

Advance Preview
Not for Sale

“Practical, tactical and hands on, this book will push you to initiate the customer interactions you should have been doing all along.”

–**Seth Godin**, Author, *Poke the Box*

THE
AMAZEMENT
REVOLUTION



Seven Customer Service Strategies to Create
an Amazing Customer (and Employee) Experience

SHEP HYKEN

Wall Street Journal Bestselling author of *The Cult of the Customer*

THE AMAZEMENT REVOLUTION

Dear Friend,

I am so excited to give you this sneak preview of my newest book. Even though this is just a little more than 20% of the book, I think you will agree that this "preview" could almost be a book by itself. If you like this, then you will love the receiving the book. When you pre-order you will receive many valuable bonuses including:

- ***The Amazement Revolution*** – 224 pages, hardbound, published by Greenleaf
- **One Year Subscription to Shep's "Business Insight" Series** (Retail Value: \$19.95)
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- **Four audio recordings of interviews with best selling authors:**
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- **Plus - Whatever additional "extra's" I want to send as a thank you for your loyalty and confidence in joining the Amazement Revolution!**


Total retail value: \$89.65 (Actually worth much, much more!)

Your cost: \$24.95 (The price of the book!)

The bonuses will immediately be emailed to you with links to download the PDF's and links to listen to the interviews. *The Amazement Revolution* book will be sent to you in April.

So, what are you waiting for? Go to www.AmazementRevolution.com and order the book today!

Always be Amazing!



Shep Hyken
Chief Amazement Officer
Shepard Presentations, LLC

P.S. Order today at www.AmazementRevolution.com. Thank you!



CHAPTER TWO

HOW WE GOT HERE

This book could almost be considered a sequel to my earlier book, *The Cult of the Customer: Create an Amazing Customer Experience that Turns Satisfied Customers into Customer Evangelists*. I say “almost” because you don’t have to have read a word of that book to put the principles of this book into practice. However, you will want to read what follows in this chapter, whether or not you’re familiar with the first book. (If you’ve already read *The Cult of the Customer*, please consider this chapter a brief but essential refresher.)¹

CRITICAL POINT #1: YOUR ORGANIZATION HAS A CULTURE

Every organization has an operating culture. Right now, your organization’s operating culture either focuses on creating an amazing experience for both internal and external customers...or it doesn’t.

Accepting this much is the essential starting point. Whether your organization is large or small, whether you are the founder of the company or a front-line employee, whether you work with customers on the front lines or somewhere deep within the enterprise, *your organization has a culture that determines the quality of the experience you provide* for employees and customers. Your organization's culture falls into one of the following categories:

1. It is *at* the level of amazement, and people are striving to stay at that level.
2. It is *moving toward* the level of amazement, and people are eager to reach that level.
3. It is *stagnant*, and people are, as a group, indifferent about whether or not the level of amazement is ever reached (or they are uncertain about what amazement is).

Look at my definition of amazement again. It's important.

As it applies to customer service, it is a consistently and predictably better-than-average customer experience.

Most organizations' service cultures are not at this level; they're stagnant. Their people are complacent about the level of service they are delivering. As a result, these organizations are moving further and further away from amazement every day.

THE FIVE CULTS

There are five specific cultures—or “cults,” as I call them—that I use to more specifically describe an organization's current direction. As you read the list below, ask yourself which one of these cults best describes your organization right now.

The Cult of Uncertainty

- In the cult of uncertainty, either no brand promise has been com-

municated or the brand promise is regarded as meaningless. As far as the external customer is concerned, there's no consistency to the customer experience. This lack of consistency leads to uncertainty. Sometimes customers have a positive experience with you, and sometimes they don't. Because of this uncertainty, customers might have a poor expectation based on a negative or inconsistent past experience with your organization. At best, these customers simply *hope* for a positive experience. At worst, their "default setting" is a negative expectation. Most customers get used to companies operating in this cult, which is not to say they like it.

- The same dynamic applies to the internal customer (employee) experience. Because the team members haven't been trained properly—or at all—they don't know how to effectively interact with customers, and they don't have the tools they need to do the job well. Job satisfaction is typically low. They have no internal mantra that aligns them with the organization's mission.

An internal mantra is a one-sentence-or-less summary of the service philosophy that aligns employees with the company's mission. This is important because it serves as a constant reminder to employees. An example is Southwest Airline's internal slogan (mantra), which is: "Not just a career, a cause."

- In the very best-case scenario, the employee *hopes* for a good experience. Again, at worst, their "default setting" is a negative expectation.
- Note: The cult of uncertainty is by far the largest of the five cults. Most organizations operate in this cult. That doesn't necessarily mean they're bad organizations. Instead, a company operating in the cult of uncertainty has a great opportunity to experience its own Amazement Revolution and just hasn't yet taken the steps to do so.

The Cult of Alignment

- In this cult, your organization makes a powerful, emotionally compelling, yet simple brand promise. External customers understand the promise, but they are still waiting to experience it. They want proof.

A brand promise is a concise commitment to customers about what they can expect as a result of doing business with your organization. An example of a brand promise is FedEx's slogan, "When it absolutely, positively, has to be there overnight."

- Internal customers also "get" the brand promise. They have an internal mantra, a one-sentence-or-less summary that aligns them with the company's mission. They have been properly trained and given good tools, but most do not yet consistently deliver above-average service. Job satisfaction is improving.
- Some brand promises can also serve as mantras and be the same for both internal and external customers. For example, one of my favorite mantras comes from the Ritz-Carlton Hotel chain: "We are ladies and gentlemen serving ladies and gentlemen." It's short, simple, and impossible to forget—and both customers (guests) and employees understand exactly what it means.

The Cult of Experience

- In this cult, external customers experience a powerful, positive *interaction* with your organization that supports a brand promise they understand and remember. They like it and hope that the experience will be just as good as the next time. Confidence is building.
- Employees also experience the mantra/brand promise working, and they begin to look forward to delivering on it. Job satisfaction is on an upward trajectory.

- Note: The transition between the cult of alignment and the cult of experience is usually the most important cultural shift for a specific employee, for a specific customer, and for a customer-focused organization as a whole.

The Cult of Ownership

- Over time, customers experience *multiple* positive interactions with your organization. A positive outcome becomes predictable, and the customer begins to own the experience. The customer thinks, “This is where I want to do business!”
- Employees have a similar experience inside the company as positive interactions become consistent and predictable; employees begin to own the process that delivers good customer experiences. They also begin to implement and refine the processes that deliver multiple powerful, positive interactions with customers. They begin to enjoy significant job satisfaction. They think, “This is where I want to work!”
- Note: Ownership has three requirements. First, internal processes (operational procedures and policies) must be in place that are understood and used by employees. Second, these internal processes must consistently deliver positive experiences to customers. Third, these internal processes must regularly be improved upon. In my experience, no organization can move forward to the cult of amazement, the most desirable cult, unless it meets *all three* of these criteria!

The Cult of Amazement

- Customers get *addicted* to the level of experience they consistently receive, and they become *evangelists* on behalf of your organization. They self-identify as part of your community, and they want others to become part of your community, too. (Evidence of this takes the form of loyalty and referrals.) Mistakes certainly aren't impossible, but when you've achieved the level of amazement, if your organization

makes a mistake, the external customer's "default" assumption is that it will be resolved in a positive way. You get a second chance. The bottom line: people trust you and love doing business with you.

- Your employees also connect as a community. They have a shared system of belief, one that elevates the customer experience to primary importance. Employees become evangelists for you as an employer, and they can even aid in the recruiting process. People enjoy their career with you and love telling others about what they do for a living.

Remember: Amazement is not a single experience. It is the consistent outcome of expecting and getting the right thing.

The cult of amazement involves both customers and employees. Expecting your employees to deliver a superior experience to your organization's customers when they have not enjoyed this unique culture as a result of working for you is worse than unrealistic. It's delusional!

CRITICAL POINT #2: YOUR ORGANIZATIONAL VOCABULARY MUST CHANGE

The way we communicate *always* affects our behavior. If your organization is currently operating in the cult of uncertainty, not only must your processes change, but your vocabulary must change as well. *When we change our vocabulary, we can change our thinking.*

Each organization has its own needs on this score, and it's likely that no two organizations are going to share precisely the same terminology as they move out of the cult of uncertainty and away from organizational and personal stagnation. The following phrases should become part of the vocabulary of every group, large or small, if you and your organization are committed to moving toward the cult of amazement.

Amazement: You know this one already. It's an experience that is consistently and predictably above average. Amazement is the state of having people do the right thing for us so consistently that we come to expect that treatment; we overlook occasional problems because we anticipate a positive resolution; and we actively recruit others, so they can have the same positive experience we are having.

Amazement Revolution: This is your organization's movement out of anything that resembles the cult of uncertainty and toward the cult of amazement, or your effort to stay in the cult of amazement. This movement must be led by someone. To learn who, see *force of one*, *force of many*, and *force within*, below.

Evangelist: This describes your highest-level customer, the customer who does business with you at the cult of amazement level. This customer is not just loyal, they also sing your praises to others. This customer wants to convert others, turn them into customers, and thus do your marketing for you! Loyal employees do much the same thing by recruiting prospective employees from their circle of friends and family when your enterprise operates within the cult of amazement.

Force of one: This is someone who aspires to achieve or to continue operating within the cult of amazement as a solo entrepreneur.

Force within: This is a person or group within an organization that aspires to achieve or to continue operating within the cult of amazement, even though the enterprise as a whole may not share that objective.

Force of many: This describes the situation where *everyone* in the organization aspires to achieve or to continue operating within the cult of amazement. It's part of the culture. However, the Amazement Revolution is not over. It's an ongoing phenomenon, and the drive to maintain amazement is driven by a leader (typically a CEO, owner, founder, or president) who is focused on people—both employees and customers.

Interaction: This is the phrase with which I propose we replace the common word “transaction.” A transaction is something that starts and ends. An “interaction,” however, is part of an ongoing relationship. I’ve made a promise to remove “transaction” from my service vocabulary, and I hope you will do the same in your organization.

Moment of Magic: This is my take on Jan Carlzon’s moments of truth concept: “Anytime a customer comes into contact with any aspect of a business, however remote, that customer has the opportunity to form an impression.”² These touch points can be good, bad, or average, and they can be experienced by both internal and external customers. Positive moments of truth are what I call Moments of Magic. Even though I use the word “magic,” that doesn’t mean the touch points are always “wow” experiences. Just as we saw in the definition of amazement, these may simply be above-average person-to-person interactions. There’s an old saying that a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. The journey toward amazement begins with a Moment of Magic!

Moment of Misery: This is the phrase I use to describe negative moments of truth, such as a manager criticizing an employee in public during a team meeting, or an employee failing to assume accountability for a problem reported by a customer. Note: Any moment of truth, even a Moment of Misery, can be transformed into a Moment of Magic! (And vice versa!)

Role model: This is a person or organization engaged in an Amazement Revolution—someone from whom you can learn specific lessons that help you to lead your own Amazement Revolution. I’ve included more than fifty role models in this book. See Amazement Revolution takeaway below.

Touch points: See Moment of Magic.

Amazement Revolution Takeaway (ART): This is a best practice that you learn from another person or organization and adopt to support your own Amazement Revolution. It's the answer to the questions: "So what? Now what?" Amazement Revolution Takeaways follow every amazement story in this book and are highlighted with the phrase **ART**.

ART of Amazement To-Do List: This is a summary of the specific best practices that you are focusing on implementing within your team or organization. You'll find this list in Appendix A; use it to create your own unique to-do lists.

Amazement Brainstorm Worksheets: These are special activities that will help you to implement the good ideas you've encountered in this book. You'll find them in Appendix B.

CRITICAL POINT #3: YOUR ORGANIZATION NEEDS ROLE MODELS

After I finished writing *The Cult of Amazement*, I asked myself: What internal principles, beliefs, and best practices make a culture of Amazement possible? What are the standards that can ignite an Amazement Revolution within any size organization, whether it employs one person or thousands of people? Which companies are the very best role models for individuals and/or companies who want to make the transition to a cult of amazement? Drawing on decades of experience, I am offering this book as my answer to these questions.

I believe there are seven Amazement Strategies shared by the best service-focused organizations in the world. Much of this book is devoted to the true stories of these real-world role models, both people and enterprises who actually live by these Amazement Strategies and whose examples and best practices can help you transform your own workplace into that of a premier service organization.

The seven Amazement Strategies are:

1. **Provide membership.** We think of customers as members who deserve a superior level of service.
2. **Have Serious FUN.** We embrace *fulfillment*, *uniqueness*, and anticipation of what's *next* as internal operating principles.
3. **Cultivate partnership.** We deliver a level of service and create a confidence so compelling that customers might consider us a partner, not just a vendor or supplier.
4. **Hire right.** We hire the right people, and we look for the right personality for the job even before we look for technical skills.
5. **Create a memorable after-experience.** We deliver a powerful after-experience that reminds our customers how much they enjoy and appreciate doing business with us.
6. **Build community.** We create and support communities of loyal customers and employees, also known as evangelists.
7. **Walk the walk.** We operate under a clear, shared set of values that everyone throughout the entire organization understands and follows.

ABOUT THE ROLE MODELS

I selected fifty role models for this book. Many of these organizations will probably be familiar to you; some you won't recognize at all. I wanted a mix of role models, from small entrepreneurial businesses to large Fortune 500 companies, to show you that the Amazement Strategies can work for organizations of any size.

These role models have a lot to teach us about launching and sustaining a culture of amazement. With that said, I can only confirm that they are *currently* engaged in an Amazement Revolution. That doesn't mean they always were or will always be. As quickly as this book goes to print, one or more of these organizations might fall from grace. Furthermore, most of

the role model companies don't practice all seven of the Amazement Strategies. That's good news for you because it proves that implementing just one or two of the strategies can put you on track, or keep you on track, to create an Amazement Revolution for your own customers and employees.

You may disagree with some of my role model choices. That's okay. (If you feel the urge to do so, please feel free to write me and tell me why you disagree.) Even though we may not see eye-to-eye about a company's role model credentials, I hope our differing views will not diminish the powerful lessons we can learn from these organizations.

To be included in this book as a role model, an organization had to:

1. **Demonstrate mastery** in at least one of the Amazement Strategies.
2. **Have a dedicated group of loyal customers or evangelists.** This is a real-world community from which the company draws praise and also ideas for improvement and innovation. You know your company is amazing when you've developed a community of evangelists!
3. **Show the ability to prosper, or at least rebound, during tough times in the larger economy.** Time after time, I have found that amazing companies use service, loyalty, and retention as critical marketplace weapons to survive and thrive during tough times.

Before we move on, I want to share a few important thoughts on the Amazement Revolution Takeaways (ARTs). First and foremost, I want to emphasize that what follows is not just a list of techniques. Here you will not only learn the important how-tos, but also some of the important whys behind a successful Amazement Revolution. Some of these ideas can be implemented immediately, and others will take a considerable amount of time to implement. Regardless of how long it takes to implement a given ART, you always want to look at what must happen to change the *culture* of the team or organization. I can teach someone the right strategy, but equally important cultural changes have to happen for someone on

your team—or for your entire organization—to actually want to do the right thing by the customer.

I believe the best way to change the culture of an organization that's currently operating within the cult of uncertainty is to start treating employees the way you'd like customers to be treated—maybe even better. I call this the Employee Golden Rule, and it is at the heart of any successful Amazement Revolution. What happens inside the organization inevitably affects what happens to customers on the outside of the organization. Managers, that's the part of the Amazement Revolution that you must make a special effort to constantly pursue. It's all too easy, in the midst of our busy day, week, or quarter, to lose sight of the Employee Golden Rule!

Some managers who read customer service books like these are eager to get the tips they can share with the front-line team members that will help them improve interactions with customers, but they may be less interested in strategies to improve their own interactions with the team. The way managers communicate with their team members has far more impact on the level of service your organization delivers than any advice we pass along to them. As you make your way through this book, the seven strategies will not only help managers to improve your organization's relationships with customers, but they are also designed to help you support your employees, improve your relationships with *them*, and implement the Employee Golden Rule!

Managers must pay close attention to what is happening inside the organization, because the quality of their interactions with front-line people will determine the quality of the organization's interactions with customers.

The very first role model you will learn from—American Express—proves that any organization, including a global financial services giant,

can make the Employee Golden Rule a driving operating principle of the enterprise. As you'll learn in the next chapter, constant improvements in the *internal* culture have made this company a global leader in the area of customer service.³

Who is Shep Hyken?

(The Official and Somewhat Boring Bio)



Shep Hyken, CSP, CPAE is the Chief Amazement Officer of Shepard Presentations. As a speaker and author, Shep works with companies and organizations who want to build loyal relationships with their customers and employees. His articles have been read in hundreds of publications, and he is the author of *Moments of Magic®*, *The Loyal Customer* and the Wall Street Journal and USA Today best seller *The Cult of the Customer*. He is also the creator of *The Customer Focus™* program, which helps clients develop a customer service culture and loyalty mindset.

In 1983 Shep founded Shepard Presentations, LLC and since then has worked with hundreds of clients ranging from Fortune 100 size organizations to companies with less than 50 employees. Some of his clients include American Airlines, AAA Anheuser-Busch, AT&T, AETNA, Abbott Laboratories, American Express - and that's just a few of the A's!

Shep Hyken's most requested programs focus on customer service, customer loyalty, internal service, customer relations and the customer experience. He is known for his high-energy presentations, which combine important information with entertainment (humor and magic) to create exciting programs for his audiences.

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We hope you enjoyed this sample!

Thank you for your interest in *The Amazement Revolution*. I hope you enjoyed what you have read. This sample consisted of around 20% of the book. What follows is seven chapters that expand on the seven strategies, with forty-nine role-model companies showing us how they use these strategies to achieve amazing customer service and loyalty.

In addition to the strategy chapters, there is section with Amazement Brainstorm Worksheets. These worksheets will help you implement what you have learned from the book. These can also be downloaded, free of charge, at the Amazement Revolution website.

To order the book, go to the website noted below. When you buy through the website, you will receive a number of extra's that include:

Shep Hyken's 52 Weekly Business Insights

The Cult of the Customer Manifesto

Audio interview with Don Hutson on negotiation and sales

Audio interview with Sam Silvestein on accountability

Audio interview with Tony Alessandra on adaptability

Audio interview with Josh Linkner on creativity

And more!

**So, what are you waiting for?
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“extra's” mentioned above. Go to:**

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