

The Value Of Customer Engagement In Service

John Carroll of The Service Council discusses the challenge of embarking on a service transformation with advisory board member Stu Reed, president of home services at Sears Holdings.

Last month's Spotlight (*I'll Have An iPhone With Back Office Integration And Real-Time Service Mobility To Go*) featured commentary from a recent interview held with advisory board member Greg Sharp, VP of service operations at STERIS Corporation, a global leader in infection prevention, contamination control, surgical and critical care technologies, and other life-critical products and services. Sharp discussed in detail the results of STERIS' recent service mobility project that included the deployment of iPads and a field mobility solution integrated by AT&T and Antenna Software. The efficiencies gained as a result of the deployment saved a minimum of 10 to 20 minutes per technician, per log-in. With roughly 720 field service technicians in North America, this resulted in far more efficient field support, enabling STERIS more time to increase the help given to their customers to improve their utilization of STERIS equipment.



stu reed

Stu Reed
president of
home services,
Sears Holdings Corp.

Understanding where to begin a service transformation initiative can be a grueling, and many times, head-scratching process. The Service Council recently spoke with advisory board member Stu Reed, president of home services, Sears Holdings Corp. about the company's two-year-long service transformation initiative called *The Customer Engagement Model*. Stu discussed the primary driver of Sears' service transformation: the customer.

How does Sears Home Services define its customer-centricity model?

Reed: Two years ago, Sears Home Services embarked on a journey to transform its relationships with customers from event-based transactions to a customer relationship model. For Sears Home Services, *The Customer Engagement Model*, called "proadvocacy," is a cycle that matches customer needs with a team of empowered associates, that through leadership enablement, produces a service experience worthy of telling family and friends.

What's the most important factor of "producing a service experience worthy of telling family and friends?"

Reed: In a 52% referral business across our in-home, installation, and home improvement business units, our customers have told us that process and technology, while vital, can only get us to 58% of our customer satisfaction goals (100% customer satisfaction standard). A sustainable behavioral change is required to consistently deliver a "recommend to a friend" experience. Showing respect for the customer is the single most important factor in achieving 100% customer satisfaction.

How does Sears use voice of the customer (VOC) feedback to continuously improve its customer support programs?

Reed: Gathering real-time customer feedback, temperature checks, and postservice surveys drives our recovery engagement and continuous improvement performance management. Sears has deployed a series of customer feedback programs, including its temperature survey that is currently rolled out nationally across all of Home Services, which has captured responses from 18.5 million customers annually. The results enable real-time, rapid advocate response to customer feedback.

How does Sears ultimately use the results of customer feedback to improve the way it interacts with customers?

Reed: We believe that the best way to get engaged customers is to have overly engaged technicians. That's why we empower our technicians. They carry their own business cards, they introduce the temperature check survey to the customer on their laptop in real time, and they turn their laptop around to allow the customer to see the results. We strive to achieve full engagement among our technicians, because that is what transfers directly over to our customers.

As one of the world's largest services organizations, Sears has clearly identified what it needs to know about its customers and has empowered its technicians to engage with them directly to ensure that their needs are met. According to Stu Reed, "Service is very different from buying an item one time. We require customer feedback — and then, we need to be prepared to use it!"