

# Case Study

PARTNERING

intelligence

## Client Profile

A sales and marketing organization

## Partnering to Create Cross-Functional Coordination for External Customers

### Business Issue

A company's marketing executive was charged with improving the "customer experience" to the point of differentiation over competitors. A major challenge was that 13 customer touch points (each supported by several sub-points) were distributed across virtually every function of the business.

While the marketing organization was charged with leading the project, it clearly did not have control over every customer touch point. Some were owned by customer operations, others by engineering, by systems, or by sales. Still others were owned by departments or functions that fell outside the company.

### The Solution

They decided to engage in a partnership-building process. "Since we didn't have control over every touch point, we had to negotiate with people, understand their needs, and weigh cause-and-effect relationships to avoid doing something in one area that hurt another area," said Sue Schaefer, the marketing executive in charge of this initiative.

"If inter-departmental dynamics are left purely to human nature, the net result is that people run in different directions and work at cross-purposes."

Sue Schaefer,  
Marketing Executive

In this case, the cross-functional team countered human nature by conscientiously building the skills required to deliver on the customer experience. The team practiced the guiding philosophy that you can't accomplish anything of importance if you

haven't mastered the basic elements of human relationships—especially in larger businesses that are dependent on scale. "You absolutely have to have the human dynamics down before you can build any additional collaboration skills and get to the 'one plus one equals three' thought," asserted Schaefer. "This is what you have to do if you want to dramatically shift your business."

Partnership Continuum's partnering tools helped the team members strip away the "masks" that often cloud human relationships and implementation efficacy. For example, Schaefer pointed out that some people tend to be mavericks while others tend to be insecure. "These are the factors," she said, "that really get in the way and sub-optimize the energy versus output of a business initiative."

The partnering tools of Partnership Continuum also taught the team members (a) how to treat each other with respect and dignity, (b) how to communicate and listen, and (c) how to have a "future orientation." These were the "partnering touch points," if you will, that propelled them beyond the status quo.

## Results

In the end, the customer experience team was able to install and implement its touch point system with pride of ownership, clarity of purpose, and ease of human relations. "The key for this group," concluded its leader, "was grasping basic but difficult human skills and leveraging those skills to outmaneuver the competition."

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In the twenty-first century, businesses that develop, sustain and profit from partnerships faster and better will attain organizational success. At the core of any successful business are people. After all, businesses don't partner; people do. Developing the partnering intelligence of your people is what we do.

Partnership Continuum, Inc. mobilizes your relationships with employees, customers, suppliers, and even competitors in surprising and rewarding ways. Our unique and innovative programs and products lead to higher productivity and stronger relationships enhancing your partnering capability through building trust, positive exchanges, respectful interactions, beneficial outcomes, future potential, and leadership excellence.

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impact your organization's effectiveness.**

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