

Customer Relationship Management

Emerging Themes



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Introduction

In a world that is forever changing, it is clear that the main competitor for humankind is the wonderful invention of technology and machines, these both allow us to achieve things such as to communicate faster, design and build easier, even down to things such as automatic soap dispensers all making our lives that little bit easier.

Technology has become such a huge part of our life, using such things as social media and gaming, to invisible things such as how the simplest item is made, within the body of this work I will be critically looking into and explaining through the customer service experience in Asda stores.

1, Human touch vs. Tech touch

2, Customers' and Brands' Experiences

I'll try to figure out how important and appropriate the themes are in relation to the Asda supermarket, and how they affect customer relationship management (CRM). Furthermore, clearly justified recommendations are needed based on the development points indicated in the findings.

With Asda supermarket being one of the “big four” supermarket chains in the United Kingdom, holding over 600 stores has over 145,000 employees and maintains over 18 million customers, I will be explaining both good and bad sides of the Customer experience throughout its stores and branches.

Human touch Vs Tech touch

First, I would like to introduce you to a table of things I understand to be involved in human touch and tech touch in the form of a simple table then I will go on to introduce each followed by theories and paraphrases with reference list at the end of the body of work.

Human touch

Human contact

Here are some examples of how the human touch works:

When in store, Item location

The chance to try on clothing before buying it. There's no need to wait for a refund as you would if you did it online.

Rather than buying and then trying, try before you buy.

Customer service that is delivered in person

Greetings with a smile

People who buy things online need order pickers.

In-store display of the item/brand

The look and feel of your online buying experience

Shopping is delivered.

Tech touch Here are some examples of how technology is currently being utilised in stores and online that have been accelerated and adopted due to unforeseen situations.

In store:

Self-serve checkout

Scan as you go shopping (scan and go)

Contactless payment

Tech Vocovo communication headsets between colleagues

Online:

The ability to buy products/brands online

Click and collect

Virtual ques

Self-serve checkout:

A checkout dedicated to scanning your own items bagging them and being able to accelerate your service time instead of waiting in a que to be served manually.

Scan and Go:

Using the handsets supplied or on the phone app you can scan the barcode of each item as you go round the store enabling you to then bag the item watching your spending simply as you go, then by using the dedicated checkout service, scan your handset QR code, pay and leave.

Contactless payment:

The phrase contactless payment refers to a safe method for consumers to buy items or services using a debit, credit, smartcard, or other payment device that employs radio frequency identification (RFID) and near-field communication technology (NFC). This payment technique involves touching a payment card or other device against a contactless payment terminal. Some banks and businesses refer to contactless payment as tap-and-go or tap.

Click and collect:

With Asda Click and Collect you simply buy online arrange a time, date, and store to collect from.

Virtual ques:

During the lockdown and beyond, the Walmart-owned supermarket chain created virtual queues outside its stores to prevent customers from having to physically queue before entering.

Human touch:

It is important that human touch remains in certain circumstances, something as simple as a smile can change your whole shopping experience, especially for the lonely and the elderly, sadly sometimes it is the only human interaction a person may have with another person outside the loneliness of their simple lives, therefore it is imperative to still maintain that chance for social interaction even if it is simply a smile or a hello.

Service staff are critical in recognising client demands, delivering services, and initiating/performing service recovery. Customer-facing service providers (store personnel) are vital to the retailing industry; they may be valuable assets rather than just 'order takers' or delivery people. "To provide service that exceeds standards, retailers must provide service providers with the necessary knowledge and skills, provide instrumental and emotional support, improve internal communications and reduce conflicts, and empower employees to act in the best interests of customers and the company," Levy and Weitz write. ("Retail Industry Final Exam Flashcards | Quizlet")

Technology is essential for giving clients with important product information, but without a human touch to bring that experience to life, you have nothing to set you apart from your competition. The bottom line is that if you provide an enjoyable experience for your clients, they will want to buy from you.

To create more engaging experiences, equipping employees with the correct technology is critical. Employees should be equipped with technology that allows them to stay nimble and capable of responding to client issues whether that is through mobile payment solutions to speed the sales process or beacon technology to personalise a shopper's experience.

However, here is where the difficulty lies. With so much innovative technology available, there is a genuine risk that staff will spend all their time devoted to their smartphones, alienating potential customers. Though if your staff are really committed to your business, technology may help you stand apart. For far too long, it has been assumed that technology,

notably ecommerce, can salvage a retail firm. But as we all know this is not the case. A Brand that respects actual customer values will always succeed in the end.

With the cumulation of both tech and human touch according to Juran's definition of quality, that neither tech nor human touch lack quality for certain uses but lack quality for the bigger picture. That tech and human touch should go hand in hand in completing the bigger picture in customer relation management of becoming the better version of quality. Hence both defining quality and deficiency placing both together can create the better version of quality.

Customer Experience and Brand Experience

Asda began back in the 1920s, starting off as a family butcher. It later in the 1940s became a breakaway venture for the Asquith sons, Peter, and Fred, to then become Asda in the 1960s with its founder store in Yorkshire that grew to become one of Britain's leading superstores.

Branching out to become:

- Supercentres
- Superstores
- Supermarkets
- Living stores
- And petrol stations

Throughout the UK.

Back in 2019 Asda chose to refocus on price and customer experience following the failure of a merger with Sainsbury, which was stopped by the competition watchdog. They stopped the £7.3 billion merger saying that it would leave the customers "worse off" and that the quality in the range of products would reduce and it would create a "poorer shopping experience".

Asda take consumer- orientated marketing, Ethical marketing, customer-value marketing, innovative Marketing, societal marketing, and sense-of-mission marketing profoundly serious as the following information will breakdown and show.

Asda Now have a strategy for a better customer experience called creating change for the better, this is shown as a four-pillar strategy that promises to make “a real difference” to its customers lives, accumulating all that they do to:

- Protect the planet
- Encourage healthy lifestyles
- Support and transform communities in which they operate.

Better Lives

Through Asda better lives, Asda tackles health and happiness barriers enabling its customers to get the best out of life by:

- removing 518 tonnes of sugar from its products
- removing 11 billion calories from its products
- removing 20 tonnes of salt
- removing 996 tonnes of fat
- aim for another 1,200 products to have the live better icon by 2024
- investing over £6 million to lower the price of the free from range for their customers
- engaged with 19,000 customers to raise alcohol awareness
- offered the government access to all its 238 pharmacies to help with the covid 19 vaccine rollout
- in 2020 they were the first to launch the UKs first drive through flu jab
- over 1000 colleagues took part in autism and dementia awareness sessions
- one of the first retailers to ban sales of energy drinks to under 16s
- pride themselves on the price customers see is the price they pay

- they have removed cartoon characters from their own brand cereals, milk-based drinks, and ice creams

Better Planet

Through Asda Better planet the use initiatives and sustainable practices to conserve the world by:

- sourcing 98% of their paper, pulp products and timber sustainably
- lowered their carbon footprint by 44% since 2019
- plastic reductions for over 200 products from the ranges they sell
- removed over 1,300 tonnes of plastic from their own brand
- through a sustain and save exchange saved over 72,000 tonnes of carbon
- used sustainable sources to get %60 of their cotton
- 2018-2019 increased food redistribution by %98
- Have donated surplus edible foods to foodbanks and charities from all 586 food banks

And without sending any operational waste to land fill sites, Asda recognises climate change as a concern and is working to mitigate all material hazards to its food chain, as well as contribute to environmental solutions and sustainability of the environment.

Better Communities

Through Asda better communities Asda supports and delivers opportunities at a local level to enable them to become stronger communities below are some examples of what they have achieved within communities and supporting charities:

- Tickled pink has raised £71 million for breast cancer
- Over the last 21 years Asda have raised £26 million for children in need
- Since 2018 Over 5 million meals have been donated to food banks by customers

- During the covid-19 pandemic Asda donated 250,000 pieces of equipment to care home staff
- Tackled the roots of poverty by supporting 1 million people with food advice services
- Since 2013 enabled 111.7 million meals through financial or in-kind donations to charity
- Asda foundation granted £4.5 grants committed
- Since 2018 donated over £25 million to the trussell trust and fareshare
- £28.5 million in community contributions
- Had 1 million beneficiaries from community contributions

All of this to support local communities to help build long-term resilience.

Better Business

Better business enables Asda to see that if their staff feel protected and appreciated, and that if they follow the highest standards of honesty, ethical behaviour across Asda stores and sourcing activities, they will be able to achieve their “creating change for better” goal. Here are some of Asda’s major accomplishments:

- Training 1,000 colleagues in dementia
- 77% of colleagues said they were proud to work at Asda
- Reduced the gender median hourly pay gap by 5.5%
- Over 1,000 colleagues supported pride events in 2019
- Through the covid 19 pandemic 16,000 colleagues were able to shield
- The ability to provide more than 2,000 product lines from local providers
- The chance to support the “Bright Future Programme” for the survivors of modern slavery
- Provided 1,596,682 workers with basic safety training in Bangladesh
- Trained 500 suppliers to the George assured quality training programme standards.

Adding on to the technology Asda now has in place not only for an easier shopping experience but allowing colleagues to contact other colleagues through headsets, alongside All this enabling the customer experience to be the highest standard of quality.

Brand Experience

Asda prides itself on its Brand experience claiming that its own Brand is high quality for a lower more affordable price and sources its items locally supporting local business.

Asda has its own brand ranges with all at affordable prices

- Extra special
Creating the best tasting products for every occasion.
- Smart Price
Basic essentials at their lowest price.
- Farm Stores
No matter what your budget, Asda supplies excellent quality meat so you can cook fresh no matter what.
- Little Angels
Everyday Baby care items you rely on as they can relate to being a parent in the age of today
- Little Kids
Pre made meals that kids love to make your day easier.
- Plant Based
If you're vegan, vegetarian, or just fancy a change Asda have 48 plant based tasty items that are award winning for you to enjoy.
- Good Balanced
Products that allow you to have a balanced health diet whether it be freshly made or ready made for the healthy person on the go.
- Hero
Nutritional food for your dog to keep it happy and healthy.
- Tiger
Nutritional food for your cat to keep it happy and healthy.
- Shade
Comfort and strength when and where needed.

- Bakers Selection

An entire range of fresh baked items available from bread to cakes.

- Butchers Selection

Professionally selected quality meats.

- Growers Selection

Professionally selected and tested fresh produce.

- Free From

For those with allergies or just want to be healthier a full range of foods just for you.

As you see Asda brands will keep you coming back for more, good quality, with reliability and choice (meeting the consumer needs)(listening to and acting on social criticism) adds to the customer experience as does the Brand experience like tech touch and human touch, with the age of today one is needed to enable the other and vice versa, tech touch and human touch, customer experience to brand experience, if delivered in the right way (Ethical Marketing) ("Thus, ethical marketing is the cornerstone of sustainable Marketing" (Kotler, et al, 2017) will make a successful Sustainable superstore.

W. Edwards Deming: the 14 points

Dr. W. Edwards Deming modestly identifies himself as a "statistical research consultant." Others have referred to him as the "Father of the Third Industrial Revolution." It is now commonly believed that Dr. Deming's visit to JUSE in mid-1950 was the catalyst for Japan's extraordinary turnaround in industrial fortunes. His ideology combines broad use of statistical concepts and methodologies throughout organisations with a management strategy that is, for the most part, diametrically opposed to traditional and present Western practise. The management approach provides an atmosphere in which statistical practise is valued in a way that has never been seen before. Because this technique is not often taught in management

or business schools, the statistical consultant must become acquainted with, and advocate the adoption of, management philosophy in addition to statistical features.

Here shows Dr. W. Edwards Demings 14 points:

1. Constancy of purpose

"Create consistency of purpose for continuous product and service improvement, allocating resources to meet long-term requirements rather than short-term profits, with a plan to grow competitive, continue in business, and offer jobs".

2. The new philosophy

"For economic stability, adopt the new ideology. We are living in a new economic era, which was birthed in Japan. We can no longer accept commonplace levels of delays, errors, substandard materials, and poor artisanship. To stop the continuous downfall of industry, Western management styles must be transformed".

3. Cease dependence on inspection

"Remove the requirement for mass inspection as a means of achieving quality... by incorporating quality into the product from the start. In both the production and buying activities, statistical evidence of built-in quality is required."

4. End 'lowest tender' contracts

"Stop awarding contracts merely on the basis of price, and instead require real quality metrics in addition to pricing. Reduce the number of suppliers for the same item by removing those that don't meet the quality criteria based on statistical proof. The goal is to reduce overall costs, not just starting costs. Purchasing managers have a new role to fill, and they must learn it quickly."

5. Continually seek out problems

"Continue to look for issues, to constantly and forever enhance the company's production and service processes, as well as every other activity, to increase quality and productivity, and thus to consistently reduce costs." It is the responsibility of

management to work on the system continuously (design, incoming materials, maintenance, machine improvement, training, monitoring, and retraining)".

6. Institute training on the job

"Institute new ways of on-the-job and for-the-job training, including management, to better use all personnel."

7. Institute supervision

"Institute new supervisory (leadership) practises, concentrating on assisting people and machines to perform better...." Supervisory responsibilities must be shifted from quantity to quality. Productivity will increase naturally as quality improves. Reports of inherited flaws, maintenance needs, inadequate tools, hazy operational definitions, and other situations that are averse to quality must be addressed immediately by management."

8. Drive out fear

"Encourage good two-way communication and other methods to eliminate anxiety throughout the organisation, so that everyone can work more successfully and productively for the firm."

9. Break down barriers

"Break through departmental walls... People from various departments such as research, design, sales, administration, and manufacturing must work together to solve difficulties that may arise with goods or services."

10. Eliminate exhortations

"Remove slogans, banners, and exhortations... for the workers, expecting zero faults and greater levels of production without offering means." Such exhortations merely

foster antagonistic relationships; the majority of the causes of inferior quality and productivity are systemic, and hence outside the workforce's control."

11. Eliminate targets

"Eliminate work standards that prescribe numerical quotas and goals (targets). ... Substitute aids and helpful supervision; use statistical methods for continual improvement of quality and productivity".

12. Permit pride of workmanship

"Remove the restrictions that deny hourly employees and managers the right to take pleasure in their job...." This entails, among other things, the elimination of yearly merit ratings (performance evaluations) and management by objectives. Again, supervisors' responsibilities must be shifted from quantity to quality."

13. Institute education

"Establish a robust education and retraining programme... New skills are necessary to keep up with changes in materials, procedures, product design, machinery, techniques, and service."

14. Top management's commitment

"Clearly describe top management's ongoing commitment to ever-improving quality and productivity, as well as its responsibility to put these principles into action." To achieve transformation, create a framework in top management that will press on the previous 13 criteria every day."

Deming, Edwards, (1986)

Elton Mayo school of human relations 1949

The “Hawthorne experiment” was stated to be weak in design, lacks sufficient supporting data to validate the results made, and the number of participants was considered to be too small, according to the Elton Mayo school of human relations.

Eltons research revealed both positive and negative aspects. On the plus side, it promotes positive workplace relationships, considers individual needs and wellbeing of employees as more important than Taylorism, prompting managers to take a more personal interest in employees, resulting in employees feeling more appreciated, and social factors contributed to employee:

- morale
- retention
- motivation
- and productivity

On the negative side, it was claimed that it was an unscientific approach, that his original findings lacked sufficient supporting evidence, and that his theory never addressed issues such as workplace conflict, which is almost inevitable and frequently required for progress, yet the theory is based on managers and employees simply cooperating with one another.

It misses the possible influence of conflict since it hasn't considered the possibility of conflict and how it can affect motivation and productivity levels if it does., It also oversimplifies human behaviour by assuming that pleased employees would automatically be productive employees, which is not the case. There is, however, evidence that social variables impact motivation and productivity.

There is also a slew of other elements that influence every individual in the workplace, which Elton Mayo conveniently ignores.

Conclusion

As you can see from the contemporary up to date explanations, Dr. W. Edwards Deming's 14 principles are still extremely important in today's world and shown throughout the ethics that Asda embodies. His hypothesis was Brilliant and is crucial to effective management skills and customer relationship management in today's modern-day society. Where as although flawed as it is perceived, Elton Mayo's theory still fits in with the modern day forward look in to customer relations management (CRM) as when put in to practice the relationship between managers and employees is imperative to the outcome of productivity and workplace morale, that mannerisms of can be seen to be utilised in Asda's professional practice.

So with tech touch, human touch, customer experience, and brand experience, Asda exhumes all the areas of good practice with each going hand in hand, side by side, to achieve the ideal customer relations management (CRM) of the present day workplace by looking after the needs and wants of the consumer and is heading to achieve the perfect goal in a forever changing industry, looking after and listening to the consumer, supporting local businesses, putting back in to the local communities, and delivering for local charities.

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