



Customer Engagement Models: MetLife

by Curtis N. Bingham

**CHIEF CUSTOMER OFFICER
COUNCIL**



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Curtis Bingham is the recognized authority on chief customer officers and the first to promote this role as a catalyst for competitive advantage. He is the creator of the CCO Roadmap, a groundbreaking work containing 100+ critical strategies essential for customer centricity. As an international speaker, author, and consultant, Curtis is passionate about creating customer strategy to sustainably grow revenue, profit, and loyalty.

Many companies today have developed paths to greater engagement and greater profitability through recruiting the involvement of their customers. To restate the definition of engagement: it is the extent of a customer's willingness to invest his/her discretionary time for a mutual benefit, and particularly for the benefit of a business.

MetLife sponsors and maintains a robust customer community with which it engages in many ways over time, from asking simple questions to testing ideas and products. In a simple yet powerful engagement exercise, the company asked community members to write a letter to a relative explaining why insurance is important. The customer stories that resulted from this exercise were deeply moving and very powerful. They described experiences that enabled the marketing group to understand where and to what emotional extent insurance is a welcome relief rather than a necessary evil. These stories continue to inform MetLife's understanding of what customers value. They also enable MetLife to humanize and optimize its marketing and sales efforts.

MetLife has also leveraged stories that customers share with each other to drive advertising campaigns. In Poland, MetLife has low name recognition and market share but word of mouth promotion is unusually strong. One popular story customers were sharing there told of a claim from an elderly woman whose signature did not match the one on her policy. Normally such claims are denied, but in this case, an agent tracked the woman down, found her in a nursing home, verified her identity, and paid her claim. MetLife created a very successful television advertisement based on this story. And because real life customer stories like these increase authenticity and effectiveness, they give MetLife a significant edge over its competitors.

The insurance industry is replete with cumbersome product names such as, “Variable annuity with a guaranteed minimum withdrawal benefit,” or “Immediate lifetime annuity with return of principal.” The names attempt to describe function from a company perspective and end up confusing customers. In anticipation of a new product launch, MetLife turned to its customer community to share the product’s purpose and benefits. Customers provided not only the name, but also the emotions to evoke and the messages to convey within the product’s marketing and advertising campaign. In May 2013, MetLife launched the customer-christened “Shield” insurance product.

MetLife has successfully engaged customers in product development and in customer acquisition and retention. As well, MetLife has demonstrated such value in engaging customers in process redesign pilot projects that the CEO has mandated leveraging customer engagement in order to eliminate \$100M in costs from the business.*

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About CURTIS N. BINGHAM

As Executive Director of the Chief Customer Officer Council™, Curtis Bingham is the recognized authority on chief customer officers and the first to promote this role as a catalyst for competitive advantage. He is the creator of the CCO Roadmap, a groundbreaking work containing 100+ critical strategies essential for customer centricity. He has created the comprehensive Customer Centricity Maturity Model used to assess and guide customer-centric organizational strategy, and is a champion of customer engagement as a critical growth engine. As an international speaker, author, and consultant, Curtis is passionate about creating customer strategy to sustainably grow revenue, profit, and loyalty.

About THE CHIEF CUSTOMER OFFICER COUNCIL

The CCO Council is a powerful and intimate gathering of the world's leading customer executives from widely diverse industries. The Council helps executives achieve objectives faster and more easily by leveraging best practices. It helps validate and refine strategies and initiatives to avoid experimenting at customer expense. Membership is by invitation only, and purposefully cross-pollinated with the most forward-thinking companies, large and small, so as to help customer executives deliver solid, customer-centric business results. For more information, email info@ccocouncil.org or call 978-226-8675.



Powerful Influence on Customer Centricity – Authority is the currency of the C-Suite. Greater Authority means greater ability to influence the organization to take a desired action. So how do you increase your authority and better use the authority that's been granted to you? How can you build stronger relationships and demonstrate and communicate results? In this **Bingham Advisory**, you'll not only learn about the three types of chief customer officer authority: Positional, Borrowed and Earned, you'll also learn five ways to borrow and four ways to earn greater authority, with specific examples of each.

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