

Three Emotional Intelligence Skills to Improve Customer Experience

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IMPACTS CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AND ACHIEVES MARKETING GOALS.



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Three years ago, it was predicted that customer experience would be the future of marketing.¹ Today, we live in a world where our customers' stories, journeys and relationships with brands are the most powerful form of marketing we can find. Customer experiences are authentic, they're easy to relate to and they're oftentimes emotional. In this white paper, find out how emotional intelligence and customer engagement play a role in marketing in a bigger way than they ever have before.

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It's a bold statement.

But according to experts, early adopters and innovators in the marketing and customer experience (CX) space, it's true. Three years ago, [Forbes](#)¹ predicted that customer experience would be the future of marketing. Today, we see that this hypothesis is not only a reality, but has completely shaped the way we think about marketing today.

But *how* we utilize customer experience through marketing is a challenge that many CX and marketing professionals face. How can we create more authentic and genuine customer experiences, and how do we turn those experiences into effective and engaging word-of-mouth marketing? For as much strategy and data is utilized in CX and marketing, the answer may surprise you.

It's human.

It's emotional intelligence.

WHAT IS EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE?



emo-tion-al in-tel-li-gence

noun

The capacity to be aware of, control, and express one's emotions, and to handle interpersonal relationships judiciously and empathetically.²

It's the latter part of the definition that companies should employ in marketing that creates memorable customer experiences.

According to [Psychology Today](#),³ emotional intelligence, oftentimes shortened to "EQ", includes three skills:

3 Skills of EQ

- 1 The ability to identify emotions as they happen (emotional awareness)
- 2 The ability to harness emotions and apply them to tasks like thinking and problem solving
- 3 The ability to manage emotions

REAL-WORLD EXAMPLES OF EQ

Emotional awareness, applying emotions and managing emotions play a major role in marketing and business.



1. Identifying Emotions (Emotional Awareness)

Gone are the days when marketers can push *what they want* to customers. Savvy marketers study and listen to their customers to deliver products, services and message that enhance the customers' lives. Being emotionally aware starts with voice of the customer (VOC) listening throughout the organization, but it is critical in the marketing role.

Just as important is voice of employee (VOE) listening. Employees have the benefit of taking in a multitude of customer information—what they say, what they don't say, how they look or sound, etc. These are all cues gained from emotional intelligence that survey scores or feedback cannot convey. Often the feedback frontline employees gather is more emotionally aware than what customers themselves say.



IN THE REAL WORLD: [Aimee Lucas of Temkin Group](#)⁴ dedicates her career to transforming customer experience within large organizations. In an [article for American Banker](#),⁵ she writes about USAA and its unique online platform built to pose questions to its employees about challenges or innovation opportunities. The platform gives employees the chance to initiate discussions with submissions or “vote up” other ideas from like-minded peers.



2. Applying emotions to tasks

The workplace is emotional, just like the rest of life. When we embrace emotion, instead of ignore or suppress it in the workplace, we can deliver experiences that go beyond the logical and into the emotional—where great service and loyalty are born and engrained. When employees and customers interact, leaning into emotion makes our companies more human, more likeable and more trustworthy.



IN THE REAL WORLD: Salt River Project (SRP) has a program called Service from the Heart, which utilizes Hallmark Business Connections Customer Care solution to improve a customer experience through emotional marketing. When customer service associates are empowered to [send Hallmark cards](#),⁶ emotional intelligence wins the hearts of both employees and customers.



3. Managing Emotions

Empathy = Understanding Your Emotions and Others' Emotions = Emotionally Intelligent Responses to Situations = Better Relationships = Business Success



IN THE REAL WORLD: By simply thinking of hotel guests and hospital patients as “people”, [Hyatt Hotels Corp. and PatientsLikeMe set a new standard for empathy](#)⁷ in their respective industries. Hyatt even adopted the slogan, “We care for people so they can be their best.” Using the word “care” instead of “serve” was completely intentional. “You can serve without caring but you can’t care without serving,” says Mark Hoplamazian, president and CEO of Hyatt Hotels Corp. In the same vein, PatientsLikeMe is shifting the way the health industry cares for its patients by acting as a repository of data on patient experiences. Vice President Sally Okun believes that empathy—seeing the experience through the patient’s eyes—leads to better care.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN BUSINESS

Brands that understand what consumers want and connect with them on a personal and emotional level [will be more successful](#)⁸ than those that do not. Marketers who find new ways to make people feel special or important will help brands rise to the top. Brands and marketers who work together to create genuine customer experiences can utilize those stories, opportunities and content for effective and engaging marketing.

Companies no longer have a choice about creating authentic connections; their success depends on it. Today, creating a lasting bond with customers means finding ways to build relevancy, connecting on an emotional level to make them feel important and reinforcing their smart decision to do business with you.

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Quick Facts: Marketing & Emotional Intelligence



92% of consumers want brands to make their marketing feel like a story⁹

12x

Customers who like their sales rep are twelve times more likely to purchase¹⁰

17/18

Emotion is the most influential factor affecting customer loyalty in 17 out of 18 industries¹¹

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN MARKETING

Customer experience is one of the best opportunities a marketer has in their toolkit. Digital and traditional marketing success hinges on talking to humans, connecting with people and strengthening relationships. With this in mind, it is critical that marketing efforts align somewhere on the emotional intelligence spectrum.

But it's easier said than done. Marketers go to battle every day to bring attention to their brand. As consumers, we are exposed to [up to 10,000 brand messages per day](#).¹² From our social media feeds to our email inboxes, from our television sets to our physical mailboxes, marketing messages are constantly being delivered to us—and constantly being ignored.

The marketing efforts that employ emotional intelligence, however, are more likely to get noticed and engaged with. In a study conducted at the University of Pennsylvania known as [“The Link Between Viral Content and Emotional Intelligence,”](#)¹³ it was found that writer Neetzan Zimmerman was able to attract 30 million page views a month just because he understood the emotions that would make a person on the other side of the world click a button.

Zimmerman's efforts, as well as the emotionally intelligent marketing work of many other big brands, prove that a strong blend of customer experience, marketing know-how and emotional intelligence is an ideal recipe to get a message opened, read and engaged with.



CONCLUSION

One of the simplest ways to promote customer acquisition, loyalty and retention is by sending something meaningful to your customers in the mail. Direct mail is an impactful marketing tactic—and it's even more impactful when it brings emotions out of the consumer. Sending a Hallmark greeting card, for example, performs better than other direct mail formats—in some instances [with increases from 5% to 22%](#).¹⁴

To learn more about how to utilize emotional intelligence in your marketing strategy, view our most recent [video](#)¹⁵ explaining how sending Hallmark cards as a direct marketing tactic creates a differentiating customer experience. [Contact our Customer Engagement team today](#).¹⁶



LET'S CONNECT | *About Rhonda Basler*

Rhonda Basler leads the Customer Engagement team at [Hallmark Business Connections](#), Hallmark's B2B subsidiary. An avid business trend watcher, her customer experience expertise comes from combining more than 20 years experience in both Fortune 500s and startups with her strategic insights and knowledge of analytics and technology. When she joined Hallmark six years ago, she knew she found a job she could truly love. Her true passion is creating innovative approaches to customer experience, employee engagement and omni-channel marketing, transforming them into both human-centered and results-oriented programs.

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LET'S CONNECT | *About Hallmark Business Connections*

Hallmark Business Connections is the business-relationships unit of the iconic Hallmark Cards brand. We leverage more than 100 years of Hallmark heritage, creativity and innovation to help businesses build and strengthen the relationships that make them thrive. Turning customers into advocates, employees into champions, and companies into healthier environments, Hallmark Business Connections crafts innovative solutions that boost employee engagement and business growth. Hallmark Business Connections is headquartered in Kansas City, Mo., with locations in Minneapolis, Minn., and Duluth, Minn. For more information, visit HallmarkBusinessConnections.com.

Endnotes

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