

## I'M SO CONFUSED!

In trying to differentiate yourself from the mélange of competitors, you've embraced new approaches of interacting with customers—the lobby, the drive-thru, the ATM, the internet, and now mobile banking. With all of the high-tech tools at your fingertips, great ideas and products, banks, you truly can treat customers differently. It is an exciting opportunity where creativity and lifestyle relevance win.

So why then are customers confused?

Think about it. Most financial institutions consider themselves as very customer service oriented, high-touch and "glad-to-see-you" organizations. When the customer visits the lobby that may be true, but when the customer visits your website, you become a self-service, "try-and-find-it," financial institution. When the customer dials the customer service line, again the experience is fundamentally different.

Finally, when it's time to send out account statements, it is back up the truck with a load of disclosures and statement stuffers that force the customer to run the enclosure gauntlet just to get to their statement. And you wonder why they do not open their statements when they arrive? What? You want me to READ that stuff before looking at my statement?

From a behavioral psychology standpoint, as an industry, we are sending different and conflicting messages to our customers and no doubt confusing them. Your brand is your customer experience and it should be managed consistently across all forms of interaction.

The well-known behaviorist, Ivan Pavlov, discovered that automatic behavior is caused by a stimulus from the environment. A correlation in banking is what your customer does automatically when they receive a thick envelope from the bank! Yep, right to the shredder! It's automatic! And do you wonder why only 30% of your customers use your website? Do you think perhaps they may not like it? Unfriendly, hard to find anything, with stuff always being moved around even more than the grocery store!

Is the trend then that your customers are trying to find ways to avoid your bank, and only use the services they absolutely have too? ARGH! Not the BANK... please... anything else but that!

The message is a simple one: even though technology is cool, the implementation of technology can confuse the customer. With the advent of voice response units, websites, 800 numbers, mobile banking, and ATMs your institution should take time to understand the psychology of the customer's experience, the technology being installed and how to deliver a consistent brand across different channels. Technology is not just flip the switch or plug in play! Technology should not be thought of as "islands of services"; not connected to the whole customer experience. It takes work to understand not only the technology, but also how the customer understands you.

Pavlov made a great discovery: automatic things happen with interaction. What brand of stimulus is your technology automatically creating that you are unaware of?

The Wombat!

#### About the Author

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