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INSPIRING MILLENNIAL ENTREPRENEURS



Human Touch is Good for Business

By: ASSOC. PROF. DR. NURAZZURA MOHAMAD DIAH

Today, customers are becoming increasingly picky when spending their money. They prefer to spend on businesses that emphasize on customer experience (a.k.a CX) more. I came across an article by Kristin Smaby entitled "Being Human is a Good Business" published in 2011. She wrote "...So, get to know your customers. Humanize them. Humanize yourself. It's worth it". Why is she so adamant in promoting a human-centric business? I try to make sense of what she believed in and connect it with our current situation. Obviously, we have witnessed how Covid-19 has fundamentally changed the way entrepreneurs sell their products and make connections with their customers - from "Welcome to my shop" to "Please visit my website", "You can check my FB or IG" or "For more info, click the link". Yes, everyone is one click away from many things today. More and more common behaviours such as distributing brochures and pamphlets, persuading people in-person, making handshakes, being followed by a salesperson in the shop, paying with cash and many more are gradually vanishing.

The one fact that remains is customers' engagement which is still vital in the buying process. In challenging times like today, it is more important than ever to "meet" your potential customers wherever they are - locally or abroad - in the comfort of their homes, in their cars, on the streets, in different time zones while addressing their problems, making *real* connections and offering them some solutions. In the wake of Covid-19, entrepreneurs must embrace the "new normal" which is to be more creative, attractive and meaningful in connecting with their customers virtually. Customers need businesses/brands which understand what they want and have walked their paths before. Customers need to put trust in the businesses that would help them to overcome their problems.

So, what should online entrepreneurs do? The answer is to put **EMPATHY** into the business. Empathy, put simply, is defined as the ability to understand and share the feelings and experiences of another person. Your business is seen as the person who will tell the customers how to achieve their goals as well as come to terms with their struggles to achieve the goals. By doing this, your business is literally making the customers feel that you understand what it is like to be in their shoes. Empathy can help businesses to become more customer-centric oriented. There are simple ways to put empathy into your business. First, tune in. Pay attention and get interested in your customers; concerns may include being overweight, having acne problem, having insufficient time to cook, wanting to look beautiful instantly, lacking baking skills, being burn-out and many more. Ask real questions, listen to their responses and engage in meaningful conversations with those to whom you are trying to sell your "solutions". Next, show that your business cares. Tell customers that "I feel you". Living in somebody else's shoes helps your business to better understand particular circumstances and it may shed some light on what actually is taking place. If you don't care about your customers' feelings, it would be impossible to be empathetic.

Aside from that, see the world from their perspective. This is essential to accurately align your business. For that matter, businesses must learn to take great shots of the products, show someone enjoying using the products, highlight customers' reviews, create tutorial videos, hashtags (#) as well as host an AMA (ask me anything). More importantly, customers want to connect with products by asking the question: What's In It For Me (WIIFM) during the pandemic. All in all, customers look forward to businesses that understand their circumstances and are able to provide solutions. Since we are living in a time of abrupt and constant changes, building empathy in a digital world is vital. Therefore, to appear relevant today, online entrepreneurs must include some human touch in their businesses as the world is becoming more and more remote and digital.

Biz Quote

Believers! Do not devour one another's possessions wrongfully; rather than that, let there be trading by mutual consent. You shall not kill yourselves. Surely Allah is ever Compassionate to you.

SURAH AN-NISA: 29

POINTS TO PONDER

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Communication Is Key To Business Success

Nowadays, being an entrepreneur is one of the most exciting and popular things to do although starting and maintaining a business isn't always easy. Instilling entrepreneurship mindset and qualities in students may be considered paramount in producing more young entrepreneurs in an effort to develop the country in the future. In fact, it is astounding to see how some students are actively participating in some side business in between lectures and studying to earn extra pocket money. It does not only give them an opportunity to juggle a few things at a time, but also acts as a platform to be creative and innovative.

In addition, communication is also the foundation of your business's growth. As we know, one of the essential tools that aids us in connecting with people is communication. Each person will have to communicate or interact with others such as family members, friends, colleagues, members of society, etc. Generally, communication can be defined as an information exchange process between individuals through symbols, signs, or behaviours (Merriam-Webster, 2021). Therefore, communication in business is important to be enlightened in order to have better entrepreneurship skills.

For illustration, a business organization will communicate either among its colleagues or with authorities such as managers to ensure their daily tasks run smoothly and communication usually takes place in coordinating information. According to Markovic and Salamzadeh (2018), no business organization will succeed and progress day by day if no effective communication skills are applied within the company itself. Can you imagine running a business without effective communication? After all, selling and delivering products or services without excellent communication can be a huge problem or even lead to bad business results (Markovic & Salamzadeh, 2018).

It is noted that effective communication is one of the keys to successful business as it helps to maintain the relationship with various individuals who contribute to the continuous growth of the company. Every business is responsible for providing important information to internal and external individuals who include suppliers, customers, clients and peers about their units, departments and divisions. Verbal and written communication are among the means used to run the operations of the business, starting from the process of ordering, sharing ideas and managing the customers. Therefore, in order to have a good relationship with customers, a company needs to depend on effective communication which includes listening to feedback, making follow-ups and offering services they need during and after a successful transaction (Arulkumar, 2020). The communication process must also include handling the employees because it can encourage them to share constructive criticisms, suggestions and innovative ideas for the future of the business. Consequently, when everyone carefully communicates issues and concerns, it is easier to prevent clashes and conflicts in the workplace itself.

As mentioned above, we need to be aware that customer service relies on good communication. If you don't know what your customers want, how can you give it to them? Whether you sell products or services, you need to listen to the needs of your customers and answer their questions. In conclusion, there are numerous reasons why good communication is critical to the success of your company. No matter how big or small your business is, having constant communication can have a significant impact on productivity, employee satisfaction, customers and revenue.

References:

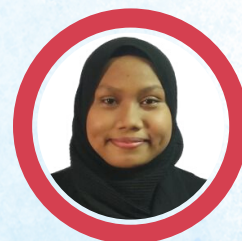
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ARTICLE OF THE DAY

By:



Nur Athirah Mohammad



Siti Nuraishah Mohd Sofi



Elly Asfadalila Shahrom

COSA Entrepreneurship Bureau,
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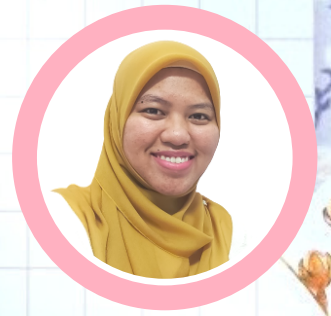




KENT. eTIJARI SUCCESS STORY

By:

Zatussy Syamami Zulkifli
Founder @zalection



CRAFTING YOUR HAPPINESS

Gifting is a way to cherish and boost relationships as I believe that people enjoy receiving gifts, especially from someone close to them. But to me, as a gift-giver, it is a fun process when I spend time creating personalized gifts for people that I love and often think of happy memories while doing so. I take two extra steps to create something uniquely theirs because I love giving handcrafted gifts. By doing so, I am transported to a happy place in which all my worries and problems are gone. In other words, I feel like I am walking on air and that is my way to celebrate my 'me time'! I believe that when it comes to gifting, it is the thought that counts. Looking at the receiver's emotional reactions such as jaw-dropping expression and sometimes tears, or seeing them use or display the item that I create for them, brightens up my day!

It has turned out to be a wonderful journey when I decided to do a handmade craft business after taking a course - Society and Economy (SOCA 4400) - during my final year as part of my course requirement. Before the semester began, I was too nervous and frequently asked myself, "What am I capable of doing?" I cracked my head to think and decided on the kind of product I should sell once the semester began. However, it did not help me so much until one day I asked myself: "How can I bring value to other people and how can my product help to solve other's problems? If I'm happy to do it, how can I share my happiness with other people? How can they get benefit from what I'm doing?"



Finally, by thinking in such a way, I said to myself that I wanted to do something that I can see myself in; I love crafting and I want to make something different. It gives me a sense of accomplishment and happiness when I create something. My plan to make personalized gifts became clearer when I saw the results from my quick survey done on 55 participants on Instagram. 82% of them preferred custom-made gifts as did the majority of participants on my Facebook page. Until today, most of my clients have been requesting personalized metal bookmarks and bracelets as gifts for special occasions. Indeed, personalized gifts have their own magic that makes the gifts even more special.



Handmade products emanate so much energy and love. It is because they are crafted in an environment of joy, love and honour. I transfer my happiness towards people by investing my time crafting metal bookmarks and bracelets requested by my customers. I enjoy the path that I have chosen to help those people who are struggling to find meaningful gifts for their beloved. I am happy to help them as much as possible with what they are looking for and giving my opinion whenever they ask for it. Reading all the happy feedback shared by my clients really lightens up my day. I can relate to how happy they are when they thank me and pray for me and they wish me success in my business. When my energy and effort meet someone else's need, that is where my passion lies. It is like a loop of happiness that I cherish a lot.

Although there have been many hurdles, I'm glad that I chose to grab this opportunity and focus on getting good at something that genuinely helps others because I believe that helping others is the secret to be personally fulfilled and happy. Indeed, happiness is the value I attach to Zalection. Meanwhile, focussing on doing what is valuable has given me clear and meaningful goals; it has made my life better. Being guided by values may give us the courage to make differences and inspire us to stay true to who we are and who we want to be.



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Offer a Freebie

Post inspirational quote

Thank your followers for their support

Share customer feedback

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Upcoming Event

KENT. WEBINAR 2.0



MyDigital Blueprint:

What's In It For Me?



SPEAKER

ASST. PROF. DR. RABI'AH
AMINUDIN
Head Department of Political Science,
KIRKHS, IIUM



MODERATOR

BR. NOR ISKANDAR MAZLAN

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TO
4:30 p. m

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