

## Improving Customer Experience in HR Support and Benefits Delivery

Differentiation based on product innovation is no longer sustainable because competitors can leapfrog feature/function advantages more quickly than ever. And differentiation based on price kills profitability. On the other hand, research shows that 86 percent of consumers said they would be willing to pay more for a better customer experience. (from an Oracle white paper on Customer Experience Management)

Forrester's fourth annual report "[The Business Impact Of Customer Experience, 2012](#)," shows that **companies with better customer experience tend to have more loyal customers:** when your customers like the experience you deliver, they're more likely to consider you for another purchase and recommend you to others. They're also less likely to switch their business away to a competitor. These improved loyalty scores translate into more actual repeat purchases, more prospects influenced to buy through positive word of mouth, and less revenue lost to churn.

The Temkin Group conducted research with more than 300 HR professionals from organizations with at least 1,000 workers and found that, while most understand the importance of engaging employees and creating a customer-centric culture, a mere 15% are significantly boosting those efforts. Most continue to focus on traditional HR functions such as hiring and recruiting.

Only 12% of companies evaluated by Temkin earned ratings of "good" or "very good" for HR support of customer experience efforts; 26% were rated "very poor" or "broken."

"Employee engagement is critical for customer experience success," says managing partner Bruce Temkin. "We're excited to be publishing this research which should appeal to both customer experience and human resources professionals. The results provide a compelling case for these two groups to work more closely together in the future." (EBN)

Clearly, customer experience has become a key business differentiator—yet delighting customers is not always easy. The following outlines best practices in improving the customer service in the delivery and support of HR and benefits functions. Companies adhering to these principles can ensure an improved customer experience. . The result: improved revenue, enhanced bottom-line profitability, and long-term brand value.

## II. Best practices in Improving the Customer -- or Employee Experience -- in Delivering HR and Benefits

### A. Strategic:

- Aligning HR and Benefits delivery with your customers' goals: Assigning high value to knowledge and anticipation of customers' real needs and desires
- Branding: Because customer experience is such a critical competitive differentiator, it often makes sense to make it a core element of external messaging. This calls attention to the differentiation your company has achieved and lets customers know that you view customer experience as central to your value proposition. This kind of branding also tends to raise customer expectations—not a bad thing. Because customer expectations are constantly being raised by their last excellent experience—even if that experience was with a competitor or with a company in an entirely different market space—it makes

sense to embrace higher expectations and make them part of your company's brand differentiation.

#### B. Tactical

Best practices in deploying an HR and Benefits portal:

- Ease of access
- Intuitive
- Responsive
- Scalable