Successful companies are customer-focused

United learns the hard way what's important

As you no doubt have seen by now, United Airlines has been forced to make several changes in the wake of the customer abuse incident seen around the world (where a passenger was forcibly removed from a plane and injured in the process). United has now released a report that concludes it let company policies trump customer's rights, and is now making changes to focus on the customer. You can read more details in this Washington Post article: United dragging report: 'Our review shows that many things went wrong that day.' Also, today, United placed a full-page ad in the Washington Post (and I assume other large dailies) apologizing for its actions and outlining the policy changes.

It took very negative publicity and its consequences to make United realize that customers are the reason for being of any company. Without customers, a company simply does not exist. We know that companies that are more customer focused are also better regarded and therefore more successful. Southwest Airlines comes to mind.

UX is about your customers

All this brings me to UX (user experience) and how important it is. UX is being customer- focused when it comes to designing your website/app. If you don't consider UX when you design, you are not being customer-friendly. It's that simple.

Verizon FIOS On Demand versus Fandango Movies on Roku

Take the example of Verizon FIOS' On Demand screen versus Roku's Fandango Movies screen.

Verizon re-designed their On Demand screen a couple of months ago. They made fonts and images smaller, they crowded the images together and they changed the categories. Adding to that, the background is dark, making it hard to see the writing. To find out whether a movie is available for purchase or rental, you have to click on the title and only then will you be able to see what it costs.

Fandango has several categories on the left hand side of the screen, starting with “New movies to buy” and New movies to rent.” The background is a light color, the images are slightly bigger than Verizon’s, and easy to read. Just by scrolling through the titles you can see the price of the movie, its Rotten Tomatoes rating, its MPAA rating, and its length.

Fandango most definitely considered UX when designing its movie screen. It’s clear they thought about how customers search for movies, and what information (cost, time commitment, ratings) they need to make a decision. In contrast, the Verizon On Demand screen UX is plain horrible. It’s hard to search, hard to find the information you need, and in my opinion, it’s just ugly. Oh, and Fandango movie rentals cost less than Verizon’s.

Think about your customers, and it will pay off

In my case, I have been renting movies from Fandango and not from Verizon. I definitely find the Fandango interface easier to deal with. Additionally, I voiced my concerns to Verizon, and so far, they’ve made no changes. I don’t know if the redesign has affected sales, but I wouldn’t be surprised.

Your customers and their experience with your company/brand/organization has to be your first concern. If customers are mistreated, they simply will not come back. And in this age of social media, any negative publicity is amplified. Your customer’s bad experience can be shared over

and over.

Being customer-focused and thinking about their user experience will go a long a way in making any organization successful.