

E-Customer; Customers Just Got Faster and Smarter, Catch Up!

WAP will go out of fashion. Personal computers will become landfill site material. Interactive Digital Television will lose and then regain its sparkle. Technologies with wild, wacky, and unpronounceable names will arrive and depart unmourned. Each device will have frenzies and crises.

All these things and more will happen but in 50 years people will still be shopping; at least they will still have needs to be met through an exchange of value. This will remain a constant.

But the services must change. The stuff has to improve. The e-customer is evolving. His aspirations have been fed by years of science fiction and soap-style images of the rich and famous. He has been promised more. He is certain that a better everything is out there.

The only way to get the e-customer's cash is to create stuff that has value for him. You need to understand him. You need to get closer. You and your colleagues must learn to empathize, visualize and innovate on behalf of the e-customer.

That's why this book is not focused on presenting long structured case studies. In such material you only learn what your competitors want you to learn about their services. You don't think they would let you in on anything of real value do you?

Perhaps their success is not success at all. Perhaps it won't keep them alive, thriving, enjoying the benefits of growth. Perhaps they have only transferred their off-line products and services online in the most mindless, uncreative manner - with no value added for the hundreds of millions invested.

The focus here is about competing for the attention and spending power of the wired generation. You can't do that by just reading accounts of what others have done. A set of principles is needed so that you can create your own innovation - so that you can win the mind and wallet of the e-customer.

Technologists talk about 'best of breed' as the ideal mixture of components, collected from different manufacturers, in order to do a required job. The examples that are presented in this book may not be perfect. In fact they are not perfect. So look on them as springboards to your own innovations. If you can't improve on them and can only copy then you will only ever be in defensive mode anyway. Grab hold of them and ask how you can slot together enough of these best of breed approaches into one world beating e-customer inspired organization. Underline what you find useful. Make your own lists. Do your own work. Create your own differentiated benefit to the e-customer by opening up a dialogue with him.

