

# It's All About the Experience

Customer experience management can help you use technology to keep your eye on the prize for increased customer satisfaction and increased revenues. *by Rob Rush*

**Imagine this nightmare. You're an upscale** golf course management company that's undertaken a multi-million dollar Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software installation in order to better know and grow your members and guests. One of those golfers, let's call him Joe Lowhandicap, calls for a tee-time at your course in Sarasota, and your CRM database alerts your staff that Joe prefers a sleeve of Pro V1s waiting in his cart, a chicken sandwich and a cold Amstel Light at the turn and a Macanudo stogie at the 19th Hole. If your goal is to provide Joe with a consistent, memorable and distinctive experience at your club, your bases are covered, right?

Unbeknownst to you, Joe had to trek into the pro shop for his Titleists, his credit card information was recorded inaccurately and the bartender in the clubhouse had the warmth of a three-iron. Joe drives away disappointed and underwhelmed, never to be heard from again. Clearly, just knowing his unique purchasing preferences and behavior was not enough to drive satisfaction or most importantly retention.

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An extreme example? Sure, but for every successful CRM installation, the customer service landscape is littered with CRM projects that didn't quite hit the green. In many applications, CRM has a great big blind spot. Though CRM effectively pulls information about the customer to benefit the company, it lacks insight into the customer's actual experience across the crucial experiential touchpoints that add up to the elusive combination of satisfaction and loyalty. No amount of CRM technology lets a golf course see the golfer's experience.

An integrated Customer Experience Management (CEM) program can help fill in those blind spots and complement the potentially powerful data collected in a CRM project. Put plainly, where CRM is weak, CEM is strong. By focusing on the experiences of your members and guests and how those experiences impact behavior, CEM addresses the quality of the company's execution and the efficacy of the result. In this way, a CEM application can work hand in hand with CRM to create loyal customers for life. Blind spot eliminated.



With customer tracking software investments in the millions, it doesn't pay for a company to turn penny-wise and pound-foolish when it comes to the actual

customer experience. By investing in the quality of that experience, a golf course operator has a far better chance of driving increased play by existing customers and by extension increased profitability. Though

you may have heard the old adage expressed several different ways statistically, it is considerably less expensive to keep an existing golfer (and to get him or her to play five extra rounds a year) than to woo a new one.

So after all was said and done, what happened to Joe Lowhandicap? Turns out the operation had a CEM program in place as well. His dissatisfaction was registered in a customer satisfaction e-survey. The survey was flagged by a manager, who soothed Joe's frayed nerves with a gratis round at the company course of his choice. The team at the Sarasota course was referred back to its standards materials and a trainer flew in that night to conduct a refresher course, just in case. And when the mystery shopping team showed up in Sarasota two months later, you guessed it, cold Amstel from a friendly bartender! 🍷

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