

Building a Culture of Customer Centricity with a Blended Leadership Training Program



Changing Industry, Changing Expectations

As the Wall Street Journal recently phrased it, “These are not easy times for utilities in Europe and the United States.”¹ Above all, changes in industry regulation, the appearance of new competitors and innovations, and changes in consumer culture have forced utilities companies to shift the way they interact with clients.

In response to these broader trends and in order to best appeal to rapidly changing consumer preferences, a Spanish utilities company started actively working on improving their customer experience. In 2014, they launched different small projects to evaluate and improve the way contact centers and operators interacted with customers. They realized, however, that this was truly a cultural transformation for the organization and the involvement of all the employees was critical as they changed from being process-oriented to customer-centric.

Launching a Cultural Transformation

In order to embark upon this cultural transformation, the organization partnered with BTS to develop and deploy two customer experience learning and execution journeys.

First, BTS designed a journey to align and build capabilities for the company’s 2,700 middle managers. This program involved a 1-day live classroom session, followed by 10-weeks of virtual learning journey. Simultaneously, the organization created an advocacy program through which 3% of all employees were named brand ambassadors and worked on promoting and advocating the company’s brand. Later that year, all 2,700 middle managers joined the advocacy program to also become brand ambassadors.

To take this transformation to the next level, the company again partnered with BTS to reinforce the customer experience program at the top management level, working with their 400 directors. This unique experience combined leadership, strategy execution, sales and innovation content. It was designed as a 1-day session that helped participants

“When we chose the strategic partner we wanted to work with, we chose BTS for two reasons. First, since our first meeting, BTS was extremely client-focused, and the emphasis on customer experience was already in their DNA. Second, we perceived from the first moment that they totally understood our specific context, needs and objectives.”



understand the fundamentals of the program and their role as top management in leading the cultural change. At the heart of the experience was a custom leadership scenario simulation that enabled participants to grapple with and practice how they should act when putting the customer in the center of what they do.

These two learning and execution journeys were designed to enable the following objectives:

- Promote and develop commitment to the cultural change by incorporating customer experience into the ways of working in the organization.
- Engage leaders as ambassadors of the company and its customer-centric culture.
- Use new tools, frameworks and great leadership practices to enable the new culture and put the customer (both internal and external) at the center of everything that they do.

Participants worked through the experiences in cross-functional teams, competing to become the team with the highest internal and external customer satisfaction and team engagement.

Blended Solution, Clear Results

The impact of the middle manager and director programs has been great. As a direct result of the experience:

- More than 1,750 improvement initiatives were defined individually by the participants
- 73% of middle managers reported being much more sensitive to their clients' needs
- 68% of the managers' direct reports say that their managers have helped them be much or very much more sensitive to clients' needs
- Customers are sensing the change, too – when rating the company, customer's NPS went up from -3% to 23% after the year of the first program, and up to 50% in the year of the second program.

Participants evaluated the program very highly, with feedback including:

“I appreciate these workshops, they have helped me a lot in managing my team, improving everybody's attitudes, I am more focused on my objectives and the way of doing things.”

“Mission accomplished. In these weeks we learned what the customer experience principles for our organization are and we started applying them within our scope of responsibility. We learned making decisions thinking always on the impact they may have in our customers and clients' satisfaction.”

“It is very useful to make us aware of the client importance and the application of the customer experience principles in our daily activities in order to improve the customer satisfaction.”

“Applying the learnings every day has helped me to keep in mind my internal and external client, and think before I act how my actions may impact them.”

As one member of the program steering committee said, “Results are excellent! Additional to a great increase in NPS (both external and internal), BTS helped build sensibility and excitement in our employees. This program is moving the company and group in a global scale. Employees are excited to do it better for the customer, and everybody (regardless of the area they are working on) is collaborating with other areas to improve their performance and attitude towards the customers.”

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