



Remarkable

My happy-go-lucky assistant Amy is knee deep in building and soon moving into her first “we built it” country home. She and her young family are eagerly waiting for move-in day sometime in April; I often hear about adventures in building supply stores picking out sinks, toilets, tubs and lighting. Which brings me to write about what a difference a positive customer experience makes.

Jennifer is a GenXer who works for Home Depot and spends her evenings patrolling the aisles. It didn’t take a supercollider to bring the parties together. As Amy tells it, she was looking at a glass shower she’d been eyeballing for a while and “GenX Jenn” stopped to see if she could be of any help.

So far, not out of the ordinary. It’s what happened after that, which falls into the remarkable customer experience file. Not only did Jennifer offer to help with information on the shower, she genuinely took an interest in Amy’s project. For the better part of an hour she worked with Amy and her husband Greg, asking about their new home building project and offering helpful suggestions based on her experiences. Jenn was building a trusting relationship based on what she heard in conversation.

The best part? Amy felt that her experience with Jenn was authentic; not canned responses or go-through-the-motions CRM crap but a real person genuinely concerned about her needs based on engaging each other.

Jennifer would never have been able to gain that trust if she didn’t come intrinsically hard-wired with authenticity. The next day Amy got a call from Jenn telling her that she had located the tub Amy liked from another HD location, got her an even better price and asked if they would they like it delivered.

Home Depot is lucky to have Jenn. She demonstrated a number of the characteristics of building a remarkable customer experience.

Jenn’s time spent in dialogue with Amy and her caring nature provided a heart-felt connection with the Home Depot brand. Her genuine approach was not one of sinks, and toilet and showers, but instead she was focusing on grooming in the bathroom and how the products HD were offering would enhance their bathroom grooming experiences for years to come. (She even instructed Greg to get in the display shower and put his arms outstretched and over his head to be sure he’d have enough room).

Unlike a visit to another building store where a service rep assumed that they would only be interested in price (commodity based selling), Jennifer understood that building this new home was an emotional decision making process and not just a series of pragmatic, rational choices.

Consumers are living human beings with experiential needs. They are looking for brands that provide those experiences and thus become loyal brand advocates and brand evangelists.

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