

CRM



Rob Rush

Imagine this nightmare: you own a giant network of car dealerships that has undertaken a multi-million dollar CRM installation in order to better know (and grow) your customers. One of those customers—let's call him Joe Sportscar—enters your dealership looking to buy, and your CRM database alerts the showroom floor that Joe likes chrome on his grillwork, a latté while he shops, and lease financing on his new ride. If your goal is to provide Joe with a memorable and distinctive experience at your dealership, your bases are covered, right?

Unbeknownst to you, Joe is not offered a latté, no one shows him any models with chrome detailing, and the finance manager takes a two-hour coffee break. Joe walks off your property that day, disappointed and frustrated that he isn't driving off. Clearly, just knowing his unique purchasing preferences and behavior was not enough to satisfy or retain the customer.

Hey, Dealerships—It's All About The Experience!

An extreme example? Sure, but for every successful CRM installation, the customer service landscape is littered with projects that didn't quite hit the mark. In many applications, CRM has a great big blind spot. While CRM effectively pulls information from the customer to benefit the company, it lacks insight into the customer's actual experience with that company. No amount of CRM technology allows the company to "see" the customer's experience.

An integrated Customer Experience Management (CEM) program can help fill in those blind spots and complement the data collected in a CRM project. Where CRM is weak, CEM is strong. By focusing on the experiences of customers and how those experiences impact behavior, CEM addresses the quality of the company's execution. CEM takes the brand promise that your dealership is making in your advertising and marketing materials, and operationalizes that brand, thereby translating customer strategy into positive, real-life experiences. In this way, a CEM application can work hand in hand with CRM to create loyal customers.

Among the elements involved in a successful CEM support program are:

Standards and practices development: Without a good game plan, you can't win the game. Make sure everyone is reading from the same playbook!

Customer service and leadership training: Put

the game plan into action before your team hits the field. Regardless of technology, sales won't happen without the right human touch.

Customer research: Is the game plan working? Get the information about the experience at your dealership right from your customers.

Quality assurance: Are you and your employees following the game plan? Employ an expert eye to mystery-shop your dealerships for the small details that make a big difference.

Together, these CEM elements ensure that the brand promise a company makes is delivered to the customer in ways that CRM is ill equipped to handle—blind spot eliminated.

So what happened to Joe Sportscar? Turns out your dealership network also had a CEM program in place. His dissatisfaction was instantly registered in an eSurvey; a regional manager soothed his nerves with a free oil change. The team at the dealership was referred back to its standards manual and a trainer visited the showroom floor for a quick refresher course. And when the mystery shopper visited two months later, he was offered a latté...with extra foam!

Rob Rush is CEO of LRA Worldwide, a leading consulting and research company specializing in Customer Experience Management. LRA offers an integrated suite of services designed to measure and improve service quality, employee performance, customer satisfaction, retention, and profitability. He can be contacted at rob.rush@lraworldwide.com or visit www.lraworldwide.com for more information.