

# 7 QUALITIES OF A CUSTOMER-CENTRIC LEADER

**W**HY ARE SOME leaders and organizations more customer centric than others? Why do some companies inspire greater loyalty from employees and customers alike to become the best loved brand in their industry?

Many senior leaders today would agree that a customer-centric culture is a vital ingredient to a successful business. More than a decade of empirical research within the global customer experience (CX) industry supports a strong correlation between a positive customer experience and three key elements of loyal behaviour: a willingness to buy more, a reluctance to switch, and the likelihood to recommend.

In studying customer centricity and senior leaders who have had the most success, we discovered specific observable behaviours and actions that differentiate customer-centric leaders from others. Customer-centric leaders:

- 1. FULLY EMBRACE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AS A CORE OPERATING MODEL.** They have a strongly held belief that customers are the foundation of their business. They instill a feeling of purpose around the customer and help every employee to understand their role in delivering the ideal customer experience.
- 2. MASTER THE ABILITY TO CLEARLY ARTICULATE A SHARED VISION OF THE IDEAL CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE,** one that is intentionally differentiated from other brands through the consistent delivery of a well-articulated value proposition across all customer channels. Customer-centric leaders regularly and easily communicate this uniqueness to everyone inside and outside the organization.
- 3. EMBRACE AN AUTHENTIC PASSION TO SPEND TIME INTERACTING DIRECTLY WITH CUSTOMERS** to establish special emotional connections. They can tell stories about positive and negative customer experiences and will regularly showcase examples of employees who demonstrate consistent or exemplary customer-centric behaviours.
- 4. HAVE A STRONG WILL TO UNDERSTAND CHANGING CUSTOMER PREFERENCES**—benchmarking both competitors and industry leaders. Customer-centric leaders make problems in the customer experience well-known across the company and understand the true cost of poor-quality experiences. Enterprise-wide systems are put in place to understand and empathize with the changing needs of their customers.



*Janet LeBlanc + Associates is an executive coach, business strategist and recognized leader in customer experience management, specializing in helping leadership teams master the ability to design and deliver a Branded Customer Experience®. This proprietary approach includes customer experience strategy development, ideal customer experience design and journey mapping, customer research, and employee training. She can be reached at [janet@janetleblancassociates.com](mailto:janet@janetleblancassociates.com). BRANDED CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE® is a registered trademark of Janet LeBlanc + Associates Inc.*

## 5. STRIVE FOR A CLEAR DEFINITION OF WHAT EMPLOYEES NEED TO DO DIFFERENTLY TO DELIVER THE IDEAL CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

for everyone's role, both front- and back-office positions. Some organizations manage as many as tens of thousands of interactions with customers every day. Ensuring a consistent, high-quality experience across every interaction or channel will not be possible without clear direction and a robust system.

## 6. IMPLEMENT A MEASUREMENT AND REWARDS SYSTEM,

linked to customer experience management, to accelerate the pace of change. Employees want to be recognized for changing their behaviour. When an employee is recognized, it provides senior leaders with an opportunity to share the vision of the ideal experience and provide stories of customer-centric behaviours in action.

## 7. RECOGNIZE THAT NO ONE LEADER CAN ACHIEVE

**CUSTOMER CENTRICITY ALONE.** Customer-centric leaders build cross-functional alliances, to break down silos, and reinforce key metrics that bring forward corrective actions needed to improve the customer experience. There must be a strong coalition across the organization to bring about transformational change.

Today's customer-centric leaders recognize the strategic advantage of driving customer perspectives throughout all aspects of their business. They work to transform legacy systems to adapt to changing customer expectations and use customer experience to disrupt, reshape and redefine new markets, creating strong coalitions across the organization to bring about transformational change.