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*Implementing Lean Marketing Systems*



## The Challenger & Customer Experience

Guest was Matt Dixon

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Matt Dixon, an executive director of strategic research at [CEB](#), has an unrelenting drive to find the answers to questions senior executives often take for granted. Matt's latest book is [The Effortless Experience: Conquering the New Battleground for Customer Loyalty](#) and he is best known for the book, [The Challenger Sale: Taking Control of the Customer Conversation](#).

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### Transcription of the Podcast

**Joe Dager:** *Welcome everyone! This is Joe Dager the host of the Business901 podcast. With me today is Matt Dixon. He's a managing director of strategic research at Corporate Executive Board and has an unrelenting drive to find the answers to questions senior executives often take for granted. Matt has overseen dozens of original quantitative and qualitative research studies on all aspects of customer service, strategy and sales productivity.*

*I think of Matt as a myth buster from his two books, and I'd like to welcome him. He's written one of the most influential books I have read in the last few years, The Challenger Sale, and now has a new book out, The Effortless Experience. Some great work Matt and my honor to have you on.*

**Matt Dixon:** Thanks Joe. It's a pleasure to be here.

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**Joe:** Starting with *The Challenger Sale*, it really blew away some traditional sales myths. Can you just give a quick summary for a few of the people that haven't read it maybe?

**Matt:** Yes, of course. The Challenger Sale research started back when it was really the depth of the downturn Joe. It was back in late 2008, early 2009. We're a member-based organization. We work with about 1,000 heads of sales around the world – all B2B – and we take our research marching orders, my team does, from those 1,000 chief sales officers. And at that time as you can imagine, it was really a bad time to be in sales because none of your customers wanted to buy a darn thing from you. It was the world in which our clients, heads of sales around the world, were coming back to us and saying, "Hey the thing we really need help with right now is trying to figure out why it is that in this really, really tough selling environment we find that most of our salespeople are missing quota by a wide, wide margin. We are just hemorrhaging right now. Still there are a couple of folks on the team who continue to be bringing in the number. In fact, some of them bring in deals, in business that we would dream of even in the best of times. What is it that those select few star performers are doing that we can actually learn from, kind of bottle and export to everyone else? Hopefully that will be kind of a tide that would lift all boats because gosh we really need the help right now. It's just a tough time in sales.

What we found when we went out and did the research – we started analyzing data on about 1,000 different sales reps across geography and industry, again all B2B. Since then the dataset has expanded to about 35,000 people around the world. We continue to run and validate the model. The story remained very consistent from the initial kind of data

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that we did. What we found were two things. One, we found that all salespeople at the end of the day, fall into one of five selling profiles. These are statistically defined sales profiles.

I could talk to you more about how we did the research if you want, but at the end of the day you've got five tested sellers, you've got hard workers – these are nose to the grindstone type sellers – you've got challengers – these are sort of the debaters on the team. They got a provocative point of view and not afraid to use it to push the customer bid outside their comfort zone. You've got relationship builders and those guys are all about kind acquiescence doing whatever the customer wants, sitting on the customer side of the table, advocating for the customer inside the supplier organization or the vendor organization. You've got lone wolves. Lone wolves are some of the prima donnas of the sales organization. They march to the beat of their own drummer. They don't follow the sales process. They don't file their expense reports sometimes. As I often joke, they sell things you don't even make and then they ask for forgiveness afterwards, and many companies let them get away with it because they hit their number consistently or exceed it. Then you have problem solvers. Problem solvers are sort of customer service reps than sales reps closing. They're more interested in post-deal execution than in getting the next deal through the sales pipeline.

While that's kind of academically interesting, the second big finding was the big shocker. When you look at the performance of these different profiles, when you map it up against sales performance, you find that one of these profiles; the challenger performs heads and shoulders above the rest when it comes to who are the high performers in the dataset. They are the top 20% of your sellers. We find that nearly 40% of those people fall into that

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challenger profile.

The bigger surprise Joe was that the one that comes in dead last out of those five is actually the relationship builder profile. This was a big shock to heads of sales who've always I think lived by that notion that people sell to people and at the end of the day, even in business-to-business, selling is about the relationships you have with your customers. What it really forced us to do was to rethink what happened in the dynamic with the customer, how the currency of the relationship has really changed.

That's led us on just a fascinating journey, part of which is documented in the Challenger Sale and some of which is in research we've done over the past four or five years since the original challenger study to understand what best salespeople are doing differently in an age where customers can kind of go out and learn on their own. They don't need that talking brochure salesperson anymore because they can go out and learn all kinds of things about their own needs, and to find those needs and figure out what's keeping them up at night all on their own. And then they can go figure out, "Who are the suppliers that can help me to scratch those itches, to solve those business challenges?" How do they stack relative to one another?" and they really start to engage the salesperson later and later in the purchase journey. We found that the challenger salespeople are really the ones in this world where customers are out there learning on their own, are really able to kind of reverse that trend and avoid that sort of price-driven commoditized sales trap that is really plaguing today's salesperson.

**Joe:** *Since you've written the book, I'm sure you've learned more and did further research,*

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*are you only confirming this? Has your mind changed at all that your book may be a little bit out of place?*

**Matt:** You know it's a great question. The things that we've studied, I think what we find as researchers is the more things we find and research, the more questions we surface. A couple of the things we came up with the right away that weren't really things we addressed in the Challenger Sale. A lot of people would ask us earlier on, "What is Challenger? Is it a sales methodology? Is it just a set of behaviors? Is it just a mindset or a way of thinking for the salesperson or is this really a way to sell? Is it actually a real sales kind of approach or methodology or sales process?" Since then we've actually really gone in pretty deep around applied challenger selling. So specifically, what are the opportunities that, in a territory, a challenger would prioritize versus a core performer, an average performing salesperson? Who do the best salespeople go after? Who do challengers target? Within those companies, the sales opportunities, what kind of people do they sell to? Who is the stakeholder that the challenger salesperson that high performing salesperson, is really looking for inside the customer organization?

Once you find them, what are the dynamic between the seller and the customer stakeholder and who leads and who follows? Again that's just sort of the tip of the iceberg. As we continue to get into that, I wouldn't say we found anything that actually refutes what we said in Challenger. In fact the one thing I would say is we've gone out and conducted numerous quantitative studies around all of those questions I just mentioned – opportunity targeting, stakeholder targeting, stakeholder engagement, sales process, etc.

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The thing that consistently comes back from independent studies is that the top people, the top salespeople, do what challengers do, they lead with insight. That is the thing that customers are looking for. They're not looking for the stuff that they can find online. In a world where customers can go out and learn on their own, they're actually looking for the thing they couldn't learn on their own. That's really the new currency of the relationship today. That's been a really exciting thing. The more ways we look at this question, the more confirmation we get back that that is the real differentiating and discriminating factor for today's successful sellers.

**Joe:** *I think of that and I think in today's world is that we're more into team selling. Can an organization do team and collaborative type selling or does that challenger sales guy, is that still the lone wolf sort of out there?*

**Matt:** We wrote a post recently for HBR, a blog post, where we talked about that, how sales is no longer an individual sport. It's exactly Joe what you're talking about. Many of the companies we've worked with have said, "Over time we've seen the sales call go from a two-legged sales call to a 16-legged sales call as more people get involved in it." It's a team sport today, and it takes a lot of collaboration, and certainly that's what we found. It used to be way back when that sales was the domain of the individual performer. Today what we're finding is best salespeople actually they're not just challenging, but they also are differentiated by their ability to work with and to leverage the network inside the supplier organization, so to work with their team, to work with their peers, to work with colleagues across the business to help bring solutions to the customers. Certainly sales is a team sport.

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Now it's interesting when you talk about, "Well would we want a sales team made up all challengers?" Often we say, "Well maybe, maybe not." You may not want that only because they might end up spending all their time challenging one another and debating endlessly without actually making headway with the customer. It may be that you actually want the person who is facing off with the customer, the person on the pointy end of the spear; you may want that person to be a challenger. They may be well supported by people who have some of those other profiles that I mentioned before because they're many roles on the team, not just the role of the challenger. We haven't studied it specifically about what's the optimal composition of the team, but that's my gut sense having worked with a lot of sales teams before. There are roles on the team for many different types of sellers. In today's environment, you probably want the customer facing person, the leader on that team who's engaged with the customer, especially at that senior level, to have more of that challenger approach. But that doesn't mean that everyone on the team should necessarily have that profile, as well.

**Joe:** *When I try to explain the challenger approach to someone, I say it's the salesman or the sales team that's going to meet with the customer and are going to do new math. Instead of one plus one equal to two, they want to make one plus one equal to three. Is that a good way to explain it?*

**Matt:** It is. Since the book's come out, I've heard so many people tell the story just like you are in their own words, and it's always exciting to hear people kind of put it in their own terms. I think that's definitely a way you can put it. Just the other day I was talking to



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the head of sales and said the challenger for this person, for this guy, the head of sales at this pretty large company, global company. He said, "When I think of my challenger salespeople, these are the people who go in, and they make the customer blink." They bring that new idea to the table. They bring a new way to save money or to make money, or to avoid risk or to steal market share or to engage employees. Whatever the outcome is that you are promising to deliver for the customer they bring a new way to get there, the new idea for getting there and accomplishing that objective, and they put it on the table.

It's often an idea the customer themselves hadn't thought of before, and it makes them blink and it makes them do a double take. Surprisingly, they actually generate some pretty skeptical reaction from that customer. The customer says, "Hey, I don't know about that. That's a pretty bold claim or I don't know if that's going to work here what you just laid on the table. I'm not sure. I think we're a little bit different." The challenger is able to hold their ground, drive forward and use that idea as a wedge to open up new terrain and surface new area in conversation. I do like your description though, and I'll file it away for later use and maybe pay you royalties on the description later.

**Joe:** *I grew up in an era where most of my sales experience centered on Spin Selling and the Consultative type selling. Does this mean that this is dead? Is this still alive? Can we still sell that way?*

**Matt:** That's such a good question. Here's what we'd say is that, in a world where customers are out there and kind of defining their own needs, they're out there learning on their own, what that really tells you is that the approach of selling that sort of premises on

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questions and coming and asking the customer “what’s keeping them up at night?” is sort of a premise on the wrong thing. The world, today, shifted to a world where customers today don’t really need salespeople to come in and ask, “Hey, what’s keeping you up at night?” It is a world that they can go out and learn on their own and get very smart and very knowledgeable about solutions to their problems, what their problems even should be. What they actually want the salesperson to do, the bar has just moved. What they need the salesperson to do is come in and tell them, “What should be keeping them up at night?” Not asking them, “What is keeping you up at night?”

The important thing to keep in mind though is that so many of these approaches, so many of these very sound and robust methods and techniques and skills that have been taught in the past around Spin Selling and Solution Selling and Strategic Selling and so many great methodologies and approaches, it doesn’t mean that they are rendered obsolete by the change in the way customers are buying. What it means is that the bar has changed for the challenger. If you study challenger salespeople, I think what you’d find is, and certainly we have found is, they’re very good at actually many of the things that have been taught for years in selling – asking good questions, diagnosing needs, the Spin techniques, the Strategic Selling techniques, the Consultative Selling techniques. They’ve got those things. Because they’ve seen the customer change the way that they buy there’s this sort of lead steer effect that we see Joe, which is they see the lead stare and they kind of change directions because they see something’s changed out there over the horizon, and they lead the herd in a different way.

When you want to look for the latest innovation in sales, you actually go out and look to

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see what the best salespeople are doing. Certainly 20, 30 years ago, those best salespeople, just as Neil Rackham found in his classic book, were doing something very, very different. What Neil did was scientifically study that and document that. Neil I think was excited about our work because he said, "You guys have kind of done the same thing." What we've seen is that best salespeople are not just doing all the things that I said they should be doing and others said they should be doing, they're doing that but now the bar has moved, and they're doing something else too. The new thing they're doing is leading with insight. It doesn't mean the questions and techniques of the past are irrelevant or obsolete because surely you still use those things when it comes to selling anything. I mean for goodness sake; you're not going to sell anything to a complex customer or a customized solution to a complex customer without asking lots of questions along the way.

It's just the way in which those are used and how we engage with the customer today has really changed. That's the thing we see is really different. The biggest change out there is not necessarily how salespeople are selling. The biggest change out there is how customers are buying differently today and how they're out there learning on their own. Your best salespeople have adapted to that world in a new way, and we call that challenger as the word that we've used to describe what your best salespeople are doing. It is an evolution of what they've learned in the past, no revocation of that if that makes sense.

**Joe:** *How has this changed the role of a sales manager?*

**Matt:** This is a good question. The year after we wrote Challenger, and this is what I meant before, that the more research we do, the more questions we find. The first

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question that actually came up interestingly was the question you just asked which is, “Okay I understand there are five profiles of sellers, and I understand that challengers win, and that’s driven by the change in the customer buying department. I get that. What does that mean for the manager? How does it change their role?” Exactly your question.

We went out, and we actually tried to do a similar challenger study but of sales managers and we actually couldn’t make the data or the model work in the same way. We didn’t find five profiles or six profiles or seven profiles of sales managers, we actually just found one profile. Our hypothesis is what happens is when you go from being an individual contributor; an individual seller to being a manager of people and a leader of a team, a lot of what made you distinct as an individual kind of gets washed out in the laundry if that makes sense, and they sort of coalesce around a single profile of manager or leader.

That doesn’t mean that everyone does it well and that all managers are great because we all know that’s not true. What you find is one kind of profile of managers in a very wide spectrum of performance. So when we dig into it we find best sales managers do three things. The first thing they do is they can actually –, and this is again an independent corroboration of the challenger research. When you look at the sales skills and competencies that best managers possess, interestingly they also possess those challenger skills. Your best sales managers can demonstrate those challenger skills to the salesperson. It becomes more than not do as say but do as I do and watch how I sell and learn from that.

Secondly, we know they are tremendous at imparting the skills known to drive success. They are great coaches. I think as we all know with managers they hear the word coaching

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and I think they default to performance management. They go to spreadsheet coaching and deal inspection and all these types of notions that sales managers have about coaching which really aren't about coaching at all because coaching is about behaviors, not about outcomes. The best sales managers really do know the difference, and they're able to not just demonstrate those skills but impart those skills in a coaching oriented way.

The third thing best managers do is they're innovative. That doesn't mean they're innovating on products. Sure they may come up with a great idea and pass it unto the products guys, but what it means is they're great at innovating at the deal level. When things get stuck they are really, really creative around the deal terms, the conditions, the positioning of the value proposition, to get those deals unstuck and get them across the finish line. Those are really the three steps of differentiating characteristics we see that best sales managers have. Again it's not five types of managers, it's really one. But the spectrum of performance on those three things, the challenger sales skills, the coaching skills, the innovation skills varies quite dramatically one manager to the next.

**Joe:** *Well I want to jump into your new book; you just published it last fall I believe, The Effortless Experience.*

**Matt:** Yes, that's right.

**Joe:** *I find it very interesting because it coincides with some other things that I've heard recently – is the book mostly centered on customer loyalty? Is that the premise of how you came about it?*

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**Matt:** A lot of people out there love The Challenger book and a lot people are asking, "How do I reconcile these two pieces of research or put them together?" You know truthfully they're different studies though I think there is a very interesting and powerful connection between the pieces that we could talk about. But really the genesis of the Effortless Experience work was back in 2007, 2008. One hat I wear at our company is I run the membership in the group that serves heads of sales I mentioned before where The Challenger research came from. The other hat I wear is I run the program for heads of customer service and customer contact. These are the folks who are running, in many cases, very large scale contact center operations that's, unfortunately for a lot of the people, we love to hate as consumers. I'm subject to many cocktail party conversations where people will lay out all their dirty laundry and all the ways they've been wronged by call center reps in the past and by companies. The root of that research was back in 2008 we had picked up a study for that membership.

We worked with about 400 heads of customer service around the world. The thing they really wanted to know, because a lot of these folks were getting pressure from their CEO's that as their products and their brand and their value propositions become very commoditized out there a lot of these heads of customer service were coming back and saying, "The CEO or the CMO is really looking for us to use customer service as a way to differentiate who we are as a company and to generate loyalty." So what can we do in customer service to deliver that loyalty-building customer service experience? As we got into it, we found something pretty surprising information. Just like in Challenger where we found these five types of reps; the one who wins is not the one we thought was going to

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win, and it led to lots of questions.

In the customer service world, when you think about this question of how to deliver a service experience that drives loyalty and you ask any head of customer service or any senior executive in any company, what they'll tell you is the way to the customer's heart, the way to build loyalty is by not just meeting their expectations but by going above and beyond as people in the call center world or the service world call this the "moment of wow" or the "delight moment" exceeding the customers' expectations. When we dig into it, what we actually found across about 125,000 customers globally, we found that those customers whose expectations were exceeded were only marginally more loyal than those whose expectations were simply met. What you find is that it cost companies a lot of money to delight customers. Often times, it's denoted in refunds and givebacks and breaking policy and giving things away for free, and it costs companies a ton of money. When you look at it, you realize that customers don't pay you back with their loyalty.

As we dug into it we found even more surprisingly, is that most customer service interactions are actually four times more likely to make customers disloyal than to make them loyal. In other words, when you think of loyalty, customer service is kind of like the defensive of loyalty. There's an offense and the offense is played by product, it's played by brand and reputation and things like that, but the defense is really owned by customer service. This is where you're trying to fill up this bucket of goodwill, of loyalty for your company and in customer service we kind of drill a hole in the bottom and all that goodwill is pouring out. When we look at what it is that customer service does to create so much disloyalty, what we find is it all boils down to this idea of customer effort. Customer effort

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is really the amount of work that companies force their customers to go through to get their problems fixed. It's a lot of the culprits that many people in customer service have tried to get after for years – things like when customers have to call back repeatedly or contact a company repeatedly to get the issue fixed.

When they have to switch channels, so they go to the website, they are confused by what they see or maybe the answer to their question isn't there, so they have to pick up the phone and call. When you call in, and you get transferred around and you get the feeling that people are passing the buck, "Oh it's not us. You gotta talk to those people over in that department," and things like that, repeating information and that runs the gamut from having to tell your story over and over again. Even to the simple stuff like having to repeat your account number after you just typed it into the touchpad.

When we look at these things, and we actually sum it all up as I said before, we give it this term of customer effort and that big disloyalty effect that customer service tends to have really does boil down to the level of customer effort that you force your customers to go through, the level of effort you make them go through to get their problems fixed. The takeaway here is that the real role for customer service in companies is not to try to create loyal customers by delighting them but rather to mitigate disloyalty, create fewer disloyal customers by making things easy for them. That's a real mind shift for heads of customer service. Just like Challenger is for heads of sales, it gives customer service leaders who've grown up in a world of delight and exceeding the expectations really celebrate, and it's rewarding, and it's steeped in the culture of every single call center in the world.

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You or I may beg to disagree based on our personal experiences with call centers. But believe it or not if you ever go to visit one you'd see bulletin boards with letters and emails from really excited and happy customers praising the rep for going above and beyond and going the extra mile and wowing them in the moment. When you look at it in its entirety what you find is again companies don't get paid back for that and really what they're doing in customer service is drilling that hole in the bottom of the loyalty bucket, and the book is really about how do you plug that hole and how do you stop letting your good loyalty kind of drain out the bottom through bad customer service interactions.

**Joe:** *I thought it was really interesting where you divided customer effort into two categories, and you talked about exertion and interpretation. What is the difference and what is the most important?*

**Matt:** When we talk to companies, it's very interesting because customer service is a scalable operation for big companies and so they're trying to think about what are the things that we can do to change the process of getting an issue solved? What are the technologies we can invest in to make it easier for customers to solve their issues? So once you tell a company, once you tell a head of customer service, "Hey, the key here is for you to make it easy, to mitigate disloyalty by lowering customer effort by making it easy for the customer." They say, "Great, I got a great list of things I can go do right away." But so many of those things come down to the do side of customer effort, the hoops we physically make our customers go through fixing policies and processes and technologies and operating systems and all these kinds of things.

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What we found in our study was two thirds of what accounts for the level of effort that a customer feels has nothing to do with the things they actually literally have to do, but they actually have to do more with what the customer feels about the interaction. That's actually the emotional component. It's not whether I had to endure a difficult process or "God I got transferred multiple times," or I had to call back or these kinds of things, but rather, "How did I feel during that interaction?"

The exciting news for heads of customer service is look; you can spend a lifetime trying to fix all the broken processes and invest in exactly the right technologies and truthfully you should still work on those things, but the big opportunity for you is teaching your frontline representatives to take control of the feel side, the emotional side of customer effort that it's the interpretation, not just the exertion.

We found is there are some really interesting studies and methodology that we use that best call center reps, and best companies are actually using specific language rooted in the principles of behavioral economics designed to get customers to be more willing to accept or more okay with what are otherwise not so great answers that they would get from the customer. Often times, it literally comes down to the words that come out of the reps mouth and how they position the solution and the resolution for the customer. It's something that call center leaders and customer service leaders can go do something about right away by simply scrubbing certain words out of the lexicon that their reps use and teaching them new techniques to actually get customers to be more okay with the answers we know we're going to have to give them anyway.

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**Joe:** I have to ask you this. It's kind of a loaded question here maybe but is the Net Promoter Score a useful tool to judge customer effort?

**Matt:** Well it's a great question. One of the things we really don't want to do and we try to steer clear of in our work, because one of the things that people actually really attach to in the new book in all the work we've done around this concept of customer effort is a metric we came up with which we call the Customer Effort Score. I think that's where you're going here. It's actually a question that we suggest all companies use to ask, "How easy did the company make it for you to get your issue resolved, to get your problem fixed?" It's a scale-based question, and we found it correlates very, very highly with customer loyalty and we've kind of positioned it to companies as a bit of a dividing rod. I mean wouldn't it be great to have a question in your survey – that survey we all are asked to fill out at the end of an interaction with the company – a question that you could ask that would tell you whether that customer is at risk of leaving or churning, or maybe just going onto the internet and saying bad things about you and telling all their family and friends about their horrible experience? Wouldn't it be great if you could tell that in advance? That's really what the Customer Effort Score is designed to do.

One of the things we really try to steer clear of is creating any kind of religious debate with adherence of other metrics out there designed to assess loyalty like Net Promoter Score. The thing about Net Promoter Score that we like is it's a great metric for assessing the overall customers' impression of the company and their loyalty to that company by measuring their advocacy – "How likely would you be to recommend this company?" But the problem with it from a customer service perspective is there's so much stuff scooped

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up in that question. When I ask you how likely would you be to recommend Apple or to recommend Verizon, or United Airlines, when I ask you that question, so much is factoring into your answer. You're thinking about the recent service interactions. You're thinking about the product and whether you like it or not and does what you need it to do. You're thinking about whether your friends or family also like that brand. You're thinking about whether it's cool to be associated with that brand. I mean there's so much noise that's scooped up there. And it doesn't really give a practical answer for the contact center leader, for the customer service leader that if they ask the customer, "How likely would you be to recommend?" at the end of a service interaction, the customer says, "You're likely or unlikely or somewhere in the middle." What do you go do as a customer service leader? What do you go do, as a result? How are you going to go fix your operations? How are you going to skill your reps differently? It doesn't give you actionable guidance in a transactional environment like customer service.

What we find is the Customer Effort Score that that question actually when paired with other sources of data that we know customer service leaders collect can lead to very powerful insights and next steps for people to go do something about it. What we try to do is say, "Look, if your CMO or your CEO is saying, 'Hey let's go measure Net Promoter Score,' there's no point fighting them on it. Don't make it a religious debate but see if you can get the Customer Effort Score also asked in your survey because it will give you more guidance about what you can go do to play in that loyalty game with the rest of the C-level executives." Product has a role to play; brand has a role to play, communications have a role to play, marketing etc. But you want to know "what's customer service's role?" and what we found in our research is customer service's role is to plug that hole in the loyalty

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bucket. The best way to find out if you got a hole in your loyalty bucket is to ask a Customer Effort Score question as a start to find out “Where is the effort coming from? What is driving it? What can we do about it to fix it?”

**Joe:** *Is there something that I didn't ask that you think that about one of the books the listeners would be interested in?*

**Matt:** I'll tell you Joe, the question I get asked so often being out on the road now presenting *The Effortless Experience*, I think so many people come back and will point to the counterpoints, or the counter instances out in nature or in the industry that suggests that maybe this isn't the right way to think about customer service. The one that comes up most often is actually Zappos, Tony Hsieh's book on the whole notion of powered by service. It really created a very strong brand around exceptional customer service. A lot of people come back and ask me, “Yes but doesn't the whole Zappos thing kind of disprove the argument that the real role is to make things easy?” Clearly they've created a lot of loyalty and a great brand, and they're all about delight. It's very interesting because when I ask companies I say, “First of all let me ask you, when was the last time you call Zappos and talked to one of their reps?” Most people will tell you, “I usually don't. I just order stuff online, and I like it.” I say, “Well what do you like about it?” They say, “Well they make it really easy. It's very simple. I can see exactly what I want. I can get a good sense of what's available, and the styles, the colors and the pricing and the reviews, and they pay for the shipping both ways. I can order a few pairs of shoes and the ones, I don't like, or that don't fit I can send them back. It's a piece of cake.” Then I say, “You hit right on the point. In fact, we'd say Zappos is maybe the poster child for *The Effortless Experience*.”

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They really honed this in that most people actually love Zappos not because you could spend nine hours on the phone with one of their call center reps or order a pizza through the Zappos call center, which again makes for a good press release and makes for a fun kind of human interest story. But the truth is like how often do any of us ever engage with them in that way? The thing that most people really love about them is how easy they make the shoe buying experience and the shoe returning experience. And that's really what it comes down to. We say absolutely do what they do but understand the difference between the kind of PR that they might put out and the press they get for some of the over-the-top service experiences and the real thing that drives most customers loyalty to Zappos which is the fact that they make it easy and they make it a pleasure to do business with them.

**Joe:** *I encourage anyone that hasn't read the book to take a look at it because it busts some myths about the effortless experience in customer service just as what the Challenger did. I thought it was a great piece of work again Matt.*

**Matt:** Oh, thank you Joe.

**Joe:** *What is the best way for someone to learn more and reach out and get more information about what you're doing?*

**Matt:** **W**e talked about Challenger and Effortless Experience. For Challenger, I would tell people two places to go and learn more about Challenger. One

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is thechallengersale.com which is our book website. There are some great tools and resources in the book that you can download there – challenger coaching guides and hiring guides and cool stuff like that plus lots of blogs and press out there around Challenger. There are some videos that you can check out as well – some with us, some with Neil Rackham and his views on Challenger, which are really fascinating. So check that out if you're interested in Challenger. The other one would be LinkedIn group, the Challenger Sale LinkedIn group which is a fantastic resource to engage with other companies and other sales leaders. You've got about 5,500 now, sales practitioners, sales leaders out there engaging actively in a discussion with multiple threads every single day, comments every single day about implementing a challenger approach within your sales force. They're very cool community of practitioners doing this stuff for a living.

For The Effortless Experience, check out that book's website – [effortless-experience.com](http://effortless-experience.com). There again are lots of tools, templates, etc. There is also a new LinkedIn group we just started for people, customer service leaders, heads of marketing, heads of operations who are really focused on reducing customer effort and making things easy for their customers. Check that LinkedIn group out, as well.

**Joe:** *Like I said, I thought you did a great job on both books. I look forward to your third book upcoming maybe if it is in the works yet. So again thanks Matt and this podcast will be available on the Business901 blog site and the Business901 iTunes store.*

**Matt:** Okay, thanks very much Joe.

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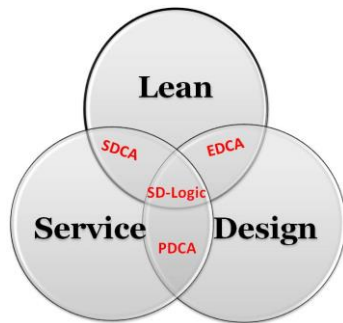
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Joe Dager is president of Business901, a firm specializing in bringing the continuous improvement process to the sales and marketing arena. He takes his process thinking of over thirty years in marketing within a wide variety of industries and applies it through Lean Marketing and Lean Service Design.

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