



Christopher Roberts
MD, ENGAGED STRATEGY
Author of “10 Reasons Why
CX/NPS® Programs Fail”

THE TALE OF 2 CEOs

The Power of CEO- Led Customer Recovery

It is a clear and primary rule of business that the Customer Experience (CX) with a brand must match the brand promise. Otherwise over promising and under delivering can actually damage a brand.

Let me tell you a captivating story that unveils the transformative potential of CEO-led customer centric initiatives — a tale of two CEOs whose approach to Detractor Management propelled their respective organisations to unparalleled heights of brand loyalty and advocacy.

A best practice with the Net Promoter Score® is that Detractors should be called through a personalised outreach, preferably within 48 hours. This approach not only aims to convert Detractors into Passives, or even Active Promoters, but also helps mitigate potential brand damage by addressing concerns directly. Traditionally, such calls were made by mid-level managers well-versed in the intricacies of the business and equipped with empathetic communication skills. However, what transpired with these two CEOs that I’m going to tell you about was nothing short of extraordinary.

Two visionary CEOs, driven by an unwavering commitment to customer-centricity, took the reins of Detractor Resolution into their own hands – and the end results were staggering.

CEO #1 who was leading a member based organisation where the member experience was paramount, approached Engaged Strategy for an initial Net Promoter Score (NPS®) survey. He wanted to send a strong message to his leadership team and staff about the importance of being member centric. Upon receiving the results, he personally reached out to Detractors, setting a powerful example for his entire organisation including the leadership team and staff. Witnessing their CEO take proactive measures to enhance the member experience, employees across all levels embraced a culture of member obsession, resulting in a significant increase in NPS® within a short period.

In contrast, CEO #2 was naturally customer obsessed and fully understood customer lifetime economics and the power of referrals. Therefore, he was extremely curious to know what ‘his clients’ were saying about ‘his brand’. Following the first NPS® survey conducted by Engaged Strategy for the brand, he personally called back Detractors and shared customer concerns with his entire team using it as a way to rally them to prioritise customer-centricity. As a result, their customer program got off to a great start. Because of this and other initiatives the organisation took based on our recommendations, their NPS score increased by 86%.



Note here that both CEO #1 and CEO #2 were driven by a shared purpose: while CEO #1 sought to instill a resounding message within the organisation for both the Leadership and the staff across the board, CEO #2 was determined to uncover the voice of his customers. Irrespective of their approach, the outcome was the same - robust internal engagement that ran through all levels of their organisations, fuelling a customer-centric culture. And this is how it happened.

By personally reaching out to dissatisfied customers, they sent a resounding message throughout their organisations—that customer obsession was not merely a buzzword, but a core value ingrained in every facet of their operations.

The impact of this hands-on approach was profound. Customers were astonished to receive calls directly from the CEOs themselves, underscoring the organisation's dedication to prioritising their needs and concerns. More importantly, internally, the message reverberated loud and clear: customer experience was paramount, and every individual—from the executive suite to the front lines—played a pivotal role in shaping it.

The results were staggering. Both organisations experienced remarkable increases in their Net Promoter Scores®, which is testament to the tangible outcomes of their CEO-led customer recovery efforts. But, beyond the quantitative metrics lay a deeper narrative of brand strategy success—one rooted in authentic engagement, trust-building and a relentless pursuit of excellence in customer service.

The secret is that staff look very keenly at where the CEO or the Leadership focuses their effort, as it provides a clear indication of organisational priorities. In this case, the CEOs' unwavering commitment to customer-centricity which was demonstrated through personal involvement in enhancing the customer experience served as a guiding light for their staff, fostering a robust culture of customer focus within their organisations.

So, what lessons can we glean from this narrative of brand strategy triumph?

First and foremost, leadership sets the tone for organisational culture. CEOs who prioritise customer engagement and demonstrate a willingness to roll up their sleeves and address detractor issues firsthand inspire confidence, loyalty and a shared commitment to delivering exceptional experiences.

Secondly, the power of personalised outreach cannot be overstated. Beyond automated responses and scripted interactions, genuine human connection fosters empathy, understanding and the opportunity for meaningful resolution. By engaging directly with customers, CEOs signal that every voice matters and every concern is taken seriously.

Moreover, CEO-led customer recovery initiatives serve as a catalyst for internal alignment and motivation. When employees witness senior leadership actively engaging with customers and championing CX initiatives, they are more likely to embrace a customer-centric mindset and strive for excellence in their own roles.

This tale of the two CEOs exemplifies the transformative potential of CEO-led customer recovery initiatives as a cornerstone of brand strategy. By embodying the principles of customer-centricity, authenticity, and continuous improvement, organisations can not only resolve detractor issues effectively but also foster lasting customer loyalty, advocacy and brand resilience in an ever-evolving marketplace.



