

How Employee Engagement Shapes Customer Experience:

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The Catalyst,
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A fan walks into a stadium. A guest sits down at a table. A passenger gets into the back of a taxi.

In each moment, the experience sets the tone. And almost always, that difference comes down to how the person on the other side of that interaction feels at work.

The “Special” Relationship: exploring the often-invisible link between employee experience and customer experience.

*(Reflections
from the Panel)*

Experience is emotional



“We see a taxi journey as the connection between two moments in someone’s life, which is why emotional awareness and engagement from our drivers is just as important”

-Tom Shanks, Blueline / Bell & Shanks

A great customer experience is never purely transactional; it is fundamentally emotional. Employees who are confident, informed and empowered can turn routine interactions into moments that matter. Small gestures – a genuine smile, attentiveness or personalised attention - ripple through every touchpoint.

When service and emotion align, customers remember not just the transaction, but how they felt.

Engagement drives performance

Employees who feel valued and connected to purpose take ownership of customer interactions. Engaged staff deliver consistency and adapt to individual customer needs.

When employees understand the impact of their role, they deliver experiences that resonate and build loyalty.

“Everyone at the club plays a role in protecting the supporter experience – from matchday to hospitality to how we communicate beyond the stadium.”

-Sarah Medcalf, NUFC



Leadership presence

Visible, empathetic leaders create culture where employees feel supported and understand the purpose of their work. Presence and accessibility are more effective than policies alone. Employees mirror the engagement they see in their leaders, passing that attentiveness on to customers.

“Spending time in branches helped change perceptions of head office and built authenticity. Being visible and listening made a tangible difference”

-Simon Bray, Executive Coach





Continuous Improvement

Organisations that embed a culture of continuous improvement encourage employees to refine skills, innovate and take initiative, keeping service fresh, relevant, and high-quality.

By fostering growth, companies ensure that employee development directly benefits the customer experience.

“Building confidence in our people
- through product knowledge, briefings, and personal engagement
- directly transfers to the guest experience and creates positivity”

-Nick Shottel, 21 Hospitality

Recognition and Motivation

Acknowledging and celebrating employee contributions help colleagues feel valued and motivated to deliver their best work. Recognition reinforces the link between effort and impact, making employees more confident and attentive in customer interactions.

“Recognition matters - whether through small rewards or public acknowledgment, it gives employees the confidence to focus on customers and feel proud of their contribution.”

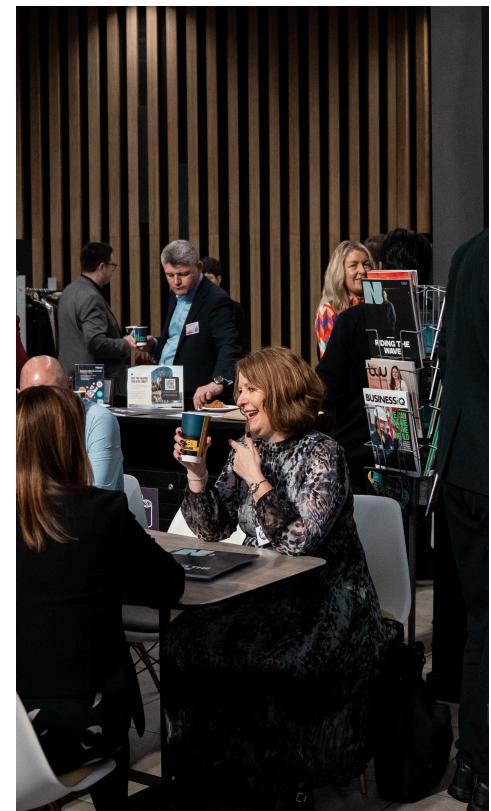
-Lauren Mallon, Marks & Spencer Food

Technology as an enabler

Technology enhances efficiency, insight and communication, but it cannot replace human connections or culture. Used wisely, it allows employees to focus on meaningful customer interactions.

“Technology is used to give drivers insight and data that helps them perform better.”

-Tom Shanks, Blueline / Bell & Shanks



Investing in employees is investing in customers.
Organisations that connect culture, engagement, leadership and technology create experiences that are consistent, personalised and emotionally resonant.

Employee Experience is the *foundation*



Customer Experience is the *outcome*