



HOW TO BUILD A CUSTOMER-CENTRIC CULTURE

by Linley Watson, Managing Director, Peak Performance International

Customer-centric culture change involves an organisational shift that puts the customer at the heart of everything you do. It unifies the organisation with a common cause and provides a competitive edge. It's about getting people to look at the organisation from the outside in, ensuring that what they do and the way they do it makes sense and creates value for customers. It's about determining an aspirational brand promise and continuously striving to close the gap between that promise and the actual customer experience. A customer-centric culture is arguably what makes the difference between being an ordinary organisation and an exceptional one.

It takes committed leaders and for the whole organisation to embrace the change. Here are 10 key steps to drive customer-centric culture change in your organisation:



1. Lead the CHANGE

Becoming customer-centric is a leadership issue. Make it a priority. Step up, understand and be an advocate for your customers and a role model for your people. Consider your people, processes and systems, then make decisions, drive change and reward behaviours that put the customer at the forefront of your organisation. Most of all, get started.



2. CLARITY of purpose

Clarify your purpose and make the customer your 'cause'. Create a clear and compelling customer-centric vision that people can believe in and get excited about. Unite the organisation by focusing on the overall customer experience your brand promises and your strategy for delivering it.



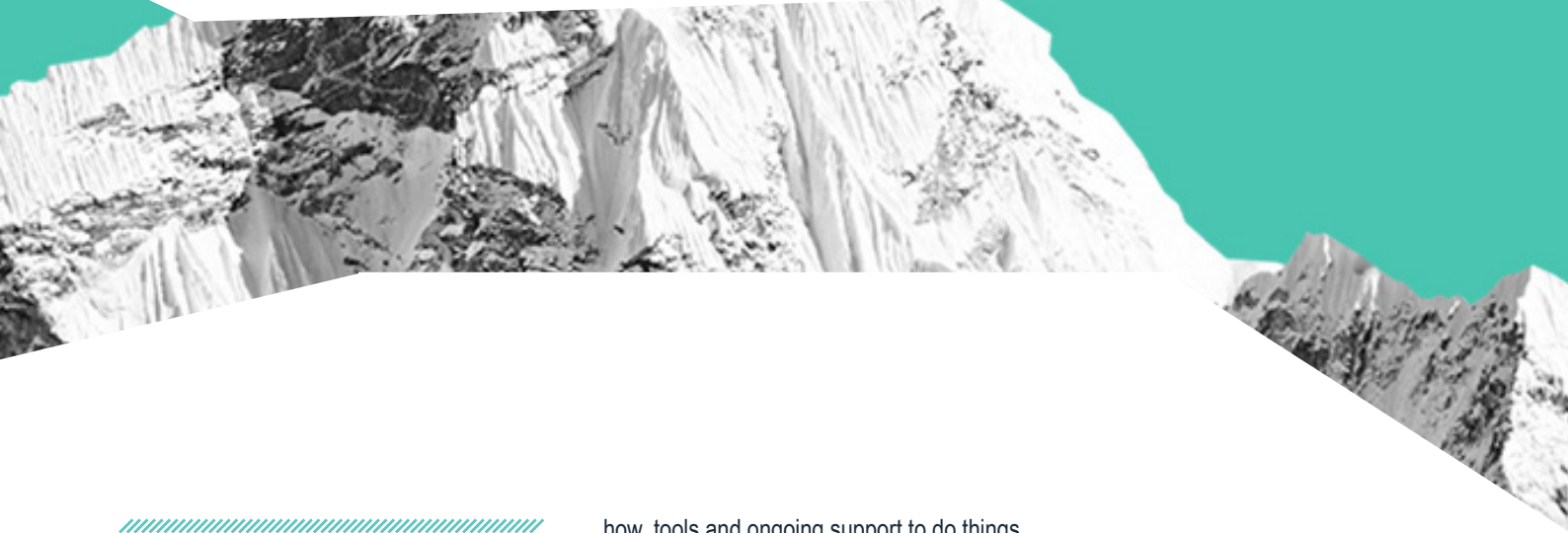
3. CONTEXT for change

Explore the need to change and the consequences of not. Understanding 'why' will help your people put the change in context and help get them on board. Your 'why' could be that customer satisfaction has plummeted, a new competitor has entered your space, or maybe sales are slipping. Current competitors might be closing the gap and challenging your position. Whatever the imperatives, now is the time to create some urgency – to look at the strategic reasons for change and what will happen if you don't.



4. CONFIDENCE to be the difference

Mindset is key. Build the desire and the confidence to make each customer more successful. Confidence comes down to attitude and resilience. People need to feel that what they do matters and that they have the power to make a difference. Recognise and work through the natural resistance to change. Challenge your team's thinking, build trust and encourage new attitudes and behaviours that improve customer interactions and outcomes.



5. COMPETENCE to create value

Understand and deliver what customers value. Find out what they want, solve their problems and exceed expectations. Develop the competence of your people so they get the basics right first time, every time. Boost the benefits and reduce the time, effort and emotion your customers need to invest to do business with you. Then you can compete on value not price.



6. COMMUNICATE to engage

Involve, inform and inspire your people to embrace the change. Communicate in an engaging way that makes sense to the people you're talking with. Be visible, listen and ask for input. Most importantly, communicate honestly. Be candid about the change, outline expectations and keep people informed of how they will be affected. Make the voice of the customer heard. Share customer stories that highlight progress and actively encourage people to contribute.



7. COACH for performance

Bridge the competence gap that change creates and ensure people have the know-

how, tools and ongoing support to do things differently. Invest in skills development and give positive and corrective feedback on the specific customer-centric behaviours you want to embed. Use informal and formal on-the-job coaching to constantly lift performance. Re-align what gets recognised and rewarded.



8. COMMIT and sustain

Embed new routines and ways of doing things that demonstrate commitment to internal and external customers. Show what success looks like, set high expectations and reward achievement. Create an environment where people welcome feedback and have a chance to contribute and accomplish something meaningful for their customers. Watch their commitment grow and the changes stick.



9. COLLABORATE to unite

Break down the silos, work together and inspire everyone to improve. Collaboration and sharing experiences, ideas and stories is where real traction happens. It's in the conversations and the passing on of what worked, for whom and why, that people see the results of a new way of thinking about



customers and a new way of operating at an individual, team and organisational level.



10. CONTINUOUSLY improve

Install customer metrics, monitor and analyse to find a better way. Empower teams to set tangible targets and to work towards them, tracking their results. Mobilise your people with a sense of ownership – push for progress, celebrate accomplishments and continuously look to improve and innovate.

Find out more by contacting:

Linley Watson

Ph: 0403 149220

Email: Linley@peakperformance.com.au