

Fueling growth through customer experience

Transcript

SPEAKERS:

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WADE KRUSE: You're talking a lot about, touching in a couple areas, the customer. Let me throw something at you here. How about the employee experience? How crucial is the employee experience to the customer experience? Don't you need a really empowered workforce to be able to drive what you want for the customer? To drive the experience you talk about, your workforce really needs to care about the client. How do you achieve that?

CHRIS SMITH: Talking about any kind of growth, you have your customer-facing mechanisms to drive growth. But absolutely, if you don't align the employee experience and the employee themselves, the employee segments, the employee profiles, to the level of service, experience, everything of your customer, if there's a mismatch between the employee set and the employee experience and what it takes to motivate and deliver on that level of customer experience that you've set, bad things happen.

I think a lot of times when companies go through that reintroducing themselves to their customer, understanding what the customer expects, it starts to pose a question. They want it faster. They want higher quality. They want it 24/7. What does that mean to your operating model? What does it mean to your employee set if they've been used to a 9-to-5 culture or a work-style culture. So yeah, when you're talking about growth, and delivering at the speed of the customer, there are implications for the operating model, the employee experience, and even how you position yourself out in the market with your brand.

WADE KRUSE: OK, so the customer experience, co-opetition...

CHRIS SMITH: And then the third one, it's this evolution of customer service. Again, if we go back decades, you had a classic customer support function, I think there are parts of it evolved into customer service, and then over the last decade-plus this notion of customer success is emerging. And while I think it can be argued that it started in the

software/tech industry, with most industries having such a huge part or soon-to-be huge parts of their businesses services-based, software-based, this concept of customer success is probably one of the top conversations that we're having. And customer success is all focused on getting your customers to use your product or service more. So it's very much focused on retention, knowing that your ability to have a larger, loyal customer base enables them to stay longer, potentially be more open to buying cross-products and services that you're selling them, but also trusting you to lead them to the right solution, even if it's not within your own four walls of a company.

As much as I'm a huge fan of customer success and really up-leveling the value of support service and success, there are huge implications going on right now. For example, if you have a customer success department very focused on individuals, customers using your product, being aware of other products that could be used to resolve your pain point, it poses the question of, what's the role of field sales? What the role of inside sales? What's the role of marketing? What's the role of legacy support organizations? So a lot of the conversations we're having are shifting to more of a customer retention-based philosophy, heavy nods toward customer success, but it's not just standing up a customer success organization and forgetting about everything that exists. And it's not just renaming the customer support organization "customer success." There's a lot of operating model considerations to work through before really setting up a profitable customer success capability.