

# Momentum

ten minutes of ideas to keep you moving forward!

Volume 1

**TMI**®  
Inspiring People to  
Achieve More

## TEN MINUTES OF IDEAS

My guess is that you, like most people, lead a pretty hectic life. So much to do, so much to know, with so little time!

We have therefore designed this newsletter to be read in 10 minutes. I hope that the 600 seconds you spend reading this newsletter every 6 weeks will stimulate your thinking, and, more importantly, stimulate you to act!

Cheers for now.

George Aveling  
CEO  
TMI Consultancy Sdn Bhd



## WIN! A COPY OF BRANDED CUSTOMER SERVICE

We are interested in your feedback on this newsletter. Send George Aveling your comments, ideas or suggestions on how we can get better and be in the draw to win a copy of the book, *Branded Customer Service, the New Competitive Edge*, written by TMI Partners, Dr Janelle Barlow and Paul Stewart. All you have to do is email George on [george@tmimalaysia.com.my](mailto:george@tmimalaysia.com.my).

We look forward to hearing from you!



## INTERNAL BRANDING

### WHY HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENTS SHOULD PLAY A MAJOR ROLE IN BRAND BUILDING

From our experience in Malaysia, HR Departments should take a much more prominent role in helping to build their company brands. Let me explain why...

*Your brand is much more than your logo...*

There is a major misconception that a company's brand is its logo. In fact, your brand is your reputation. This is formed by every contact that customers have with you. Your brand is *created* by your marketing efforts, but it is either *magnified or eroded* by the experience that customers have with your employees. Marketing departments create the brand, but HR Departments must work hard to create cultures that live the brand.

Research has shown that customers rate their experience with employees as more powerful influencers on their loyalty than advertising. For example, Gallup Organisation research in the banking industry has shown that customers are *more likely* to return, by a ratio of 10 to 20 times, if the organization has outstanding employees.

In short, when Human Resources Departments work with Marketing Departments to create a culture that lives the brand promise, then your market share, customer loyalty and profitability will rise significantly.

This will involve the creation of a culture that focuses on delivering on your unique brand experience. Note that delivering your brand experience goes beyond delivering "good service". It involves delivering on your brand promise in your own unique style of service. We refer to this as Branded Customer Service.

*HR can magnify the investments that you make in your brand...Connect your people to your brand.*

Excited, turned-on employees will create loyal customers. My TMI USA colleague, Janelle Barlow, co-author of *Branded Customer Service – the New Competitive Edge*, gives an example of an employee who clearly was not

turned on by a new product...Janelle, like millions of other Americans, had seen advertisements by the US Postal Service for a new, relatively low cost mailing option called International Priority Mail. Literally millions of dollars had been spent to extol the virtues of International Priority Mail. When Janelle went into her local post office to try the new service, the assistant behind the counter looked at her and said, "It ain't cheap!" This was, what we call, an "off-brand" experience. The service experience with the counter assistant was not consistent with the brand promise.

In short, for all of the millions spent on the branding campaign, during that moment of truth with Janelle, the counter assistant was in total control of Janelle's brand perceptions.

If she was excited about the new product, she would have reinforced to Janelle the efficiency and value of the new service. She would have shown pride. However, as happens in most organisations, the marketing department did what it did best – it told the world about the new service, but no one took the time to inform and excite the employees. Does this sound familiar to you?

Just a word of caution for the unwary... getting your employees excited without doing anything else is not a sustainable strategy. You will need to develop supporting HR policies and systems, communications and measurements to create the foundation for a culture that is branded from the inside out.

In future articles, we will walk you down the journey of how to create a culture that delivers on your company's unique brand experience.



# CREATING THE DIFFERENTIATED SERVICE EXPERIENCE

## TIP : DON'T SCRIPT YOUR CUSTOMER SERVICE

We live in the experience economy. In other words, it is the experience that customers have with our organisations that will differentiate us from our competitors. The Regent Hotel in KL is a great example. Being older than its nearby competitors it competes on the Regent service experience. It does this very well. Guests at the Regent are made to feel special from the time they enter the hotel. I recently had 20 TMI Partners from around the world stay at the Regent, and, I'm happy to say, they found the Regent experience to be welcoming and memorable.

This brings us to the point of this tip. Customers don't want to deal with robots. They want to deal with people. Robots give scripted answers, as they are dumb and need to be programmed. However, customer service people can be educated as to the type of experience that we are seeking to give our customers. Once we do that, and give "guide rails" or boundaries for their behaviours, then it

eliminates the need for scripted, robotic phrases. For example, if you want your customers to feel important at the end of a contact, then words such as "thank you and have a nice day" can be replaced with what is right for the situation, based on the employee's judgement. If you are concerned that your employees can't show this type of judgement, after appropriate customer service education, then you have hired the wrong people!

However, this article begs a question: have we worked out what the customer experience with your company will look and feel like? Let me give you a clue on this – it is more than just focusing on customer service. Let's talk about this in the next edition of this newsletter.

*This section drew on the work of our TMI colleagues, Dr Janelle Barlow (TMI USA) and Paul Stewart (TMI New Zealand), co-authors of Branded Customer Service – the New Competitive Edge.*



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## COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT

### DOES YOUR ORGANISATION TREAT COMPLAINTS AS GIFTS?



Just imagine that someone has just given you a gift. What is your attitude? What do you say? There is a good chance that you will have a positive, welcoming attitude, and you will say, "thank you." Now imagine that a customer gives you the gift of an opportunity to improve. This might be parceled up as a "customer complaint". What do you train your people to say? The short answer is that you should train them to treat the complaints as gifts and to start off by saying, "thank you." And, just as when they receive a gift, they should let the customer know why they appreciate the feedback. For example, "Thank you for letting me know. I appreciate your comments as we were not aware that this was happening and will give

us the opportunity to avoid these situations in the future." Unfortunately, this is not how most organisations treat complaints. Service staff are often not trained to deal with complaints. They take them personally or, at worst, turn the complaining customer into a raving lunatic who "will never deal with your organisation again and will tell all his friends and relatives about your lousy service!"

The statistics are that it costs 5 times more to win a new customer compared to keeping an existing one. In addition, TARP research indicates that 96% of unhappy customers won't tell you, but 90% will tell, on average 10 other people! However, when handled well, complaining customers can become MORE loyal! Just imagine a large organisation that gets 10 complaints a day. Based on the statistics (96% of customers can't be bothered complaining), this means that there were really 250 unhappy customers that day! And, if the statistics are right, 90% of them will tell 10 people – this means that 2500 people will get to hear about the bad service. Now multiply this by 300 similar days, we get 75,000 people who have had negative word

of mouth about the company! If you don't believe us, think about how many people you tell when you have a bad service experience! This is very bad news for every company, as the strongest form of marketing is word of mouth.

The message is that Malaysian companies need to create what TMI calls "complaints cultures". This means that everybody in the organisation should be trained to have a positive attitude toward criticism put forward by internal or external customers. It would also mean that your systems and policies make it easy for customers to complain and for employees to deal with complaints effectively.

In future articles, we will talk about how to create a complaints culture in your company, where complaints are treated like gifts.

*This section was taken from TMI's course, "A Complaint is a Gift".*

# LEARN FROM THE LEGENDS: CARLOS GHOSN

## THE DISCIPLINE OF ACHIEVING MORE

Some Lessons from the Incredible Carlos Ghosn – the man who turned around Nissan in 2 years

Carlos Ghosn has achieved amazing success with Michelin, Renault and Nissan. His greatest success was with Nissan which he revived, revitalized and turned around in just 2 years.



### Key Lessons from Carlos Ghosn

- 1. Implementation mindset: companies and individuals need to focus 95% on execution and delivery, and 5% on planning.** According to Ghosn, managers and employees will talk and plan, and talk and plan until they fall so far behind in reaching their objectives that new plans are needed. Ghosn says that, “We are in business. What people see is what we execute.”
- 2. Implement based on facts:** In the game of business, only facts survive. Ghosn has little time and loses patience when people argue a point without backing it up with facts and information.
- 3. Set goals and rewards for implementation:** Goals should be set high, yet should be achievable.
- 4. Commitment and stretch targets:** Set targets which are goals that have been committed to by team members. Make it clear that it is better if higher stretch targets can be achieved.
- 5. Secure promises** as to what they can deliver. Ensure employees focus on implementation, aiming to deliver beyond expectations on promises.
- 6. Communicate for implementation:** Be transparent and explain the challenge in simple and clear terms for your team. Don't hide the facts.
- 7. Achieve commitment to implementation:** Make clear to everyone on your team, or in your organization, their roles and levels of responsibility in the execution process.
- 8. Enlist employee ideas for implementation:** Employees at all levels of a company have solutions to problems: Assume nothing – seek to find answers from within the company. Learn to ask questions.
- 9. Follow up for implementation:** Put in place monthly reviews of commitments and progress made.
- 10. Leadership consistency for implementation:** Employees find strength in consistency among leaders. “People have had enough of leaders who say one thing, and do another thing.” Predictable behaviors by leaders empower people below them to make decisions because they know exactly how leaders are going to react. If people have no idea how a manager or executive will respond to a decision, they will avoid making decisions.

To learn more about Carlos Ghosn's extraordinary style, read *Turnaround: How Carlos Ghosn Rescued Nissan*, by David Magee, HarperCollins.

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## WORDS OF WISDOM



“The heart of education is educating the heart.” Rosli Kamudin, GM, Human Resources and Administration, TMNet.

# TMI UPCOMING EVENTS

## Complaint Management and Service Recovery 2006 Regional Conference



*Innovative complaint management strategies, challenges, successes and lessons learnt presented by foremost industry leaders from across Asia*

30-31 May, 2006. Grand Plaza Park Hotel, Kuala Lumpur

TMI is a major participant with organiser Thomvell International Sdn Bhd in this two day event. Speakers on the first day will include George Aveling of TMI, as well as senior representatives from Microsoft Singapore, Alexandra Hospital Singapore and Standard Chartered Hong Kong. George Aveling will facilitate the practical complaints management workshop on day 2.

For more information, contact Santhi Shanmugam (Ms.)  
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THOMVELL INTERNATIONAL SDN BHD  
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www.thomvell.com

## Branded Customer Service Breakfast Workshop Series



*4 Breakfast Workshops Presented by George Aveling*

How to Create a Branded Service Culture Workshop Series

Presented by George Aveling, CEO, TMI Consultancy Sdn Bhd

*This workshop series is by invitation only.*

*Benefits of attending:* This workshop series is available only to senior decision makers. The workshops will show participants how to take customer service to the next phase – to the phase of delivering on the brand experience. If your company has a brand, then this workshop series will introduce you to how to link your culture to your brand.

*Format:* Breakfast workshop, running from 8am to 11am. Presentation and facilitation by George Aveling.

Workshop dates: April 19, June 7, July 19, August 30.

## Increase Your Personal Productivity in an Electronic Environment



TMI proudly brings to Malaysia a personal productivity course that has been run for people around the world. The difference about this course is that we show you how to apply personal productivity principles using a tool that most of us use every day – Microsoft Outlook. We will show you how to change some of the ways that you think and work and replace them with new ones. We will then show you how to use little known features of Microsoft Outlook to achieve more with less stress.

Date: 18-19 April, Legend Hotel

Investment: RM950, including manual and all catering. Early bird discount: RM850 if you book by 31 March.

If you would like further information, contact Poh Lan on 03 2039 4375 or email [tmisupport@tmimalaysia.com.my](mailto:tmisupport@tmimalaysia.com.my)

## FEEDBACK AND COMMENT WELCOME!

We would love to hear your comments and feedback. Let us know if there is anything that you agree with, disagree with or would like us to talk about! Contact Poh Lan on [pohlan@tmimalaysia.com.my](mailto:pohlan@tmimalaysia.com.my) or contact George Aveling at [george@tmimalaysia.com.my](mailto:george@tmimalaysia.com.my)

Until the next newsletter!

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