

## **Voila! You are the CXO of Your Carwash Experience**

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In my father's day, a "car wash" meant dragging out a hose and a bucket of soap. Over my lifetime, I remember applying paste polish and being dazzled by the shine that aggressive rubbing could produce. Then a high powered self wash came to my town and to my amazement the wax was liquid and it sprayed on. Of course, there have been many versions of automated car washes since then, those you drove into after gassing up and those where your car was shuttled through to an awaiting detail attendant. And yet we are in a new era – the CARWASH EXPERIENCE!

Our economy evolved from a time when we relied on what we extracted from the earth, to what we made with our hands, to delivering those things we made. Today's business focus is increasingly on how we can "stage" experiences around the ordinary services and products we offer. And the more that staging allows us to playfully, tactically, and sensorially interact with customers, the greater the impact we will have on their lives.

So let's look at how carwashes of the future are being designed to draw you into an experience that delights and engages the senses. A couple of years ago, Proctor and Gamble, perennially one of America's most admired companies, brought their cleaning/disinfecting brand Mr. Clean out of the kitchen and into the driveway introducing a product called Mr. Clean Autodry which allows customers to incorporate the product into the home car cleaning process and serves as the launch pad for the future.

What is the future? Proctor and Gamble is test marketing an upper-end carwash concept that includes widescreen TV's, cafes, gift-shops and soap guns that little kids and adult kids can use to blast cars as they are pulled through the wash. Not only will this car wash be playful and hands-on interactive but Proctor and Gamble will measure customer responses to the "experience" and modify aspects of it, all the while innovating new product offerings.

The Mr. Clean interactive carwash is just an example of the high interest in adding "experiences" to products and services. In fact, more than 90% of senior leaders report in a recent survey that "customer experiences will be the next business battleground."

Combining all this interest in "customer experience" with the bestseller status of my book *The Starbucks Experience: 5 Principles for Turning Ordinary into Extraordinary*, I've decided to give myself a promotion. I am now CXO – Chief Experience Officer! But in the modern workplace aren't we all CXO's? Don't we all need to deliver quality products or services on a well coordinated stage of experiences?

So gather around your business with your fellow Chief Experience Officers and ask yourself, what type of "soap gun" can you add to the experience of your "carwash" customer?

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