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### The Outside-In Perspective (/blog/post/the+outside-in+perspective)



(/Blog?auth=00540000002i20AAAQ) By Kat Cox (/Blog?auth=00540000002i20AAAQ) on 11/24/2014

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We talk a lot at ClosedWon about having an “outside-in” perspective of business. We believe this is a fundamental piece of a successful customer engagement program, but few companies seem to be able to achieve it.

So what is it?

The outside-in perspective is the fundamental understanding of what parts of your business matter from the customer's point of view.

Sounds pretty easy, right?

But this perspective is not necessarily the same as knowing what your customers want from your product or service. It's about their interaction with you; not just the service or product you provide.

## What It Isn't

Here's a pretty common scenario of an interaction with a company that does NOT have an investment in the outside-in perspective:

### The Inside-Out Scenario

After scouring Company X's complicated website for about 15 minutes, Jane finally finds a phone number for support and gives it a ring. She's immediately placed on hold, with a nice recording playing in a loop, saying, "Your business is important to us. All of our agents are currently assisting other customers. Please wait." She has no idea how long she has to wait during this call, but she keeps waiting for about seven minutes.

Finally, John picks up on the other end, and after quickly introducing himself, asks Jane for some identifying information -- her name, phone number, and account number. Jane doesn't know her account number. John can look it up through other identifying information like the last few digits of her social security number and birthday (which doesn't make Jane very comfortable). Jane reluctantly provides the information.

Eventually John finds her account but it's under another last name. Jane was recently divorced, so her last name has changed. John apologizes that he has no way of changing that information in the system, so she's just going to have to remember that Company X uses her married last name whenever she calls.

John then asks Jane what she's calling about. She explains that she is confused about how to update her product. John says that he is not actually equipped to handle that specific product, but he will transfer her to the correct department.

So Jane is placed on hold yet again, with the same message about how important her call is playing in her ear, interspersed with some really bad soft jazz. She spends another five minutes on hold before Clarence answers.

Clarence asks for her name, phone number, and account number.

Jane still doesn't know what her account number is.

She goes through the same scenario with Clarence as she did with John just to figure out how she needs to proceed, and then once again with the Billing Department, because she needs to pay to upgrade her product.

Even if her product is successfully upgraded by the end of the interaction, Jane is ready to take to social media to complain about how horrible Company X is and how she will never, ever buy their product again.

## What the Customer Cares About

Customers don't care if your data systems are inaccessible over departmental walls. They don't care if you have separate departments that handle separate products. They don't care if there are thousands or hundreds of thousands of other people calling into your call center every day, or how many employees you have, or how much bandwidth your internal network has. They want you to provide service for the product you provide, and to do it in a way that inconveniences them as little as possible.

If you have a full understanding of the customer's perspective of your business and their expectations from the outside, you will be able to tailor their experience in such a way that they don't have to deal with your internal silos. In fact, you will probably find ways to get rid of your internal silos in order to make the customer experience better.

This is why Customer Engagement is such a force for change for so many organizations. If you cannot provide a singular, consistent experience for your customers because your business is too fractured, you will lose your customers, and, eventually, all of your business as well.

ClosedWon has expertise in helping to identify the outside-in perspective for our customers via our Customer Journey mapping. We do it for each of our clients, to help create the best possible system for their customers. We do this for completely unrelated industries -- solar, healthcare, finance -- and are consistently able to provide excellent results.

This is because we are an outside-in focused company ourselves. Our clients' perspectives are what we build our business around. And it shows.

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