



Excellence is Whatever the Customer Says it is presented by Joe Hage, Leader, Medical Devices Group at IpX

Joe Hage: When I met Joe and Deanna back in April at one of my events, we became best friends and Deanna invited me to speak here and I said, “You’re making a mistake. I really don’t know anything about process excellence.”

She was like, “Oh. It’d be great.”

I’ll let you be the judge. [Laughter]

[Shows “failure video.”]

What do these all have in common?

Response #1: They’re funny.

Joe Hage: They are funny, but they’re all failures.

Let me introduce one for your reel. Why you would have me speak at this event is another great failure.

So, we’re recording this, and if it comes out that way, we’ll just add it to the reel.

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So as I told you, I really know nothing about process excellence. So I thought, “I’d better do some research.” What better place than your site?

I met this young man, and I started to imagine the possibilities. I read it very carefully, and I thought, “What does this mean?” And these are the words that stuck out to me – tools, people, processes, communicating and on.

So, my background comes from strategy marketing and customer experience. And after consulting with my 16-year-old last night, he said, “Dad, don't try to teach these people something you don't know. There are other people that do that. Just do your thing.”

And I'm very grateful for that. I started over again at 10 p.m. last night.

The point here is, from a customer standpoint, I read these words and I think, “I don't care!”

I don't mean to demean your fine audience.

I don't care how great your process is if I'm not satisfied.

Here is my coffeemaker. Now there is no coffee coming out of it. That's deliberate. But do you notice anything else there on the bottom?

That clean button, just like a 1980's VCR at midnight, has been blinking in my kitchen for nine months now.

[Laughter]

And I thought, “Beth, how do you clean this thing?”

She's like, “Joey, I don't know.” She takes care of everything domestic.

So I started to Google it, and these are just the first four results of “How to Clean a Ninja Coffeemaker.”

Does anyone have that particular brand?

[Someone in the audience raises his hand]

You and me, pal. Do you have the clean button blinking?

Response #2: Not yet.

Joe Hage: Yeah. Okay. [Laughter]

So, I went here and I learned this is Ninja Perfect Clean Technology. And I thought, “Will take 60 minutes to complete? I'm not doing *that*.”



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So my coffee pot has a clear light that has been blinking in my kitchen for nine months. I am not satisfied.

Now, the Ninja people may have great process excellence, operational this, hitting all their goals... I don't care. That really aggravates me.

Putting the customer first

What would I care about? I care about process excellence that is tied to putting the customer first. I'm sure many of you in this room do that, but the whole point of my conversation is, if it's not going to please your customer, well, dot, dot, dot.

Just that as a customer, I want to be happy. I've lead a group on LinkedIn called the Medical Devices Group for six and a half years. It grew to quite a size, and I'm a heavy LinkedIn user.

That's me at the bottom, and my virtual assistant, Kylie, on top, and a client of mine, Michele. We were doing a screen share and I was recording.

You know this is effing crazy. Now for even more clicks... This is just so fundamental to having some perceived business objective at odds with customer experience. They used to tell me, up until like last week, what Samantha Bailey was writing me about. At least the first five sentences. Now if I ever want to find out what the hell she said, I have to give them a page view.

That's not helping me any. It may be making some analyst somewhere happy, but I'm not happy. I'm happy a lot of the time, just not for those two reasons.

So my advice for you in the room, don't be that guy. [Chuckling.]

Everyone's looking at one way, and you're looking at the other way. And if that other way isn't toward your customer, I would say you're doing it wrong, with the caveat of I don't know why I'm here.

Show of hands, how many of you know who this man is? One. Wow. I thought this guy was internationally famous.

His name is Seth Godin, and he has written 20 plus books on marketing and permission marketing and customer experience and what it means to break through, and the like.

And, quick anecdote: If it weren't for his 1998 book, Permission Marketing, I might be in a different career.

I was able to read his book, memorized the good parts and regurgitated it in an interview, and I got a job because I was so smart. It was him.

So he gave this presentation that was worth your attention. I have two segments to share with you:

Seth Godin: One, fix a hole. Something's not working right. The power went out. The item broke. Somebody can't get to where they want to go.



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Number two, build a competitive advantage as we saw in the Zappos example. Zappos pays its call center operatives to stay on the phone longer than anybody else because that's a good reason to buy from them instead of a competitor.

And the third one is to actually transform the experience of what it is to buy the thing.

Joe Hage: So as you think about your operations in your companies, and you think about design and development and customer experience, how many of you would say, typically, your work is around fixing holes?

Okay. A shy few in the back. No one could see who you were except me.

How many of you would say you're consistently trying to build a competitive advantage to your competition? And the rest of you are either asleep or you're all transforming the experience in the industry.

[Laughter]

Who's transforming the experience?

Man, this is going as bad as I thought. [Laughter] I told you this was a mistake. [Laughter]

A Design Problem

Seth says we have a design problem, and I know my coffeemaker does.

Seth Godin: We have a design problem, and the design problem is the clock in my car doesn't know that it's Daylight Savings Time.

It's 2017. Why is it my job to figure out how to change the clock in my car? And the reason is simple. Because there are people who don't do what you do for a living, who make shortcuts in their work and then offload the problem to you.

And we've got to figure out how to get them to stop doing it. There's just all this stuff that people are putting into their work that is poorly made, poorly distributed, poorly organized, hasn't been thought through with how they made it, how they handled it, and we are the ones left holding the bag trying to support them. And so this feedback loop isn't in place.

Joe Hage: This was a presentation to an organization about call centers and manning customer service and the like. And his whole point is, you might end up borrowing this – give him credit, of course – without that feedback loop, without hearing what your customer service hosts are hearing as real complaints, there's a disconnect.

I found one graphic I was going to include, but Zachary said it was terrible so I took it out. And I really didn't know what it meant, most of it, but basically it said, "Start with design inputs and talk to people. And then build and iterate and such."



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And I thought, “That’s probably true, but I know when I worked as Director of Marketing Communications for a publicly traded medical device company 10 years ago, I don’t remember how many times the engineering team sat in the same room with the customer service team.”

Frankly, as the director of marketing communications, I can count how many times I sat in the same room with the customer service team. Even though I wanted to, there was a silo there, like, “what’s Joe doing here?”

I get that a lot.

So what Seth concludes is, if your product needs no service, that is good design. And if it does need service and you handled it, and I didn’t even know about it – you just uploaded a patch or whatever – that’s artificial intelligence in the background.

Or, take care of it and say, “Just so you know, we had a short outage last night. Lasted 15 minutes. We diagnosed it, you’re all set. You have no action.” Good.

But, if I have to call you and say, “What the hell, man?” You have failed.

And if you then put me on hold so that I can wait for the opportunity to tell you, “What the hell, man?” you have super failed.

Excellence is Whatever the Customer says it is.

Pressured to give a title for this rambling talk, I settled on “Excellence is Whatever the Customer Says it is.” Does everyone agree?

Audience: Yes.

Joe Hage: Applaud for me if you do.

[Applause]

That was for the camera. My mom’s going to be watching this later. [Laughter]

I had a really great customer experience a few weeks back. I was in the middle of it and I said, “Oh, this is great content. I have to record it.” So with the help of my video production assistant, Lucia, I present “Joe’s car broke down, and what it has to do with your medical device.”

Joe Hage: Okay. So my Lucas left my car light on all night. Now I think I have a dead battery. I began this process and it was so positive that I stopped so I could record it for you. What is the implication for your business?

Roadside Assistance: Press 1 now ... I have detected that you're calling from 9174 ... Is this a good number to call you back in case we get disconnected?

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Joe Hage: Yes.

Roadside Assistance: Thanks. If you need to call us back later, this number will be used as your reference number.

Joe Hage: That's convenient, my phone number. I can remember that.

Roadside Assistance: I see you are calling from a mobile phone. Let's use it to find your exact location and submit your roadside request.

Press 1 so I may send your smartphone a text link. Thanks.

In just a moment, you'll receive a text message.

Don't hang up. I'm going to walk you through the process to submit a roadside request.

Joe Hage: It's Beth, I'm not answering. Oh, I thought I wasn't ending.

I'm on the phone right now. Thank you.

Oh fuck!

And now we will start again.

Roadside Assistance: Select the link in the message received. To begin, select "Start Roadside Request" at the bottom of the page. Move the map to adjust the pin.

Joe Hage: It's asking to see my location, I say, "Okay."

So that was step one of seven.

Roadside Assistance: Choose the location type.

Joe Hage: I'm in my home garage.

Roadside Assistance: Choose a problem type.

Joe Hage: My choices – I have a dead battery, courtesy of Lucas.

I'm talking to Firestone. What is their address, you wonder? I'll have to look it up.

That's where I'm going. I'm going to continue.

Roadside Assistance: You're almost finished.

Joe Hage: I'm almost finished!



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This was such a great process that I was compelled to video record it for my subscribers [talking robotically]. That was seven of seven.

It is recapping where I am, what is my problem, what is my destination, what is my contact information, what is my policy number, and what is my car and color. Submit roadside request.

Roadside Assistance: Thank you. We've collected all of the information necessary to process your request.

Joe Hage: That was such a positive customer service experience.

I don't think I had it with any previous provider, and my challenge for you today is, what happens when your medical device breaks down? How simple is it?

It's probably a bit more complicated than this, but we've spent zero time thinking about it.

How can you automate it and use your mobile phone? That's your homework for this week. Thanks for watching.

[Applause]

Joe Hage: The addendum is, Lucas says it wasn't him who left the door open, that it was me, and we hadn't spoken in six weeks.

[Laughter]

Mike Myers as Linda Richman from Saturday Night Live: "This is so 'Prince of Tides.' The scene where Nick Nolte reconciles with Kate Mulligan. Now I'm getting verklempt!"

Madonna: "We're all verklempt!"

Mike: "I'm sorry. Talk amongst yourselves. I'll give you a topic..."

Joe's voiceover: "Do you include the customer in your operational excellence talks?"

Mike: "Discuss!"

[Laughter]

I thought of re-recording that because it was so out of Linda's character, but it was really late, and I came so close to missing my flight. Really, really close.

Still, the question is,

"How do you include the customer in your pursuit of operational process excellence?"



The banner features a blue background with several circular images of people in professional settings. On the left, the text '10x FOR SALES AND MARKETING' is displayed in white and red. On the right, a white text box contains the event description: 'The fun and educational event for medical device executives who focus on marketing, sales, sell, value analysis, reimbursement, distribution, and funding. Join us to laugh, learn, and network.' Below this, a blue button reads 'Jan. 28-30, 2019 | Orlando, FL' and a black button with white text says 'I'M SPEAKING!'.

This is the class participation part of the talk. I've got 8 and a half minutes. Deanna, is there a roving microphone?

Do I have a volunteer of someone with either a very good or a very bad opportunity to improve, way of including the customer in your pursuit of excellence that you could share with your fellow attendees? Anyone?

There in the back. Thank you.

Response #3: I didn't get to ask a question in the first session, so I'm just going to ask... [Laughter]

No, I'm just kidding. Talk to the customers. Just talk to them.

Joe Hage: Is that what you do?

Response #3: Yes.

Joe Hage: And what role do you serve in the company? Where do you work? Give us a little background.

Response #3: I work for Javelin Technologies. We're a partner with IpX, with Aras, and with SOLIDWORKS.

Joe Hage: So, you feel as though you won't have the blinking, cleaning light issue at your place? It's pretty seamless. They get involved, and it's a continuous loop.

Response #3: We still have that flashing light, but we try to avoid that at all possible costs.

Joe Hage: Fair enough. And Michael, I think you had a question as well. The gentleman up two tables. Or feedback.

Yes, you raised your hand before.

Response #4: So, maybe the first thing you need to do is ask about the needs of the customer to see how you can use them?

Joe Hage: Does your company do that effectively in your opinion?

Response #4: It could be improved, actually.

Joe Hage: How many of you in the room feel it could be improved?

Yes, I really think so.

So, I have my own story – a quick segue. I'm having an event in three weeks. I call it "10x for Engineers."



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It is for folks who design, develop, manufacture or commercialize medical devices. And I think if Joe Anderson catches up on his sleep, he might be there. I wanted to extend an offer to your team.

It's only three weeks away. You guys all have plans. You probably can't make it, but I'll make it interesting. If you can come, I'll waive the cost of all workshops. That's worth 700 bucks.

If you can make it, the code is ConX. The code will do absolutely nothing, by the way.

[Laughter]

But it will let me know that's how you got there.

And if you don't want to do the workshops, then you can use the code "JOESCREWEDUP." That's worth 300.

But, I bring that up for a few reasons. One, it's free publicity for me. Second, because I have a new partner. And I have my side and he has his. And that's regrettable, but it's a thing.

I wanted to see what his registration process was like. And on the assumption he's not going to watch this video, they never sent me a code. I was like, "So I could do this?" So I just said, "Ah, hell. I'll just register for it."

I got to the end, and it told me that it could resend my confirmation. I never got that confirmation. That was a bad experience.

And then on the bottom, it said, "Click here and I'll add it to your Outlook." So I clicked there, and it told me, "Yes, we'll set you up for that 5 a.m. meeting."

That wasn't so great, so I'm not immune from the systemic problem we have about making sure the customer experience is ideal.

We'll conclude with your vote. If this presentation sucked as bad as I think it did, you can vote for the devil guy. And if you thought I actually did better than I thought I did, you can vote for the angel guy and there is a video behind each. You will decide which video you will see.

So, for "Joe, you did pretty well," go ahead and clap.

[Applause]

And for those of you who are thinking, "Why did they invite this man?" let's hear some applause for that.

One man: Woo-Hoo!

[Laughter]



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The banner features a collage of images showing people at a networking event. The text is set against a blue background with a white and red logo on the left.

Joe Hage: I'm going to take that as 'I did good.'

So if you are watching, Mom, they said I did an okay job. So they're going to get the happy video.

[Video plays. Applause.]

That's one of my favorite movies from my childhood.

For this free bottle of Crown Royal I got from Alaska Airlines, who can tell me the name of the film, the name of the star, and the year?

In the back?

Response #5: Kurt Russell.

Joe Hage: Yes!

Response #5: The uh... the ...

Joe Hage: You're mumbling, man. I'm not giving you...

[Laughter]

Anyone else? He was so close.

Response #6: 1966!

Joe Hage: You are way off. Do we have another guess? Yes?

Response #7: Kurt Russell, 1978?

Joe Hage: 1976. The Strongest Man in the World. And you may all watch me enjoy my whiskey. Thank you.

[Laughter]



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