



A highly respected loyalty expert and two well-regarded businesses have gotten together to identify “the most important question in loyalty” in 2022. What is it, according to these authorities?

“How are we supposed to retain customer loyalty in a climate where our own employees are disengaged and increasingly disloyal?”

Of course that is a critical question; the connection between employee loyalty and customer loyalty is obvious; and the level of concern raised is appropriate. The communication went on to announce a series of informative communications promising to help marketers better understand today’s employee and remedy the situation identified. I have no doubt the information offered will be appropriate and valuable.

But the topic got me thinking about a conversation I had last week, about a loyalty hierarchy: moving from a loyalty program, to a loyalty strategy, to loyalty as a way of doing business. Let’s unpack that, and circle back to the question of employee loyalty. Most loyalty programs are transactional, rewarding purchases. A more robust loyalty strategy creates customer engagement, by listening to consumers, providing recognition, enhanced services, access to information, new product tests, and games or other elements of interaction and fun.

But practicing loyalty as a way of doing business means a commitment throughout the enterprise to be loyal to your customers and other stakeholders – because loyalty is a two-way street. Loyalty and advocacy are earned and based fundamentally on trust. Transparency, fairness, and an equitable exchange of value are essential to building trust.

It’s true that there are a number of unique and anomalous forces affecting employees in the post-pandemic economy, resulting in workers changing jobs or re-negotiating

the employment relationship. And I'm sure there are many helpful specific tips and tactics to be learned from the experts.

But I would bet that any company that truly embraces loyalty as a way of doing business will have a loyal customer base AND a satisfied, productive workforce. **Your thoughts?**

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