

Stop manipulating NPS scores by incentivising your staff!

By [Carmen Murray](#)

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Yikes! How things have changed in business. I remember when HelloPeter came out many years ago. It was the go-to place for all of us to express our opinions online and vent about companies taking advantage of us and delivering appalling service. This was the only place where our voices could be heard.



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Then the plot thickened as we witnessed the superpower of social media and the internet. Consumers are now taking control of their customer experiences and they are exposing the perpetrators that cause them distress.

Probably as you are reading this article, your business is being vetted by a potential client or customer. Are you reliable? Can you be trusted? What do your customers have to say about your business?



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Today, companies are relentlessly bombarding customers with advertising and spam calls to convince them to buy their product or service over their competitors. As Bob Levenson said:

“ *Most people ignore advertising because most advertising ignores people.* ”

Ultimately, customers have been bullied by businesses for a long time, and sad to report on this, but not much has changed.

It has become a rising trend for companies to use “**digital witchcraft**” by recruiting companies to fix the rankings of bad reviews and to use tactics to improve the overall rankings.

There are many companies out there that are incentivising their staff to get customers to write good reviews and even recruiting family members, friends and suppliers to do the same. [Amazon](#) refers to it as review manipulation to gain unfair

advantages by creating false, misleading and inauthentic feedback on products and services.

Last year the company [updated these guidelines](#) to ban any incentivised reviews to offer a more honest customer review system.

The worst customer experience comes from paying employees to achieve good NPS or customer satisfaction scores. Simon Sinek referred in *Start with Why* that using incentive tactics have short term results and is a form of manipulation with long term consequences.

Why should companies abandon these kinds of tactics?

Where there is smoke, there is fire

Assessing why your customers are unhappy and why they rate your company poorly is not something to take lightly. Instead, companies are making assumptions about unhappy customers and not addressing the problem but rather the symptoms.

Data will only reveal a part of the patterns of the complaints and ratings and this is why interventions with unhappy customers might be the biggest breakthrough for innovation. Using these superficial approaches to fix problems only leads to one thing. A decline in profits and more importantly, customers. Always remember,

“ *Your most unhappy customers are your greatest source of learning.* - Bill Gates ”

Trust has a price tag
Not addressing the real problem in your company is like hiding damp by painting over it. Once it starts raining, it will resurface and become a bigger problem with more rainfall and it is not a cheap and easy problem to solve. Luring customers to buy from you, is a short-term strategy, not a Future Fit strategy.

It will only be a matter of time before companies are caught out and this would lead to devastating consequences that could cost the business, if not close its doors.

The reality is that companies who are not invested in the wellbeing of their customers end up donating their customers to their competitors. According to Accenture's "Competitive Agility Index," 54% of companies experienced a decline in trust, which caused their index scores to drop by two points, on average. Each point equates to a 3% decline in revenue growth.

Emotional blackmail

The reality is, by incentivising staff to bring in good reviews and including it in their KPI's with the intent of them to take responsibility for overall customer experience leads to the customers' guilt buttons being pushed.

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In some of the mystery shopping services we completed for our clients in the past, we discovered incidents where staff asked customers: “Why won’t you give me a good score? My job is on the line if I don’t get good feedback?” or “I only get paid for good reviews.”

This becomes a far bigger problem because now it impacts the perception of the business and how they treat their staff which leaves a bad impression of the company morals and ethics.

Takeaways

A Future Fit business requires companies to identify tomorrows problems, today, which will ultimately lead to tomorrows profits. Camouflaging the problems, and punishing customers over and over again, will not yield in better results.

As the saying goes, “Knowing is Doing.” Your customers are your most valuable resource to help discover the barriers and frictions that drive them into the competitors’ arms. To create better companies, instead of drowning in negative social ratings, roll up the sleeves and get to the bottom of the problem. It will be all worth it.

ABOUT CARMEN MURRAY

Carmen Murray is one of the most influential modern marketers in South Africa. Her strong background in content, digital, mobile, innovation, and data analytics allows her to identify emerging trends and conceptualise disruptive communication strategies deployed with precision. The customer and their needs are always at the heart of her approach.

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