

How to Make Your Systems Employee-First





When businesses say “customers first,” most of us nod our head in agreement.

It sounds right. It seems right. That’s good common sense.

But how do you get there? How many businesses actually know how to deliver on that?

A lot of strange attempts at customer enticements and loyalty have been attempted over the years. Some have been disastrous, some weakly successful, all in an attempt to wrap their heads around how to put customers first.

Strangely, the best way to put customers first and have great customer service comes through a roundabout path: you put employees first.

Yes, an employee-first culture is the vehicle that gets you to a customer-first company.

What Is An Employee-First Culture?

When employers invest into employees who have customer-facing or supporting positions, they are creating an employee-first culture. That investment may come in many different forms, but the gist of the idea is the investment goes into employees.

What does this look like in the practical realm?

It would be easy to think employee engagement is what makes an employee-first culture because that engagement is touted as crucial to better work performance. While that’s true, there’s a further step that gets missed, one that belongs in a true employee-first culture, and that has to do with inspired employees.

Engaged employees are great, but [inspired employees outperform](#) every other kind of employee there is. According to that study, engaged employees are nearly 50% more productive than satisfied employees. Inspired employees, however, are over 200% more productive. Inspired employees create customer experiences that are unrivaled.

So what inspires employees?

Maybe you think paying more would do the trick. An increase in pay is a good way to engage employees, but it isn’t usually enough to inspire them. Sometimes more pay does the opposite, creating an expectation that they’ll only do more if they get paid more, or making you think you can overwork employees because you pay them well. Don’t confuse motivation with inspiration.

Inspiration is different. You get there by going deeper than handing out money.

1. **Great communication.** The most important thing you can do to inspire your employees is to keep communication channels clear. Miscommunication is the source for confusion, resentment, gossip, and all kinds of things that destroy a culture.
2. **Reduce hierarchy and barriers to efficiency.** A reduction in hierarchy and excessive micromanagement is a good way to inspire employees. It gives them a chance to be creative and solve problems on their own. Removing processes, systems, and tools that aren't user-friendly and add work onto work is also part of the detangling process.
3. **Define your mission.** Have a mission embedded into the culture that the employees can get behind and believe. It's easier to work for a business when you believe in the goal and see the opportunity to make a difference.
4. **Build trust.** Since [55% of employees don't trust management](#), you definitely need to build trust between management and employees.
5. **Truly value your staff.** Let's not forget the importance of both privately and publicly recognizing employees as individuals who are valuable assets and important to the business.
6. **Protect your employees.** There will be times when customers or other situations might cause employees to feel fear or hesitant because they are worried about a punitive response. If employees are valued before customers, they can act with confidence and not fear. Inspiration doesn't thrive in fear.

A culture of inspiration grows in soil where employees are genuinely valued. It's a culture where employees are given the space to thrive.

Maybe it sounds like a lot of work to build an inspiring employee-first culture without much of a return for the investment. The benefits of an employee-first culture aren't just for employees, though. Not by a long shot.

How putting employees first benefits managers.

We already mentioned that a lack of trust of management is a problem when an employee-first culture isn't present. Having that trust means managers aren't going to have to constantly fight employees every step of the way.

A business that lacks an employee-first culture will experience high employee turnover with low ambition for those who remain, and low customer satisfaction.

That's exactly what managers don't want.

How putting employees first benefits customers.

Your employees are the one place of overlap that your company's values and products connect with your customer.

Employees are the face of your company. They are how customers experience and ultimately think of your company. Their experience with them determines if they'll come back or not, more than price or product. [80% of customers](#) leave due to bad customer service. [40% of customers](#) want better customer service, with 78% saying that their best customer service experience occurred with a capable and knowledgeable employee.

So what kind of face do your customers see?

Employees who are glad to be there, and happy to help? Or employees who are just clocking in with a bad attitude? Do your employees take pride in your brand and care about protecting it? Or do they learn the bare minimum and are unable to help customers with questions?

When you put employees first, giving them the right tools and ensuing confidence, you give your customers a great experience.

How putting employees first benefits the business and its bottom line.

An employee-first culture generates happier employees. Employees who are happy actually work harder. Studies have shown that [happy employees can be up to 12% more productive](#) than those less enthusiastic about their jobs.

An employee-first culture is different from having no particular culture and a handful of happy employees, however. When your business is driven by a positive culture, one that's tangible in practice and execution, the benefits are significant. You'll see [26% fewer employee mistakes](#), [41% lower absenteeism](#), and [yes—30% stronger customer satisfaction](#). Employees from this culture are [more likely to recommend your business as a place to work](#) to their friends (which makes HR happy).

Look at that list.

Those are serious bottom line concerns. Mistakes are expensive, absenteeism is expensive, finding new employees is expensive, and customer satisfaction can't be bought. An employee-first culture addresses all of those positively.

Mobile Communication In An Employee-First Culture

As we noted, great communication topped the list for building an inspiring employee-first culture. There are two aspects of great communication: the tools you use and how simple you make it.

Let's start with the tools.

When you're talking to a family member at home, you tend to be in the same room. The idea is that you communicate best in the place where you both are.

The same goes for your employees. You have to communicate in the place they are, or they simply won't hear you. And you really need your employees to hear you.

Next up is how simple you make it to communicate.

Think of all the communication going on with your employees. New hires have to be onboarded. Schedules have to be posted. Shift and schedule changes have to be announced. Updates to policies, special notices—the list is endless. You communicate with them and you need them to communicate with you. It's back and forth.

All of that different communication can be confusing unless you streamline your approach. You don't want to use several tools to communicate. Anything but the easiest solution leads to confusion and frustration for your employees. They will definitely stop using it and disengage.

The right tool with the right amount of streamlining is your employee's mobile phone.

Today, everyone lives on their phones. That's where nearly all of us do our communicating for nearly every reason. We manage our life on our phones, and it makes perfect sense for work communication to be there, too.

You have to meet your employees where they are. If you want to be in the "same room" as they are, it must be on their mobile phone.

Start with mobile scheduling.

Scheduling is one of the biggest places of concern for employees. It's where a good work-life balance can either thrive or crumble. Removing hassle and annoyance in employee scheduling is part of the list of how to create an employee-first culture. It's about removing barriers to efficiency.

Good scheduling is flexible. It allows employees some control over when they work. It lets them easily swap shifts when something comes up in life. It has controls in place to keep employees from taking advantage of others. It makes schedule-related communication between employees and managers easy. An employee-first culture is hyper aware of all of this.

Here's where you mix the two, mobile communication and scheduling.

Mobile scheduling is one of the easiest ways to get you to an employee-first culture because it directly influences that work-life balance, and it's done right on their mobile phones where they already are. Chat with a friend, check your bank balance, swap a work shift, do some shopping, all right on your phone.

When scheduling software lives where employees are—in their pockets instead of on their computers back at the office—they'll use it more. That helps both the employees and their managers.

Getting to the place of customer loyalty and growth means you focus on your employees first. Your employees are the engine of the train that gets you anywhere good, and if you give them the right attention and fuel, you'll be on track.

Good communication and making it easier to manage a work schedule while still living life is a small but critical step towards a truly employee-first culture.

**Book time with
a scheduling
expert today.**

BOOK TIME NOW

