM ones...right? (Think Woolworths, ABSA – also depending on your LSM grouping).
2. High **expectations** are created by your Vision, Values and Proposition, i.e. a “Simpler, Better, Faster” payoffline can be the cause of the problem! If you can't live up to your expectations, change them, or restructure your company. Your CEM must deliver on the promise. Survey this by **receiving explicit opinions**, before, during & after the sale.
3. Vision, Values and Proposition: Make them customer-centric, and then deliver them with CEM. Make sure you have **CUSPs embedded**.
4. Your Corporate Culture needs to **match your desired Brand Promise/Essence**.
5. Operations need **weekly meetings** with Brand Managers. Consider restructuring your company.
6. Quote: “Consumers are driven **far less by tangible attributes** of products & services **than by subconscious sensory and emotional elements** derived from the total experience surrounding the transaction.” Dr. Gerald Zaltman, HBR Laboratory of the Consumer's Mind. I.e. the *aroma* of coffee & *mood-lighting* as soon as they step inside.
7. FMCG companies create loyalty by the **emotional bond through great advertising**. B2B companies need to learn this classical marketing discipline. However, FMCG companies need to learn the **rational B2B CRM relationship** principles too.
8. **Measure emotional & rational CEM**. Emotional is the most difficult to measure, but the most important.
9. Focus on CEM **before** (expectations), **during** (ask “What's important to you?”) and **after** the Sale (collect & act on feedback).
10. **Disneyland's Motto for great “Guestology”**: “No chipped paint, fresh popcorn and always smile.” The long queues are in a U-shape to make them appear short. There is a key-cutting service if you lose your keys on the rides. Cars are parked according to a system, so you can't forget where you parked. Even have a breakdown service.
11. **CRM vs. CEM**: Disney is not pursuing CRM, as they are NOT customising the service for the individual. They may exploit this in the future through loyalty programmes.
12. **Trust**: Customers must sense that you are on their side. Ask them “Tell me, what is important to you about...?” (Enter their Product, Price, and Distribution topic).
13. **Moments-of-truth**: Your frontline staff are the most critical **impact-points**! These staff should be “Issues of discussion” in every meeting. They are you potential Customer Issues. Pay their bonuses according to Customer feedback.
14. **Mystery-shopper**: Let the MD, Sales Staff etc phone their own front-line staff and record the entire experience. (Denial is the deepest flaw in the human race, so check if you would defect if you were the Customer! Any negative moments-of-truth?)
15. **Your Service Policies & Procedures**: Test that they accommodate the **flexibility** of meeting your CEM Strategy. The Customer also needs ‘control’ of your/his service. There must appear to be an ‘open’ policy, while keeping clients informed!
16. **Discovery Health**: By resolving their most irate customers' complaints *brilliantly*, Discovery Health's **‘worst’ customers become their most loyal!**
17. **Jaguar SA** were recently stunned to see that 45% of Customers were Black females, they responded by tailoring their CEM right onto the shopfloor.