

THE COMBUSTION CHRONICLES

**EPISODE SIXTY
PUTTING PEOPLE OVER PROFITS**

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GUESTS: DIANE MAGERS, STACY SHERMAN,
& JEANNIE WALTERS**

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Shawn: Welcome to the fifth season of *The Combustion Chronicles* podcast, where bold leaders combine with big ideas to make life better for all of us. I'm your host, Shawn Nason, CEO and founder of MOFI. In these episodes, we'll be exploring the power, influence, and importance of Experience Ecosystems™. To do that, we're bringing together the most unique and influential experience experts in the world for honest conversations about not being okay with the status quo, leading with heart, and getting real about heartsets and mindsets. In case you're wondering, an Experience Ecosystem is the web of people, touchpoints, and interactions that combine to create all of the positive and negative experiences we have in the world. When an organization wants to improve customer experience, they're wasting their time if they're not willing to engage and humanize their entire Experience Ecosystem. It's time to blow up some silos and ignite an experience revolution by putting people first.

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Shawn: On this episode, we're looking at the importance of people in Experience Ecosystems. In the world of business, it's all too easy to put profits over people and turn relationships into meaningless transactions. How might we flip the script and focus on humanizing business interactions by creating experiences that create significant revenue? To get the conversation started, we have Diane Magers. Diane is the Founder and Chief Experience Officer at Experience Catalysts in Dallas, Texas. Previously, she led customer and associate engagement along with innovation at Cisco and AT&T's office of the customer. Welcome to *The Combustion Chronicles*, Diane.

Diane: It's a pleasure to be here. Thank you so much, Shawn.

Shawn: Absolutely. Diane, let's talk a bit about the practice of experience design and you have a lot of knowledge around this. So good experience design is a little bit of detective work where we gather customer intelligence to understand the why behind behavior. And so you were a practicing clinical psychologist before getting into experience design. What is it about understanding the human and emotional elements of business that are so vital to creating good experiences?

Diane: It's so interesting to me that we don't pay attention to our own behaviors. So I'll talk about a clinical approach here. When you think about... And I ask you to think about your own experiences that you have, whether you were shopping online or you went to get your car repaired, or you went to a restaurant, when we have experiences, they are attached to an emotion, whether it's, "Hey, I really liked my meal. I had a great time there," or, "I got super frustrated at my auto dealer. I thought he was trying

to rip me off. I'm never going to go back there." And those emotions are really what drives our behavior. As a matter of fact, only about 15% of our behavior is based on rational thought. So it's really those emotions that drive behavior and so when any executive ask me what emotions have to do with experience, I have been telling a story and then I connect the dots for them that everything a brand does, from how you hire people to what you do, drives how people feel. Every interaction has an emotion tied to it even if it's a, "meh" emotion. And then those emotions drive our behavior and when we change our behavior, it drives business results.

Shawn: You've also recently been doing a lot of advising and coaching with passionate experience leaders. What do they need the most help with and what tools do they use for that?

Diane: It's ironic that the two things that I developed the muscle on because I had to because it was a gap for me when I started was being able to tell the business case financial impact both for the company and for the customer. Now, I think what happens is we focus on metrics and, you know, they're great, Net Promoter Score, effort score, all great, but that's not the language that our executives are using. And so I really want to make sure that the folks who I run into are talking about the metrics and they're talking about experiences, but they're not connected in values. So that's the first. And the second is this topic that we're passionate about in the design because I see a lot of people who are identifying things that need to be fixed even if they're proactive and they just go create something to replace that. But they don't spend time really thinking about what you and I talked about, the emotions they're creating, really designing the experience, finding the right problems to solve. And so all of those things come together. So those are really the two avenues ironically, at left and right brain, of opportunity that people really struggle with.

Shawn: I want to talk a bit, Diane, around designing for an ecosystem. Good storytelling is really experience design and so the best stories wrap you in that moment or a feeling that we've talked about and stick with you. So, when you are designing experiences, how do you think about how that story will unfold across different parts of a product or service journey in that ecosystem?

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Diane: I like to think about it if anybody is a *Star Trek* fan out there, do you remember this three-dimensional chessboard that they had on the...? That to me is what it is. When you think about ecosystem, people get a little taken aback by, "Oh, my gosh, that's so complex." And your point about starting the storytelling for me is using

stories of what a customer intends to do with your organization and the what-if scenarios that come after that. So intention and looking for all of the opportunities. And there's plenty of different design techniques, but I love the what-if. I love what, why, how laddering. I love all those techniques that allow me to really use stories in a way that take us down paths we might not have thought of yet.

Shawn: You alluded to this a minute ago, and I want to come back on this that we actually need to convert our language from CX speak. But in particular, we've got to convert that CX speak to the C-suite speak. And I really do love that. Why is that critical for success?

Diane: I don't know why it is that we as experience professionals think that we can go into asking for money to go fix something without talking about the ROI. I mean, I don't know anybody else in an organization who doesn't have to walk in with that hard-dollar business case. That's the first thing. The second piece is that I think that every executive will nod that yes, they understand the net promoter score and effort score are important, and you can correlate that to revenue. Obviously, there's a huge impact to that, but I think there's a whole other side of the story. So I'll date myself again and say, Paul Harvey, who used to tell the other side of the story, the rest of the story, he said, is really talking about the projects that you're working on, the impact it's having not only to the customer and creating value for them, saving time, all the things that really drive those scores, but also the value it creates in an organization. So if you think about things that you do that increase productivity for your organization or that gives salespeople back time with their customers to do more selling or golfing or whatever it is, if you're really looking for all of the benefits that the changes we make as experience professionals really touch and think about this as added business value, you're going to be able to walk in and tell them, not only that we increased NPS or we engaged these customers or our advocacy went up, but I know that people, for example, that have high advocacy or which was reflected in Net Promoter, also have a lower cost of acquisition. People who come in through referrals spend more, they stay longer, and they refer more, which all ties to dollars. And so if you're not talking that CX C-suite speak of revenue and cost which is what they spend time talking about, you're going to be looking at, I would say after about 16, 18 months of being a cost center, you start to convert what you do into an impact and growth engine for the organization. And that's the story you should be telling.

Shawn: We have talked a lot about what I think is one of your favorite metrics is ROX, return on experience. How do you define it and how do you use it?

Diane: What I love to tell people is and they look at me and say, you know, “The customer experience, that's kind of a nice to have.” You know, I've heard a lot of executives say that. “I think we do that already.” And what I really want to talk to them about is the fact that experience professionals because we're able to helicopter up, because we collaborate and become that mortar between the bricks, we get these additive business value cases, meaning not only am I fixing something in the sales team, but I'm also having them work with marketing. And I'm thinking about what happens if they call the care center to get support around something the salesperson told them or how they go to the digital channel and use that after they talk to the salesperson. So by doing that, we're talking about changing that behavior, back to our first conversation, changing that behavior and the emotions to really drive that change of behavior. And if that's not return on experience meaning, I would now change the behavior to be more engaging for the customer, they're going to spend more, they're going to stay longer and refer us more, that's return on experience. Creating those experiences that are more holistic, that are targeted toward engaging and providing value back to the customer, that to me is return on experience, both what the company gets and what the customer gets.

Shawn: Yeah, I challenge us as an industry to dig in and really put ROX on the map. And, you know, you've talked some about consumer effort score and all of that. I think as an industry, we have really failed that side of the speak to the business because we haven't put a stake in the ground. So I love this stuff. So thank you again for sharing that.

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Diane: My pleasure.

Shawn: So Diane, you've spent three years as the CEO of the Customer Experience Professionals Association. Can you share what meaningful relationships you made as part of that experience that influence how you approach experience design today? Because we at MOFI, we're all about radical relationships. We love relationships.

Diane: I was truly blessed and I mean that in all sense of the word that I was able to have the opportunity to meet, I would say, literally thousands of practitioners, and I would say that in that grander scope to say that the sense of community that we've created as an association and as a profession has provided support, safety net, intelligence, knowledge, friendships, long-term relationships that you just can't find in any other profession. I would also say that there is a small group of people who I have connected with that because all of us in this profession tend to have the same

personality type, we're big thinkers, we connect the dots, we're obviously very human-centric that those few people that I've connected with, literally I've known them for probably 10 years from the very first CXPA event because there is no other way to connect with people. There's more now, but there wasn't a way back then. And some of those people that I've worked as consultant alongside of them, some that we have just, we call each other and check in to see how things are going, and where you're headed. That deep engagement and understanding and watching somebody develop in supporting them and championing them have been just a blast for me to be able to have those kinds of relationships professionally, ones that last beyond working together because most of the time your relationships at work are all about the people you're around and you're close to. I have to do to reach out to them. I want to do to reach out to them and same. So it's a volunteer connection that works and it's people doing the same thing and supporting each other.

Shawn: Well, Diane, we just released a book this year called, *Kiss Your Dragons*, and we talked about the concept of a swarm. And a swarm is very different than what I call your tribe. A swarm is those people that you're talking about, it's passed that professional relationship. It's your friends. You're there for each other. So thank you. But it has come to that time in this episode where we do the Combustion Questions, and these are two questions we're going to ask you, Diane, that are randomly selected questions. I don't know them and you don't know them. So that's what makes it fun. Just have fun with them and say what comes to your mind. So, Diane, are you ready for your first Combustion Question?

Diane: Yeah. The first thing that comes to my mind, you can put a warning label on this because who knows what that's going to be. Okay.

Shawn: So would you rather your only mode of transportation be a donkey, giraffe, or elephant?

Diane: A giraffe.

Shawn: And why?

Diane: Because I think they are eloquent. I think they're unique. I believe that their view of the world is a different perspective and I think it would be cool to see that. And I think about if I had the druthers I couldn't ride on their neck, but my whole thought about that is they do see the world differently and there's something about me when I've always kind of felt on the edge. Like, I might be only one that really thinks this way? And finding my tribe, that perspective that we bring, I just think that that would be my spirit animal.

Shawn: All right, Combustion Question number two. What do you wish grew on trees?

Diane: Other than money?

Shawn: Other than money.

Diane: Well, that's my answer. No, I'm kidding. I think those people we just talked about. I wish those people grew on trees. I wish there were more people that could get right to the heart of a conversation, you know, from the moment you sit down and we all have friends like that. I wish those grow on trees, but the second half of that is I kinda wish they didn't because they're so unique and they're so special in our lives. I want to be able to appreciate them. So if there were too many of them, it wouldn't be special.

Shawn: Thank you for being here on, *The Combustion Chronicles* with us and we look forward to talking to you again.

Diane: Okay. Thank you so much. It was a pleasure.

[00:14:26]

Shawn: Let's continue our conversation about humanizing business interactions with our next guest, Stacy Sherman. Stacy is an award-winning keynote speaker, author, mentor, and podcaster about doing customer experience right. She's created a heart and science framework that accelerates customer loyalty, referrals, and revenue, which you can learn about at doingcxright.com. Welcome to *The Combustion Chronicles*, Stacy.

Stacy: Thank you so much for having me.

Shawn: Stacy, I am so excited. I met you virtually. But you've created this amazing framework that you've developed at DoingCXRight. And I love that you focused on the connection between employee experience and customer experience. Can you just give our listeners a quick overview of the framework and why it's been so successful for you and for so many others?

Stacy: Yes, I believe that in order for businesses to succeed, it's not just about process. It's not just about price. It's about people. People buy from people. And it's the people that work at the companies that make the experiences happen. And so, I believe, that the best way to keep customers, have them want to refer and provide more revenue to the business is by intentional design of the customer experience. And it is about a journey that needs to be designed and validated with real customers from the outside-

in perspective, and how we treat our employees has so much to do with the success of all of that. So, that's the highest level I can explain, but they're very connected.

Shawn: If there's such a strong and obvious connection that both you and I see in this between employee experience and customer experience, then why in your opinion, do so many companies choose to separate the two and look at them as silos?

Stacy: Habit and lack of real understanding of what customer experience means, and that it's fueled by employees because if they really understood it, then they would operate differently. And I think that people like me and my peers have the chance to create this movement of change. And I go around my workplace, I have a corporate job, and I go around my workplace, and I say to everyone, "You have a CX job, whether you realize it or not." And they say... The back-office folks are like, "Well, no I don't. It's the salespeople, the frontline." I said, "No, you do too" because if a customer has pain points in paying their bill, for example, e-pay kind of portal, then the finance people are involved and have to own that experience as part of the journey. So, bottom line is that everybody owns CX, everybody has it in part of their job, even if it's not in their title, and we have a chance to help drive that movement so it changes.

Shawn: What specific advice do you have then for leaders who want to start shifting their organization's culture towards creating better experiences for both their employees and customers?

Stacy: So first, adopt the philosophy that there is no cookie-cutter approach. You have to personalize every interaction because you're dealing with people and people have different needs and wants. So as a leader, you need to know what that is for every person, whether they work for you, whether they're a colleague, whether they're a boss, whether they're a customer buying from you. And it's about relationships and it's about meeting those needs based on what they need, what they want, not what I want. It's simple. It's about getting the basics right.

Shawn: So, you call your framework, heart and science. Say more to me about the heart piece of that when you're talking about that because I think for leaders, when you say, you know, you can't use this cookie-cutter approach, you have to personalize every interaction, they think, "Oh, my gosh, how do I do that? There's no way possible." What does that mean to you when you're talking about heart and science?

Stacy: Yes, by the way, one caveat to what you just said, I do believe technology is essential to scale what we do. But often, companies lean on technology and automation and disregard the human element. So there's got to be very clear consciousness to use technology to enhance experiences, not replace the human

elements. With that said, the heart and science is about really understanding when you're designing a customer experience from how they learn about your products, how they buy. Is it e-commerce? Is it a salesperson? Is it some other method, how they learn, buy, get your product, use it, pay, and get help, which we know is customer service.

All those points need to be designed with the customer at the table, understanding what they want, what meets their expectations. And where the heart comes in is that once you design it and you launch the product, the feature, the service, whatever that is, you have to then continue to get that feedback, the voice of the customer, and you have to ask questions that are not just checking a box, "Are you satisfied?" Or Net Promoter Score. "Will you recommend?" No, you have to get to the sentiments. You have to get to the metrics that really understand how people think and feel. And that's where you combine the methodology, but also the heart.

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Shawn: It is so much about putting people first. So, as a result of this COVID-19 pandemic, it seems that we hear the word empathy all the time now, to the point that it's almost become watered down a bit. But when you talk about leading with empathy, what exactly do you mean and what can we do to make empathy a long-term norm instead of just another buzzword through this pandemic and it's going to get lost? Because I believe empathy is so important.

Stacy: Yes, and it has to continue. That could be the good out of the bad of COVID. So, here's an example. Almost every company I know does surveys. And many times, they'll do phone surveys, for example. Well, rather than read from a script and ask customers, literally one by one by one, almost robotic, they have a chance to really listen. And when the customer is unhappy, probe deeper into what it means, how they feel, almost like a therapist. Really listen, and then have the conversations in an empathetic way, not just go from one question to the next question to the next question. And I know that customers appreciate that. And that can turn them around, just even be able to vent their frustration can change their perception.

At the beginning of COVID, we did what's called peace-of-mind calls. And we called customers and said, "Listen, we're the customer experience team, we really care how you are and wanted you to know we're here. We're open and we want to know how you're doing" instead of the traditional kind of calls we were doing. And guess what? Customers remember that when any bad situation happens, people remember. So that's just one example where it's empathy in action.

Shawn: Peace-of-mind calls, brilliant. I want to shift just for a moment and talk about all the effects of business results. What's an example of companies using your heart and science framework to achieve actual business results?

Stacy: There's a company, I don't know if they're international but in USA, there's a company, Trader Joe's. And not only I'm a consumer there, but I interviewed some people from the inside that work there. They are doing CX right exponentially. And I'll tell you why. So, from the moment I walk into that store, it's a grocery store... Do you know it? Are you familiar?

Shawn: Oh, yeah. I love Trader Joe's.

Stacy: Okay. All right. So right when I walk in the store, people say, "hello." I mean, imagine that. Hello. I mean, hello.

Shawn: That's a hard one. That's a hard one, though, Stacy.

Stacy: I mean, I said get the basics right but, like, here, there's, like, this is a no-duh best practice. So they say hello and you feel welcomed. Now, they go up and beyond wow moments. So, for example, I am looking for a particular product, while other places will point in a direction to some aisle on where I can find this product. But at Trader Joe's, any employee will hear me and walk me to the aisle and then open the product for me to taste it. And I said, "Well, wait, no, no, you don't have to waste on me." Like, "No, we want you to be happy with what you buy."

And I'm, like, "Okay, well, thank you." So then there's so much more in between, then I go to checkout. So, they're talking to me. They're sharing recipes and things that I could do with the products that I just bought or that I'm buying. The other day it was raining. The woman at the register had an umbrella. She said, "Let me walk you to your car. I see it's raining." I mean, this is not her job.

So I can go on and on. The last thing I will say, that's brilliant, is that there are communities online, especially on Facebook, who are Trader Joe's communities. The company didn't create it. The buyers created and share how much they loved the products. It's more than price. So, that's a company doing it right. And they asked me for feedback, so they're clearly measuring it too. And when I talk to an employee who worked there, it is the real deal.

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Shawn: I love what you said, people are paying for it. It's not about the price. But I also know that if an item there will cost 50 cents more than someplace else, I'll pay the 50

cents more at Trader Joe's. You know, I live in Cincinnati. We have a place called Jungle Jim's. Same concept. I will go there and pay more for that product because I get treated like a human and with respect. And I'm not just a thing to them.

So, I so appreciate that. Well we do this part in the segment called the Combustion Questions, Stacy. And they're two random questions that you have not seen and I actually just got them myself. So are you ready for your Combustion Questions?

Stacy: I'm always ready.

Shawn: Awesome. So, Combustion Question number one is, if you could design a planet, what would your perfect planet look like?

Stacy: Wow. It would be a place where people keep it real. Everyone has each other's back, a place where people care to help each other and realize there's plenty of room at the top. And through that, it would be very comfortable, where we all can be ourselves, show up as ourselves, feel confident, and there'd be a lot less turmoil and pain points. And that's the place I want to be and help create.

Shawn: Beautifully said. Combustion Question number two, dine in or delivery?

Stacy: It depends on the mood I'm in. I would say dine in. Because when I dine in, if it's the right place, it could be relaxing, calming, and enjoyable, and most of the workdays are not that.

Shawn: Yeah. I think I liked your first part of it, too. It just depends on mood. Stacy, thanks so much.

Stacy: Thank you

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Shawn: As we round out this episode on humanizing business interactions and prioritizing people over profits, we're joined by our final guest, Jeannie Walters. For more than 20 years, Jeannie has been dedicated to creating meaningful moments and real results. As the founder and chief experience officer of Experience Investigators, she has helped organizations create fewer ruined days for customers. She is a TEDx speaker, a founding member of CXPA, co-host of the top-rated *Crack the Customer Code* podcast, and a four-time LinkedIn learning instructor whose courses have been watched by more than 200,000 online learners. Welcome to *The Combustion Chronicles*, Jeannie.

Jeannie: Thank you so much. I'm thrilled to be here.

Shawn: Jeannie, as you're focused on creating fewer ruined days for customers. Where did this focus come from and how can it make a difference in the world?

Jeannie: Yeah, thanks for asking. I love talking about this because it really is about making a better world. And I think that's true for anybody listening to this, anybody who's in customer experience, that's what we're all trying to do in our own way. And that came up for me because when I started this company in 2009, somebody I'm close to, a friend of mine, she basically challenged me and she said, "Of all the things in the world to be passionate about, why are you so passionate about this?" And when I really thought about it, I realized that if we are just helping somebody through their day in a way with less friction, with less effort on their part, with less frustration, then they're going to have less negativity in their day. And they're not going to bring that negativity with them to their next interaction. They're not going to bring that home. And so I really believe that every moment matters. And if we do this well, if we deliver for our customers with proactive, intentional positive customer experiences, then we're going to ruin fewer days. And that means that there's less negativity in the world. And I think that's an incredible thing for all of us to be dedicated to.

Shawn: Well, I love it and I love your passion around it, but let's be honest here. You and I work in this industry and customer experience work is hard. And honestly, some days I think, "Why do they have so many of us working in this space? Why is it so difficult for organizations to get this right?" So what keeps you going in your work to create fewer ruined days for customers?

Jeannie: Yeah, I think you're right. I think we often set up our organizations in ways that make this more difficult than we realize. And that starts with the top. And what I mean by that is it starts with not just the leaders, of course, who need to understand that customer experience is a real thing. It's a business discipline. It's a strategy. It takes rigor. It takes effort just like every other thing in business. So we can't treat it like it's a nice-to-have or it's just something you sprinkle on top of a business plan. This is something that is part of how you do business. So it has to start there. But the other part of that is we have to give people the right tools. And one of those things is understanding what is our customer experience mission? Who are we to our customers? How can we show up consistently to our customers? If we don't give people those tools, then we're really setting them up not to succeed and not to succeed on behalf of our customers. And that's what makes it so hard. So we have to start defining things in the same way that we define sales goals or revenue goals, or when we talk about our vision and values for the corporation. We have to start defining all of that for our customer experience from the inside out so that our people are empowered to do the right things.

Shawn: Well, Jeannie, I love that and I love your... similar to our philosophy at MOFI, that it's an ecosystem, that it has to be part of a strategy. One of our dear friends, Sean Slovinski, talks about, that if you're a CEO and experience isn't in your top three priorities in an organization, you're missing it. And that's what I'm hearing from you. That's why it is so important to me. And you talked a little bit about, you know, mission and values and this being part of the strategy, I really would like us to go a little bit deeper with that. And why is that so important for companies then to find people who believe in those missions and people who will follow those, what we call the North Star or the Experience Promise, why is that so important?

Jeannie: Yeah. You hit it on the head. I mean, we need to find people who not only understand what that mission is... It's got different names, right? I call it a customer experience mission statement. But when we talk about that north star, we're really talking about how are we promising that we will show up for our customers. It has nothing to do with products or services, right? It's all about who you are and who they are and who you are to them. And so if we can make sure that we have defined that in a way that makes sense, then we can start hiring to it. We can start writing job descriptions to it. We can start evaluating employee performance based on that. And that's what really moves things forward to get closer and closer to that ultimate vision that we want. But the flip side of that is we can't forget that we are doing this to stay in business, right?

Like, we can't just sprinkle fairy dust on top and say, well, our mission is to create an excellent customer experience because then in a year, somebody's going to look around and say, "Well, I don't know, did that really work? Who knows? I guess it doesn't work." So then they'll get rid of the CX team. And I hate to laugh about that because that actually happens. If we define it in a way where we say this is our mission and we say the same thing, Shawn, it's the North Star. And then you break that down you say, let's define what this looks like. What does success look like here for not just our customers, but for our organization? How will we measure that? How do we know if we're making progress? And then that's something you can refine. You can make it, you know, what happens in one year? What happens in three years? What happens in five years? And just like every other OKR, or KPI, or any other acronym that you want to use here, you have something that everybody in the organization can look at and think, "Okay, I get it." If we do customer experience well, then we all win as leaders of this organization. So I'm going to be personally invested in this even if CX is not in my title. So it all fits together.

Shawn: You're preaching to the choir. We preach the same thing at MOFI, but I just always struggle with why senior leaders still struggle with it. When I worked for Walt

Disney Company, it was so clear. It was so clear in the leadership there. I was privileged to be there during the Lee Cockerell and Dan Cockerell days, and it just comes through. And listen, you and I wouldn't be in the business we're in today if every leader understood it. It gets so frustrating to me some days.

Jeannie: Yep. I think it's frustrating to a lot of leaders because when you get it, it seems so obvious, right? And you were lucky to work at a place that literally originated the idea of customer experience, but most organizations are retrofitting it in. And that's what makes it so hard. They haven't thought about it and they're trying to shove it into their business practices.

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Shawn: I love that. Most organizations are trying to retrofit it, right? It's not part of their DNA. So let's even flip this on because, I love to talk about heart and business, Jeannie. And since this episode is about humanizing business interactions as we've been talking about, I want to talk to you about something you said in one of your talks for some leaders. You said that we don't spend enough time walking in our customers' shoes. And first off, I'm going to say hallelujah to that because I totally agree with you, but why is it important to walk in customer's shoes and why is it a challenge for some companies, and what would happen if more companies would just do it?

Jeannie: Yeah. This is one of those things that sound so simple, right? And then when you actually break it down, it's pretty complex because the other part of that statement is usually when I explain that we only have our one lens. So if we're in the trenches, if we have major responsibilities in our role, if we have accountabilities, if we know that there are deadlines, that has to be our focus. And most of us, you might be the exception, maybe some listeners out there are the exception, but most of us don't have enough time in the day. We have way too much going on. And so if we are basically held to the goals of an organization that are not aligned with CX as a priority, then it's really easy to slip further and further away from the actual experience that our customer's having.

And that's why making sure that you're looking at customer experience management and thinking about it as this intentional way to apply business strategy and discipline and rigor, that's what helps because otherwise, we just get further and further away. And ironically, usually the higher up you go in an org chart, the further away you are from customers. And so it's very easy to think that things are going well because your process map looks like it's going well. Because you aren't getting reports of all the complaints coming in, you're just looking at dashboards that tell you something like an

NPS, net promoter score, and you go, oh, look at that? It went up, it went down, but we don't have a lot of context to it. And so the human story part of it is so important because otherwise we just get further and further away from the reality of what's actually happening, and it's really hard to walk in our customers' shoes when we're that far away.

Shawn: This whole season has been amazing people like you just about preaching the same things. I want to drill down a little bit into some business results of what happens when companies actually focus on this Experience Ecosystem, focus on customer experience. What is one of your favorite ways for companies to measure success when it comes to CX or experience in general?

Jeannie: Yeah. This comes down to really defining success within your organization based on your organizational goals first. So if your organizational goals are to increase, you know, market share, or basically many, many times an organizational goal is actually about acquiring more customers. So let's take that. Let's say we want more customers. Then you want to look at your leadership and you want to start speaking their language. And so one of the best ways to do that is to think about if we do customer experience well, what happens? Well, we get more word-of-mouth referrals. We get more renewals. We get lower service costs. So when we talk to our CFO, our chief financial officer, we might say, if we do this well, then we will drop service costs. That's going to be music to their ears. If we do this well, chief revenue officer who cares about sales, we will help you with those sales goals by improving word-of-mouth marketing referrals and retention rates.

So you break it down in that way because honestly, there is not one area of the organization that does not benefit from improved customer experience, including the employee experience. And right now with what's happening in the employee marketplace, labor shortages and all...you know, it's kind of crazy right now to keep and retain talent. So that's a great argument. If we can improve customer experience and have a better employee experience, which is part of it, then we're actually able to retain more talent and actually become an employer of choice. So you can look at any part of the organization and make a case for this, but you have to know how to measure it in terms that your leaders appreciate and then actually support those overall organizational goals.

Shawn: Thank you so much for your nuggets. But it has come to that point in our episode where we do our Combustion Questions. And these are randomly selected questions that I was just given. So I just read them for the first time and you've not even heard of them.

Jeannie: I have not.

Shawn: So are you ready for your Combustion Questions, Jeannie?

Jeannie: I guess I am. I guess we'll find out.

Shawn: Awesome. Well, Combustion Question number one. What's your favorite board game?

Jeannie: Oh, my favorite board game. I don't know if it qualifies a board game, but I've been into a lot of card games lately. I've played Euchre a lot because I'm Midwestern and we do that here, but the other one that has been fun with my family is Exploding Kittens. That one's a fun one.

Shawn: Exploding Kittens, I love that one. Yes. Yes. And no animals were harmed in the making of this episode.

Jeannie: That's right. That's right. Thank you for that disclaimer.

Shawn: All right. Combustion Question number two. What do you think about coffee shops?

Jeannie: Coffee shops, like...

Shawn: Yes.

Jeannie: Okay. I don't frequent them as much as I used to. I will say that. But I think they're great. I think that, you know, Starbucks kind of famously said it's the third place. It's not work. It's not home. It's the third place. And I think there's a place for that. And I really appreciate the independent ones and the ones that feel like they're part of the community, it's a great way to explore if you're traveling to a new place.

Shawn: I love it. Well, again, thank you so much.

Jeannie: Thanks for doing the work you do, everybody, because we need everybody in this and it really does take a village and I'm happy to be a part of it. So thank you, Shawn.

Shawn: Thank you so much for listening to this episode of *The Combustion Chronicles*. Let's keep the conversation going by connecting on LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook.

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Be sure to check out my book, *Kiss Your Dragons: Radical Relationships, Bold Heartsets, and Changing the World*, available now at Amazon. Then head over to ShawnNason.com to engage resources, a discussion guide, and information about everything from self-paced training to personal coaching.

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