



**ACTIVEO**

**BEST SERVICE IS STILL  
NO SERVICE**



**LIVRE BLANC**

WHITE PAPER

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## Captains log, star date 2017: The Best service is Still No Service

In this update of the 2008 best-seller *The Best Service is No Service: Liberating Your Customers From Customer Service, Keep Them Happy, and Control Costs* (Wiley/Jossey-bass), David Jaffe, Peter Massey, and Bill Price take a look at developments internationally towards simplifying life for customers. Their star date 2015 update is attached below this text if you'd like check their view of the trends with hindsight.

## 2. CONCEPT: THE WORLD TOUR

[David] Down here in Asia Pacific the *Best Service is No Service* idea is being re-crafted as a move to digital (the self-service part of Best Service) rather than a move to contact reduction. Everyone is talking omni-channel but don't seem to understand the risk that more contact in more channels is not always a good thing. Our definition of omni-channel is streamlined and seamless connection of channels rather than just more channels for more contact. For example, at times we still find companies who are automating what they should be eliminating. We saw a company recently about to add a new digital process for a form that shouldn't exist. The company had 90% of the data on the form and really just needed the customer to tell them two pieces of information. Another example was a company that now sends hard copy, emails and texts for the same process in some kind of channel saturation. They got lots of responses confused about which channel they should reply to.

We do see some companies start to get that usability is important to avoid calls, emails and other contact. There are more "customer labs" now than there were a few years ago. However, we see what we call "usability basics" being missed like informing the customer where they are in a long digital process, asking "knock out questions" early and doing marketing related data capture late in the process, if at all. Companies are developing mobile apps and obsessing about the right format for that channel but then creating apps for a complex and time consuming process. They aren't seeing the opportunity to use usability to drive process improvement.

If there is agreement on one thing, we keep seeing companies who want to get rid of unstructured email. They recognize that it's not that effective for complex problem solving and just as expensive as a phone call. Unfortunately, many companies have isolated email channel teams as silos so it's hard to integrate it back into the business. They have created new demand by inviting unstructured email at times. In our models, we think email and calls have to come together and be managed as a true omni-channel experience. Call centre staff need to be able to send and receive emails. Many emails are better handled as a call, so they need to be brought together as a true contact centre offering a range of channel solutions including chat which is a perfect segue.

Organisations here seem fixated as chat as some kind of miracle cure particularly in digital sales. What we've found is that chat also needs *Best Service is No Service* type thinking. Why do customers need chat? What don't they understand? As with calls, the opportunity is to understand and remove the root causes rather than see a call to chat "migration" as some kind of win. In our analysis, we've often found it just as expensive. Of course, customers like the immediacy and responsiveness of chat. Now automation throws up more opportunities but we still keep coming back to "why did the customer need to chat?" so our conclusion down here is that there is still plenty of opportunity for *Best Service is No Service* application.

## 3. TENDENCIES

### Digital transformation

[Peter] David, I agree your usability point is core to what we are seeing in Europe and in Asia. Senior management in large companies are greeting large scale “digital transformation” programmes like a hole in the head - and wallet. They often just need to embrace detail in this digital world and having understand the minutiae, see where the problems lie that they give to customers.

Constant optimisation is required: of online, mobile, bots, IVR, and of course human to human conversations. Your optimisation approach should start with an organisational metric: “what is the ratio of people improving your contact to those handling your contact?”. When it reaches 1 to 1, you’re on the right track. Optimisation isn’t something you ever finish, it takes lots of attention to detail, lots of resources and it saves lots of customer effort and cost. Then there is machine learning optimisation, which will change that ratio fundamentally... over to you Bill later in this paper.

### Resolution by knowledge management

The other two trends I’ll mention briefly are:

a) resolution through investment in knowledge management systems, not CRM. This is far more impactful and is the basis of programming bots. What’s the question, what are the triage questions, where to get the answers, what are the answers, where to republish them. Alongside these tools are the drag and drop process platforms which fundamentally change the time to live.

The second trend is:

b) improving knowledge through front line intelligence. The free intelligence and investigative power of front line staff goes to waste for want of an ecosystem to put their knowledge into. An ecosystem that produces a flow through from intelligence to results, generating collaborative priorities and change across organisational silos. This we continue to work on with large companies everywhere.

The skills of managing knowledge and using “people smarts” are key to a future which is soon to arrive. One in which we’ll be programming bots, and bots will be programming bots. Artificial intelligence and machine learning holds the promise of rapidly improving what self-service can do. But for now, there is still a need is to understand how to get your IVR to work well, your website to function and your chat and conversations to feel natural. As the wide spread adoption of speech analytics has shown, analytics without analysts doesn’t do a lot. In other news, water is wet.

### Improving knowledge: people’s intelligence

And using human intelligence will still be key to engaging conversations, which we as humans will continue to want in certain circumstances - what do you think Bill?

[Bill] Peter, I agree that in some cases good old human intelligence in human interactions is still needed, and often the best path. However, what I am seeing is the ability now to apply that human intelligence to deliver highly impactful automated solutions and predictive models.

Across the North American market, we see the rapid onset of analytics, robotics, AI (artificial intelligence), Big Data, and machine learning to augment, and in some places replace, human intervention. These new solutions have shown to me that the core Principles of *Best Service is No*

Service were spot on, and it has reinforced the need to dig more deeply into data in order to confirm the problem and to determine how to address the problem.

Let me share three quick examples, some of them harking back to David's omni-channel observations and to your emphasis on knowledge management.

## 4. EXAMPLES

### Chat bots or virtual agents

1) Chat bots or “virtual agents” are beginning to gain traction after some early failures. With the newer generation chat bots companies present an immersive and personalized interaction tool with customers, often on their web sites, able to access key data in knowledge management and then, using AI, to tee up the “best-fit” answers to questions (a) that are being asked by customers or (b) should have been asked by them. It's the 2<sup>nd</sup> part that brings forward the power of analytics, matching “customers who are like you” and “similar situations” and the string of historical interactions. Using AI in chat bots can not only automate the first contact but anticipate and reduce the need for the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> contacts.

### The power megadonnes

2) Holding onto the best customers and the best employees in companies has always been a challenge, with lots of guesses and “mother-in-law” research instead of real experiences and data. Now with the power of Big Data companies can, for example, mine the interactions and sales histories between lost customers and current customers to spot similar words, trends (such as reductions in spend rates), and the combination of words and trends, producing a succinct list of “at risk” customers. Then they can use a robust recommendations engine to try to repair the damage with those at risk customers; if they remain, the system “learns” via machine learning that that recommendation with that customer at that time worked, so it will be tried again (the opposite is also followed). As a result, companies can not only keep some of their best customers or best employees but they can also spot missing or confusing processes that help to explain the risks, address those processes, and help hold onto even more customers and employees.

### The snowball effect

3) In *Best Service is No Service* and in our 2<sup>nd</sup> book *Your Customer Rules! Delivering the Me2B Experiences that Today's Customers Demand* (Wiley/Jossey-Bass, 2015) we proposed using the term “Snowballs” to represent repeat contacts. Companies that could prevent snowballs from starting, or “melt” them after the 1<sup>st</sup> attempt, would then produce “Best Service” (preventing them) and enjoy increased customer experience. Today using Big Data analytics companies and isolate which web pages, IVR logic paths, and customer service agents are starting snowballs and which web pages, IVR logic paths, and customer service agents are successfully resolving them, or melting them; these analytics also spotlight which issues or reasons are not resolved the first time and result in snowballs. Digging into the root causes of both of these areas produces improvements in processes that both David and Peter mentioned.

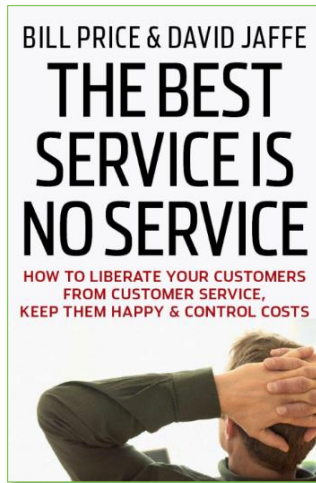
In addition, analytics and machine learning can help to predict that there might be a snowball, and recommend how to address that customer in that moment in order to prevent a repeat contact from happening. As with the predictive models that I described earlier this forms a much stronger engine – either automated or human provided – that in turns delivers a combination of *Best Service is No Service* and *Me2B* success!



## 5. ANNEX

Star date 2015

### Whatever Happened To The Best Service Is No Service? Or Why Aren't Contact Rates Falling In This Age Of Omni-channel?

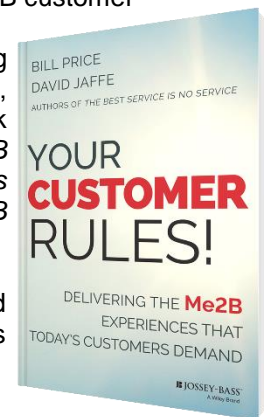


Bill Price (US), David Jaffe (Australia) and Peter Massey (UK) have been talking about and implementing *The Best Service Is No Service* ideas for over a decade. It's seven years since Bill and David's bestseller was published demonstrating how to engage colleagues all over the business to reduce customer effort. However, our observation is that contact centres around the world remain very busy places, still "coping with demand" from customers, rather than "challenging demand" using the Seven Principles of *Best Service*. Whether voice contacts are increasing or not, organisations have added social, chat, community and digital support whilst trying to improve B2C and B2B customer experiences.

Unfortunately customers have increasing knowledge and power in this "Me2B world", as Bill and David lay out in their latest book *Your Customer Rules! Delivering the Me2B Experiences That Today's Customers*

*Demand*. So, how do ideas of *The Best Service Is No Service* and *Me2B* apply today?

In this assessment, Bill, Peter and David reflect on how demand management is possible in an Omni-channel world and what other issues are creating success for leading organisations in their geographies.



**Q1: Do you think contact with organisations through manned channels is growing or falling in your country?**

#### BILL PRICE: US VIEW



We see some sterling examples in the States where companies have embraced Best Service and reduced the rate of customer contacts, using metrics like CPO (contacts per order shipped) or CPC (contacts per customer). Largely they have achieved this by taking the customers' point of view and figuring out how to apply an FCR (first contact resolution) analysis for web interactions, the first place that today's customers go for information and for support, and by reducing repeat contacts in their contact centres.

Unfortunately, many more organizations are not enjoying lower customer contact rates, even as they grapple with tight budgets that make it hard

to add new support centers or staff to handle the burgeoning amounts of contacts. I would say that it's 70% up (stable to higher contact rates), and 30% down (lower contact rates).

### **DAVID JAFFE: Australian VIEW**

It's a mixed picture depending on the industry and strategy of the companies. I've heard two of our major banks say that their contact centres and volume of call traffic is unchanged despite (or perhaps because of) the growth of self-service and other channels (and we'll discuss that again in the next question). We observe three key factors in whether overall contacts are falling:

1) The extent and quality of investments in self-service and other customer facing channels;- Those who have created really effective self-service and self "sales" and embraced it in their product offers and pricing have had better results. Our two major airlines are examples of that in creating two good booking sites with price transparency and ease of re-use.

2) Whether organisations have approached demand management in the way we first proposed;- In Australia, we observe that over half the organisations we work with still don't have a clear view of what causes contact demand, so they certainly don't have a process to manage it. Even those who have demand reporting still seem to put responsibility on the contact centre rather than recognising where the issues really lie, so we'd estimate it's only one in five companies that have really tackled it

3) Approach to off-shoring;- Unfortunately, many of our organisations have been seduced by offshoring and think they have settled for "lower cost of contact » rather than "less contact". One large utility referred to it as "mess for less" but of course that's not what really happened. It saved very little and we called it "mess for stress". If anything we have observed that rushing these off shoring processes has produced more contacts through poor handling practices and poorly designed operations. We know that has been the issue as one of our most common projects has been organisations asking us to "go fix" these poorly managed off shore operations.

### **PETER MASSEY: UK VIEW**

It depends what you refer to as 'contact' and the customer perspective is not the same as that of the business. Customers think of pressing IVR buttons, fathoming out how to find and do stuff on web sites and mobile apps as contact. Talking to someone, via whatever media, is a last resort. Except when they need reassurance for something vital. Then they want a well-informed, confident person on the end of the phone or behind the counter. So, I wouldn't generalize too much about contact increasing or decreasing. One needs to be specific about which companies and for which customer needs.

We also find that measuring contact can be difficult. We ran a contact rate benchmark across the UK mobile phone companies for several years. It was an enormous job to get simple data on how much contact was occurring even at the macro level. Today some companies have the integrated infrastructure to give them M.I. (management information) across all channels so it's a little easier. But internal definitions of contact vary so much that comparison is messy. What we could see over the years was which companies paid attention to contact rate. As smart phones came in O2 (Telefonica) led the way in reducing contact rate, meeting their customers' desire to self-serve as well as improving the economics. That's why they got the iPhone contract in the UK - Apple certainly understood the importance of effective demand management and went with a like-minded business. All the telcos and ISPs focused hard on person to person contact rate once smart phones were mass market and kept the contact rates flat. But they still varied considerably between companies in absolute terms.

## Q2: What has been the impact of new channels like digital, social media and the like?

### DAVID JAFFE: AUSTRALIAN VIEW



There is no question that here in Australia there has been a “free way effect” so these channels have often added to the volume of contacts. Build a new channel like digital and people use it more. People check their banks account details far more as an example. That is also one of the reasons why contact rates to contact centres have remained obstinately high in banking. The “substitution” effect between channels has been off-set by new and different contact types caused by the new channels. For example, access to information has given customers greater visibility of things they couldn’t see before. They query transactions more and probe their statements with knowledge. In utilities like telco’s and energy, they query their bills as they have more information.

The second big contact driver that has reduced substitution is the added support for these new channels particularly if they aren’t well designed. Customers call or chat to ask questions about how

things work or to locate things on digital platforms or get passwords reset.

One of the keys to success of Omni-channel, we find, is that you have to embed support and education about new channels into the way manned channels work. That means accepting that as digital grows, the contact centre will have to invest in customer education and showing customers how to do things. We observe many organisations in Australia who have failed to get the digital take up they wanted, because the contact centre didn’t help promote and support digital. Often this was re-inforced by organisation structures that separated digital and contact centre channels so that they weren’t collaborating. Where the channels operate in silos we often see increased contact as new channels emerge.

### PETER MASSEY: UK VIEW

Chat has had a big impact. Customers don’t want to swap to email or pick up the phone mid browsing. Whether it absorbs contacts is down to old skills like resource planning to have enough people available to handle the chat sessions. Chat needs to be timely and well managed or it doesn’t work. Then there are other challenges like well-designed knowledge management to support agents so they know what to say when they are online.

For companies, social has had a great impact. Speed, transparency, authenticity are needed and won’t wait for policy makers to muck about. Social media cuts through silos and the old, old question of “who owns the customer?” has been quickly resolved. It’s had a big impact on giving front line staff the time to research answers, to speak openly and to relax. It’s having an impact on front line knowledge sharing - everyone needs to know stuff. It’s breaking down barriers in the more enlightened businesses, but a key part is that execs and managers need to be online folk themselves to really understand it or make it work.

Going back to customers, social is a great way round the traditional slow email or long phone queue and boy do we know it. In most companies it is well resourced now but will it be as well resourced when social-media contact grows further and there are 200 staff handling it rather than



20? It's a further challenge because staff are using the written word more and having to do it in a branded but authentic way - a challenge to many contact centre skill sets.

So is the answer that voice and email are being replaced by new channels? In the better companies it's being replaced by great mobile and self-service, not by channel shift to social and chat. In the companies that haven't got a handle on the customer needs, it just proliferates contact by more and more means.

Examples like Argos and Shop Direct, show the way. At a recent conference, Shop Direct stood up and said they only wanted adequate not world class contact centres - the contact centre audience was aghast but wrong in my opinion. Shop Direct's strategy is to put the money into world class, personalised, mobile and online experiences - and so adequate contact centres aligns with this strategy.

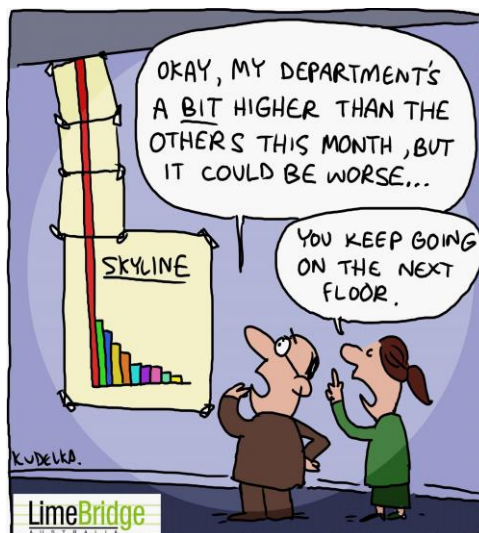
### BILL PRICE, US VIEW

Digital, social, and related channels such as chat and SMS are increasing in the States, partly because customers are asking for them and partly since they are more engaging for younger customers who have been so accustomed to mobile communications. A related development is "visual IVR" whereby the mobile customer can see the IVR script on her phone and click through to get to the right path, or obtain the information that they need.

While some of the companies implementing these new channels have done it with the same vendors and tools, using single code sets (the same process and methods of tracking contacts for all channels), in many glaring cases they have essentially "bolted on" new channels that become islands, or silos. The same-vendor or single code set companies end up enjoying a single view of their customers' contact history and can draw implications quickly, and address issues in-channel and Omni-channel. The silo type companies end up falling behind their customers and lose out to competitors that embraced the same-vendor or single code path. They suffer from information proliferation and can't tell what is really driving demand. As a result, they suffer longer handle times, repeat contacts, and higher costs – partly from an increase in contact rates ... assuming that their disparate systems even allow them to figure out the total number of contacts that they are getting!

**Q 3: Are there many organisations who have really reduced the demand for contact as you predicted i.e. who are the shining cases?**

### PETER MASSEY: UK VIEW



Two cases I really like on the demand side are [AO.com](#) and HMRC (Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs). RAC was another. One read and used the book, the other two we helped with what to do and to train their people. What made them good was that they joined up the dots and made their whole system centre around *Best Service*.

In AO.com's case they not only addressed demand, they built great understanding of customer issues so they could be proactive. For example, if selling a double door fridge to someone who lives in Apartment 32, there's a very good chance you will have delivery issues. So rather than waiting for them to happen and then put it right, they call the customer about their order and check through in advance about access and what is required so that the delivery is right first time.

In HMRC's case, the director general (the CEO equivalent) recognised that the senior business team had to co-own the contact targets if any progress was to be made with the classic issues of complex processes and forms with difficult explanations.

In both these cases significant savings in customer effort and contact costs were made - but the progress felt by staff and customers was the real breakthrough. The culture changes and it shows.

Specifically, the RAC case showed this. They ran the full *The Best Service Is No Service* processes after piloting and building robust processes. It became the heart of how they optimised process, engaged their people and shared MI with corporate clients. It wasn't that the sums of money were so large, it was that they changed the culture. People felt valued, the brand values felt real.

### **BILL PRICE: US VIEW**

T-Mobile, a large mobile carrier has slashed 30% from their annual support budget, closing under-performing centres along the way, even as their subscriber count has increased more than 20%. They followed the *Best Services* ideas and got real value. The regulated electric utility Southern California Edison has seen a plateau in its contact rate even as it has added more channels such as email and chat. The business software provider CheckFree has been able to grow their customer count and transaction volumes by 70%, respectively, with the same headcount in its contact centers so contacts per customer are way down.

In all three cases, and others that we have helped or encouraged along the way, there are some consistent themes that have produced these successes: (1) a "champion" in the customer support team who has been willing to change direction from "coping with demand" to "challenging demand", and has rallied his/her troops; (2) new metrics like CPO and CPC, widely shared, with celebrations once the rates decline; and (3) buy-in from the C-level execs, especially the CFO and the CIO/CTO, since the latter is needed to push through needed improvements in the web or IVR self-service.

### **DAVID JAFFE: AUSTRALIAN VIEW**

The Australian Tax Office has done a great job in reducing contact through a mix of digitization and use of proactive rather than reactive contact (as we talked about in *Best Service Chapter 4*). Use of electronic tax returns has changed the contacts they handle significantly and reduced calls for forms, form help and so forth. Their proactive contact is done in a smart way. Recently they used analytics to identify over a million customers who have always lodged tax returns late. They analysed these further and sent reminder texts to 200,000 of these at a cost of less than \$25,000. They collected \$800m in tax payments from these customers three months earlier than they had in prior years and avoided both outbound and inbound contacts. That's a great example of use of proactive contact to prevent collection activity and inbound contacts. The cash flow benefits alone were measured in millions.

We've seen good examples in utilities such as AGL and Origin Energy who have driven down contacts significantly by putting in place a better model of contact handling with re-thought processes. We helped them get complex contacts to a second tier of agents who had increased delegations and access to what were previously back office functions. This drove down repeat contacts and prevented escalated complaints. In addition, the new processes embedded self-service education and got customers information faster (where previously it might have meant a back office request). The net outcome has been contact reduced by over twenty per cent in both cases and workload down even more because contacts were handled better). The same model reduced email contact 40% in one case.

#### Q4: What have you learnt from the success and failure you have seen?

##### BILL PRICE: US VIEW

Vision, persistence, and a new form of currency. Let me explain. The “winners” in the Omni-channel world, those that have managed to reduce contact demand as in *The Best Service is No Service*, have demonstrated these three factors: (1) Vision, or the ability to rise above the day-to-day challenges running contact centers (and I know from personal experience at MCI and at Amazon, it’s very tough job!) and juggling limiting budgets. The winners go against the grain, for example accepting that as they automate contacts or eliminate others, as a result the average handle time (AHT) will rise, and that that’s a good thing; (2) Persistence, or the drive to corral other executives to agree that “the customer is in charge”, and that in order to create lasting customer loyalty it is essential to make it easier for customers and therefore remove demand for support; and (3) A new form of “currency”, or hard data that will secure attention from C-level executives such as CPO (contacts per order shipped) and a way to quantify the annual costs to handle contacts that ought to be automated or eliminated.



We worked with a client whose CFO was shocked to learn that they were spending more than \$10 million per year responding to customer questions about when they’d be getting back their product from the repair center. Once she learned this, she quickly approved a request for an automated outbound alert capability at a fraction of this savings, seeing the solid ROI. We also worked with a Six Sigma-trained customer care executive who was unable to get attention to spend money on root cause analysis, but when he identified that customers were contacting his company to get their password it was because the password recovery process was so cumbersome that customers created new accounts. This also inflated the customer count, and wound up impressing Wall Street when the company reported higher sales per customer.

On the other hand, the failures have stemmed from the opposite situations: (1) Lack of focus; (2) acquiescence and acceptance of the old way of behaving; and (3) Slavish embrace of tired metrics like “lower AHT is better” or NPS (Net Promoter Score).

##### PETER MASSEY: UK VIEW

Wow, big question almost worthy of another book! Let me summaries a few points and refer to more detail. We’ve implemented *The Best Service Is No Service* in many different companies & industries, to differing depths and levels of sustainability. We have constantly studied what works and what doesn’t. We published a paper five years ago, based on interviews with our UK clients and their hindsight. We did this to help others embarking on the journey. I can share the 12 key findings but I feel the overriding issue comes down to leadership.

It’s not the contact points that create the contact, it’s the rest of the organisation upstream and it’s complicated stuff usually. Policies, behaviours, band aided process fixes layered on other problems with unintended results – that kind of thing.

However, it is the leadership team level that is often the ultimate root cause - do they act as a team first and functional leaders second? This sets the tenor for the rest of the organisation. It is possible for middle management and even front line staff to collaborate to remove cross functional causes

of problems. But it seldom happens for long unless that behaviour is fostered, sponsored and expected at the leadership level.

A classic example is the 'gating' procedure for launching new products or services (see cartoon at the start of this document). To customers it is obvious whether the launch has been well prepared or not. In mature businesses, the launch won't go ahead unless all the functions are ready: stocking, logistics, online help, pricing, returns, field force trained, front line trained in store and in contact centres. There are so many businesses who haven't reached that stage yet and launch regardless. It is leadership's role to put these processes in place and make decisions day to day to make them work, thus avoiding pain for customers downstream.

### DAVID JAFFE: AUSTRALIAN VIEW

The lesson we have learnt time and again is that this isn't a contact centre problem, it's a whole of business problem. We had one disappointing result where the contact centre tried to drive responsibility for contacts into the rest of the business without sponsorship at the right levels. The rest of the business still ignored the issues as they didn't have measures aligned to this problem. In contrast we've seen much better results where there is an executive sponsor who can hold all the right people accountable.

The second lesson is that this isn't a one-off problem but a continuous one. For example, new channels like digital and social create new issues and new contacts. The most successful companies have recognised this and kept a focus on demand continuously. When new issues or contact categories emerge they mobilise teams quickly to investigate and find solutions. Unfortunately, in Australia as many organisations are still flying blind (with limited or no reporting of demand) they just see contacts increasing and don't know why. That's been good for our business as we have great ways to help them understand it, but we'd still rather provide them with the tools to stay on top of demand all the time.

**Q5. If there are still opportunities that you documented in *The Best Service is No Service*, why do organisations need *Your Customer Rules!*?**

### PETER MASSEY: UK VIEW



*The Best Service Is No Service* as a discipline is still growing but no one method or book can ever encompass everything involved in customer experience. There's no right and wrong, no silver bullet.

We've seen in the UK, Europe and indeed worldwide, that constantly focusing on delivering 'brilliant basics' is the first part of what makes companies legendary. Using *The Best Service Is No Service* is a never ending quest and some smart businesses know this. Though it's not the end game.

What a customer feels about your brand and organization is critical and complex. Brand aspiration and marketing has moved to explore experience and word of mouth. But what does this mean? Perhaps it is summed up by the Geek Squad quote "Marketing is the tax you pay for being unremarkable". To address this, you can change your economics first by removing the dumb stuff that happens and secondly by helping customers love you.



For me, there are two dimensions to simplify how we think about *The Best Service Is No Service* and *Me2B (Your Customer Rules!)*. Firstly, *The Best Service Is No Service*, addresses the physical needs that customers have, whereas *Me2B (Your Customer Rules)* looks at the emotional factors. Secondly, *The Best Service Is No Service* addresses the hygiene factors of sales and service, the stuff that can be fixed. Whereas *Me2B* mainly addresses the wow factors, things that make customers love you.

Of course, it's not as clear cut in practice. Working with clients, I often refer to the structures in the two books as 'mental models'. I think it's why the books have sold so well - they give people ways to work with colleagues in shared mental models which address inherently complex situations. They allow organisations to work on the problems the same way rather than many random ways and that avoids what we call "it's raining projects".

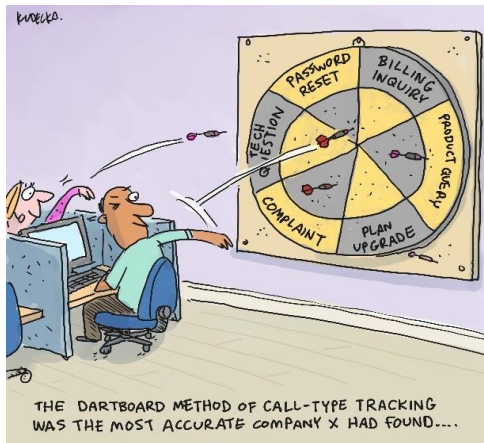
### **BILL PRICE: US VIEW**

In *The Best Service is No Service*, we concluded by saying that companies needed to "Deliver great service experiences", and we proposed several ways to do that. In the intervening years, it became apparent to us that great service experiences, while necessary, are not sufficient – instead, companies need to figure out how to deliver great customer experiences on an end-to-end basis starting with the browse and search stage, across all channels (hence, Omni-channel), and with one's business partners as well. We interviewed leading customer experience legends in order to expand the range of *The Best Service is No Service*, and to reinforce our Principles with more fundamental "Customer Needs" and "Foundations". Many of the companies we featured in *The Best Service, is No Service*, also appear in *Me2B*, for example Amazon, Danaher, Nordstrom, and T-Mobile, but others in *Me2B* come from very different situations and geographies, such as Flight Centre in Australia, Hyatt based in Chicago, Vente-Privee based in Paris, and Yamato Transport based in Japan. The broader sweep in *Me2B* has, on the one hand, validated our earlier findings in *The Best Service, is No Service*, but also paint a much richer picture. In this way, if you follow *Me2B* you will also be on the path to *Best Service*.

### **DAVID JAFFE: Australian VIEW**

Whilst we felt the customer contact "demand" opportunity hadn't gone away, we also saw that the engagement model between customer and organisation was changing. We wanted to document how organisations needed to respond to a situation in which customers had more knowledge and influence. We also hadn't spent much time in *The Best Service is No Service* describing the way in which customers wanted contacts to be handled, for those contacts that remained. Thus, the two books are complementary in that *Best Service* says "let's get rid of what shouldn't be there" whilst *Your Customer Rules* gives a lot more detail on how to handle the contacts that remain. We also had to reflect on all the new emerging channels and their implications.



**Q6: If organisations did just one thing from either book, what would you recommend?****DAVID JAFFE: AUSTRALIAN VIEW**

In our geography that would have to be, get a really clear handle on contact “demand” and how it’s changing. We say you need to understand not only what customers are calling/emailing/chatting or messaging you about but why. A customer may be asking ‘what’s my balance?’ but they are asking because the balance on the digital platform doesn’t match some other balance they have been told. Getting the right level of understanding about demand isn’t easy and even working out which tracking mechanisms work best takes some effort. Then there are issues like getting the right level of detail and working out who is responsible. It sounds like a basic thing but it’s so much the bedrock of demand management that we keep coming back to it.

**BILL PRICE: US VIEW**

I would nominate as the single recommendation from *The Best Service is no Service!* That companies acknowledge that the customer support team exists to fix other groups’ mistakes or confusion, and that in order to solve customers’ frustrations the entire enterprise needs to rally around customer support.

From *Me2B* my suggestion is that companies ensure that they get each of the Seven Customer Needs in order, starting first and foremost with “You know me, you remember me”. This means, at long last, not asking customers what you already (should) know, drawing clear lines across all contact channels (or, as David likes to call it, being “joined up”), and recognizing customer loyalty at all times.

**PETER MASSEY: UK VIEW**

Think “create a system” rather than projects and targets. Many leaders believe their job is to fix the broken things and have the brightest ideas. Wrong – that’s what managers do. What leaders do in the best companies, is to redesign the way that things work. They work out the underlying processes that are required and resource them adequately.

Think about this example. Why are nearly all IVRs a poor experience? Is it for lack of best practice on how many options, or what language to use, or how many menus to have? Or is it that in most businesses that there is no process or people with time to look at the MI, listen to the customer and optimise the way it works?

Or this example. Why are so many websites a poor experience when clearly some are brilliant? What makes one business better at it than another? It is what leaders pay attention to incessantly. They design great optimisation processes and resource them thoroughly. The really smart leaders do it with no extra cost as we’ve shown in *The Best Service Is No Service*. Using front line staff in contact with customers to tell the on and offline optimisers what needs doing, how to do it, whether it will work and how it did work.

Directors design, implement and maintain the processes and resources to run the underlying systems (and I don’t mean tech systems) required to optimise a business. From *The Best Service Is No Service*, it’s about reducing the pain that customers experience when buying and using your

products. From *Your Customer Rules! Me2B* it's tuning into your customers and optimising what they expect from your brand.

**Getting More Help:**

[www.activeo.com](http://www.activeo.com)

**Contact : Veronique Godart / Activeo / [vgodart@activeo.com](mailto:vgodart@activeo.com)**