

Episode 94: What are 'Moments of Truth'?

'Moments of Truth' was coined by Jan Carlzon who managed the Scandinavian SAS Airlines. This time we look at history, a definition and how to use them.



1. The History

SAS was looking at all the times that a customer forms an impression about them.

They examined their customers' trip from check-in to leaving at their destination.

Then they isolated which moments most influenced their views about the trip.

All moments were noted, even if it did not involve their own employees.

Looking across these interactions, they focused on the most impactful ones - these became known as the moments of truth.

Of course we do not have to wait for our customers to learn these lessons, we can do it ourselves.

Whenever you do not use your own product or service you risk not seeing this.

2. Definition of Moments of Truth

For Carlzon, these moments were when important brand impressions are formed.

That means there is an opportunity for good or bad impressions to be made.

In customer service terms: it's an instance of contact or interaction between a customer and a firm (through a product, sales force, or visit) that gives the customer an opportunity to form (or change) an impression about the firm.

3. How to use Moments of Truth

Before you can work on your MOT, you have to accept 3 key things:

- The customer is always right
- It doesn't matter what experience you think you promised
- It doesn't matter if it was someone else's fault

Often that means you need to work with people outside your team or org. If you can accept these, you can use the MOT.

Prioritize which moments are most important to the overall customer experience.

Next, work out if you have a positive or negative experience at that moment.

If it is positive, you can use it to differentiate your service and your offer.

If it is negative, you need to fix it or it will be used against you.

Implement the change and track to make sure it happens.

Finally, trace all the steps and see if the actions made a real difference.

Bottom line: We all know when we are getting good and bad service from others but we don't always put the effort into understanding our own business' Moments of Truth.