

From Process Excellence to Customer Excellence

06/04/2019
Mark McGregor

Why you need to change your North Star and quickly!

Whether your journey into process began with Industrial Engineering, Total Quality Management, Business Process Reengineering, Six Sigma, ISO9000, or more recently BPM, chances are that you will have struggled at times to get buy-in and credit for the great work you have done.

Process thinking always seems to be like the forgotten or mistreated child. All the glory is going to technology, automation, or other fashionable buzz words of the day. Which of course is kind of crazy, as process is really about how we actually get things done.

While challenges with management attention have been a significant problem, we as the process community have been, for the most part, our own worst enemy. The process community has been dense on methods and spent as much time arguing the religion of process methodology, as it has working out how to be more relevant to business leaders on an ongoing basis.

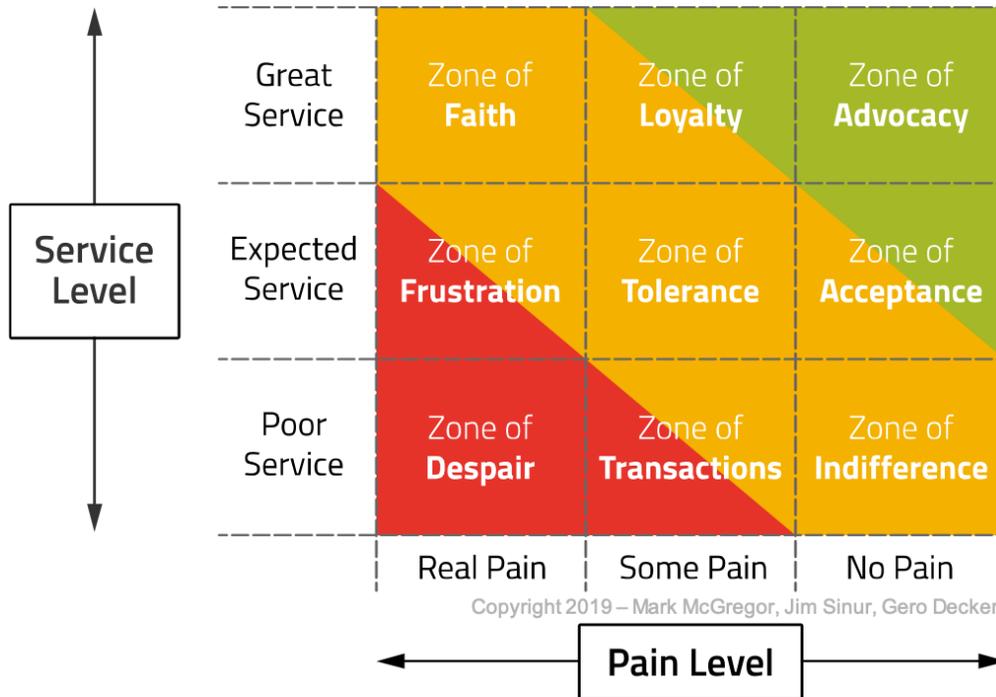
Now the process community is facing new opportunities and threats in equal measure. The danger is coming from Customer Service, Customer Experience, and other Customer xxx communities. For they are intensely business focused, aligned with the agenda of the business leadership, and grabbing the money and resources from traditional Operational Excellence programs. Their outside in approach is getting excellent traction and lots of attention. You can't even go to a public bathroom these days without being asked to rate your experience!

From an opportunity perspective, the rise of Robotic Process Automation (RPA) is once again reminding people that process is essential. Even if for the most part, organizations are still forgetting that it is better to understand and optimize before automating. There is also an opportunity attached the Customer Experience. Many of those CE or CX initiatives are likely to fail without help from process people like us.

Customers don't just want a single enjoyable experience. They want great experiences, delivered every time, through every channel, by everyone they encounter, whatever their request. They want the journeys by which they require service, or desire to leave an organization to be as smooth as the journey they went through in buying a product or service.

In other words, they don't want to be managed through Customer Experience. They want to be served via Customer Excellence. Customer Excellence can only be

delivered through excellent process management, combined with understanding customer needs, wants, Desires and the journeys they go through. In other words, Customer Experience and Process Management (Operational Excellence) have to be combined. As can be seen in the image below, process on its own can only help you move people from despair to indifference, and Customer Experience can only move them from despair to faith, only Customer Excellence can enable you to elevate them to the Zone of Advocacy.



The Zones of Customer Excellence

Success for the future will depend on your ability to deliver pain-free, excellent service all the time. While we would not claim it to be so, when you consider popular new businesses of the day, you could almost see how they might use the zones to identify a business opportunity.

Think about Dollar Shave, Lyft, Uber, Amazon, etc. and then think about what zones the customers of incumbent players might have put them in? Very few taxi companies would rate higher than tolerance or acceptance. Some retailers may have made it to Faith, Tolerance, or Acceptance, but few would earn advocacy or true loyalty.

Now whether you are an Uber fan or prefer Lyft, based on our experience, you are quite likely to be advocating for your chosen provider. If you were a customer of Dollar Shave or Harry's, you probably advocated for them. However, when did you last advocate for your bank, your insurance company or your car manufacturer, even our friends at Tesla are learning the hard way it's not the promise, but your ability to consistently deliver on the promise that creates advocates. In the Tesla example, it

appears that first time buyers are more likely to say nice things than customers who sought to renew or upgrade. Tesla may yet become one of the great business stories of the future, the one that says great ideas, great products, and exceptional service fall down without a significant focus on operational excellence.

The potential mistake of the coming years is to treat Customer Experience as an island, to think that it is easier to create a new group with all new ideas, tools, and techniques than to address current issues. It is true that in some organizations dogmatic process folks try to kill any initiative that does not fit their model of the world. However, many process groups have moved a long way in the past 10 years or so, and are more ready to adopt new ideas and thinking than some people give them credit for.

Those that can truly come from a process background and contribute to the new North Star of Customer Excellence are easy to spot. They appreciate the value of taking an outside-in approach. They understand that customers are people outside of organizations, whose spending habits decide whether we stay in business. They have become more tech-savvy and are interested in business-centric process automation. They are also more consultative in their approach, while not being mired in IT for IT sake type thinking that has killed so many programs.

It is the need to better connect customer experience with operational excellence that has driven Jim Sinur, Gero Decker, and myself to create what we call "Customer Excellence." This major new work will be unfolding through the course of this year. Our aim is simple, to provide you with easily accessible frameworks, tools and techniques, stories and examples that help you to help your organizations move away from chasing shooting stars and instead align on Customer Excellence as your organizations new North Star. The Zones of "Customer Excellence" shared here is just one example of a simple yet powerful technique to evaluate how you and your customers see your organization.

Click [HERE](#) for the chance to get your own free copy of the book "How to Deliver a Compelling Customer Excellence Program."

You can read more about our views on customer excellence by following the links below:

[Are You In the Zone for Success?](#)

[Gaining Advantage by Combining Journeys and Processes](#)

[Excellence Equals Everyone Engaged](#)

[Customer Excellence The New Business Imperative](#)

[Organizations Have to Deliver World Class Customer Excellence](#)

[Causing Your Customers Unnecessary Pain](#)

Author

Mark McGregor

A former Research Director at leading IT industry analysis firm Gartner, Mark has an extensive background in enterprise architecture, business process management, and change management, having held executive positions with many technology companies. Since retiring from Gartner he now works as an independent consultant with clients such as Changepoint, Erwin, Mega, Planview, Signavio, and LeanIX

Mark has authored or co-authored four books on business and process management, including "Thrive! How to Succeed in the Age of the Customer" and "In Search of BPM Excellence" and "People Centric Process Management. Widely respected for his knowledge and views on business change, he is the creator of "Next Practice" and has variously been described as a "BPM Guru", a "Thought Leader" and a "Master of Mindset"

Mark is passionate about the people aspects of change, he has spent much of the last fifteen years travelling the world, learning, teaching and researching the cultural aspects of change and how executives perceive business and process improvement. In this capacity he has literally taught hundreds of people and been fortunate to interview and interact with many CEO's

Mark holds certifications in Six Sigma, PRINCE2, Sales, Neuro-Linguistic Programming and Hypnosis! Mark suggests that it is the variety of his studies, which provide the depth he offers to his clients, in his words "It is the difference that makes the difference"

Connect with Mark via LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/in/markmcgregor>