

### Inside Out

#### The Experience eZine

#### Contents

- O3 The superpower of small business: How experience sets you apart
- **06** Small changes have big impact at Ōamaru Blue Penguin Colony
- **09** It's people who make your business tick: Why experience matters for everyone
- 12 Interview with a Chief Customer Officer: Stephen Druce, VetPartners
- 15 5 habits of brands that nail customer experience



#### From the Editor's desk

Welcome to the first issue of **Inside**Out. We created this zine for people
who care about the experiences their
organisation delivers but don't have
whole teams dedicated to it. Maybe
you're juggling hiring, customer
service, marketing, and everything in
between. We get it.

Inside Out is a collection of real stories, smart ideas and practical tips related to the connection between how your team feels at work and the experience your customers or members and external stakeholders have. One influences the other, always.

Let's get into it.

Samantha Howarth, INSIDE OUT EDITOR

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# The superpower of small business—how experience sets you apart

Think about walking into your favourite local café. The barista remembers your name. Your coffee's made just right. The music's chill, the vibe's warm, and even when they're flat out, you don't feel like an inconvenience.

That's experience design. And honestly? It's a total superpower.

But here's the thing, we've both been around long enough to see how often it gets watered down. Somewhere along the way, "experience" turned into a checkbox – or it just never really got the focus it needed in the first place. A smiley face button at the exit. A survey where nothing seems to get better. A half-hearted effort that fizzles out before it lands. That's not what experience is.

Real experience, the kind that sticks, that builds loyalty, that makes people feel something, that comes from the inside out. It's not just about customers. It's your employees. Your members. Your stakeholders. Anyone who interacts with your brand, your product or service, your culture. And when it's done right, it's the difference between "just doing business" and being unforgettable.

#### You're Not Just the Boss, You are the Experience

Unless you're in a big corporate, you don't have the luxury of passing the "customer experience" off to a department, it's you.

You're the one replying to emails, answering phones, fixing the hiccups, calming the upset customer, and still trying to run a viable business.

### And that's exactly why experience is your edge.

Because while the big guys are buried in layers of process and policy, you've got something they don't: proximity. You're close to your people. You see the good and the bad in real time. You don't need permission to fix what's broken, you just need the headspace to notice it.

### It's Not About Big Budgets, It's About Paying Attention

You don't need a loyalty program, fancy automation, or a rebrand to create a memorable experience. Most of the time, it's the small stuff.

Like calling a customer by name. Following up when you said you would. Making your process smoother, so your client doesn't have to chase you. Saying "thank you" and meaning it.

Experience is about making people feel seen. Heard.
Valued. That's it. And when you do that consistently, people come back. They tell their friends. They become your biggest marketing engine, no ad budget required.



# "Experience isn't some corporate strategy it's a human one"

#### Real Talk: You're Doing It

If you've ever stayed up late fixing something for a client because it mattered to you, that's experience design.

If you've taken a minute to explain how your process works so your customer feels confident, that's experience.

If you've hired someone not just because they could do the job, but because they care the way you do, that's designing from the inside out.

You're not starting from zero. You're just probably not calling it what it is.

#### One Small Shift at a Time

This isn't about adding more to your plate. It's about being intentional with what you're already doing.

Ask your customers: What could we do better? What's one thing you love, and one thing you'd fix?

Then look around your business and ask yourself the same.
Where's the friction? Where's the magic?

Tweak as you go. Keep listening. Keep learning. That's how experience grows, step by step, from the inside out.

Because experience isn't some corporate strategy, it's a human one, and you've already started.





# Small changes have big impact in Ōamaru

How targeted feedback, powered by Get Smart, is helping Ōamaru Blue Penguin Colony Improve Visitor Experiences.

#### A better way to capture the voice of the customer

Ōamaru Blue Penguin Colony (ŌBPC) was missing valuable details from uncaptured visitor feedback by online review solutions. The previous survey tool configuration lacked flexibility to adapt to their needs over time, usability was clunky and historical data wasn't easily retained. The do-it-yourself set up left them wondering if there was a better way to capture more diverse and meaningful results.

#### Making the switch

ŌBPC switched to Get Smart and take advantage of the research-backed Customer Experience Insights product. Get Smart gives ŌBPC an out-of-the-box survey professionally designed to gather deeper insights on specific visitor experiences and the bilingual capability supports capturing a wider range of responses. The weekly experience summary reports are circulated with the ŌBPC management team and key metrics are easily extracted to feed into board-level reporting.



"We wouldn't have received valuable feedback regarding commentary improvements from an online review—Get Smart uncovers the meaningful details"

#### **DR PHILIPPA AGNEW**

Science & Environmental Manager, Ōamaru Blue Penguin Colony

#### Small changes have a lasting impact

Get Smart's platform continually helps uncover opportunities to make small changes that have a big impact such as improving the delivery of expert commentary during penguin viewing.

Embedding a culture of experience improvement is supported by Get Smart weekly reporting, and the accessible bilingual surveys ensure diverse visitor input to optimise the visitor experience for all.



## Experience Excellence

At *Get Smart*, we're shaping a future where businesses know they deliver experiences that their teams and customers love.

Because it's better for people, and for business.

Built for teams without an in-house insights function. Structured customer, employee, and stakeholder feedback programmes, no CX department required.

Made for your industry. Tailored solutions for Visitor Activity Operators, Performing Arts organisations, and more.

Better questions, better data. Researchbacked survey designs that improve response quality and insight depth. **Insights that make sense.** Clear, concise reports that highlight what matters, right when you need it.

Know where you stand. Confidential benchmarking helps you see how your experience compares across the industry.

#### Act fast with Smart Route Alerts.

Be notified and respond quickly to feedback that needs immediate attention.



# It's people who make your business tick—why experience matters for everyone

What comes to mind when you think about business performance? Profit? Growth? There's something often overlooked that directly impacts those numbers. It's the experiences of your team, customers or members, and other key stakeholders — be it your suppliers, partners or board. The truth is, these experiences are deeply connected and can make or break your business.

#### **Employee Experience**

Your team is the foundation of your business. If they're motivated, happy, and feel valued, they're more likely to bring their best to work every day.

Happy teams are also more likely to be engaged and productive, which directly impacts the quality of the work they do and, in turn, the experience they create for your customers or members.

When your people feel supported and empowered, they're more likely to go above and beyond, leading to better service, improved relationships, longevity and a stronger brand reputation.



#### **Customer Experience**

Your customers or members are the people you're here to serve, how they feel about interacting with your business can either keep them coming back or send them straight to your competitors. If your team is engaged and providing excellent service, it reflects in the customer experience.

A positive experience creates loyalty, increases repeat business, and generates word-of-mouth referrals, all of which contribute to improved business performance. When customers feel cared for, they're not just more likely to spend money, but they're also more likely to share their experience with others.

#### **Stakeholder Experience**

Finally, there's stakeholder experience, the people who have a vested interest in your business's success, whether that's investors, suppliers, or partners. Keeping stakeholders happy is key to long-term growth.

If your employees are happy, your customers are loyal, and your business is running smoothly, stakeholders take notice. Strong relationships with stakeholders can lead to new opportunities, better partnerships, and access to resources that can fuel further growth.

#### It's all connected

The experiences of everyone connected to your business, from your team to customers to stakeholders, are all intertwined. When all these experiences align, your business thrives.

The best businesses don't guess, they know



## GREAT CUSTOMER EXPERIENCES START ON THE INSIDE

Modern, bite-sized learning to build high-performing teams and unforgettable visitor experiences

Great visitor experiences are built by great people. At Grow Tourism, we believe Employee Experience = Customer Experience. Investing in your team leads to stronger businesses and better journeys. Our modern training pathways equip tourism professionals with real-world skills and confidence to deliver standout experiences — now and in the future.

#### **Popular Grow Tourism Pathways**



#### Women in Tourism Career Accelerator

Delivered in collaboration with Powrsuit

Designed to nurture the career growth of women in tourism, this program equips future leaders with the skills, know-how and networks needed to step up, lead authentically, and shape a stronger, more inclusive industry.

3 courses, 4.5 learning hours, followed by a 3-month membership to Powrsuit

#### \$499

per learner / team discounts available



#### Tourism Management Transition

For new tourism managers

In tourism, many move from front-line roles into management — but leading a team takes new skills. This program builds the tools and confidence to make that leap successfully.

6 courses, 14 learning hours

#### \$399

per learner / team discounts available



#### Sustainable Tourism Fundamentals

Building a future-ready visitor economy

This program gives teams the tools to understand sustainability, tell authentic stories, and create positive impact — all essential parts of staying competitive.

5 courses, 8.5 learning hours

#### \$249

per learner / team discounts available

Beyond our standard pathways, we provide bespoke onboarding experiences and customized learning design aligned with your organization's goals.

Proudly partnering with







Powrsuit

Hospitality

Ready to grow your people – and the experiences that set you apart?

www.growtourism.com



# Why experience is at the heart of VetPartners' strategy

We caught up with **Stephen Druce,** Chief Customer Officer at **VetPartners,** to talk about what customer experience really means in a veterinary setting—and how it's more than the customer perspective alone that shapes his approach to experience design.

### Your title is Chief Customer Officer, what does that actually mean for your typical day-to-day?

It means I'm constantly thinking about how we make people feel—my core focus day-to-day is shaping and building how VetPartners shows up in the moments that matter for our team of ~4,500 pet professionals or the ~800,000 pet parents who place their trust in us.

### "Find ways to listen and capture feedback from your customers

—and be relentless in acting."

#### STEPHEN DRUCE

Chief Customer Officer, VetPartners



#### How does VetPartners put customers at the centre of care?

I know that the best patient outcomes stem from strong, trusting client relationships. My focus is to help our clinic teams drive better connectivity, consistent service delivery, and improved accessibility, creating more frequent and meaningful interactions with clients that ultimately deliver better care.

### How is customer experience brought into focus operationally at VetPartners?

The quality of our client experience is closely tied to their everyday interactions with our people. To give our teams more time to focus on what they do best, delivering exceptional care, we provide support across several key areas.

- We use innovative marketing technology to stay connected with clients between visits, making care more accessible.
- We prioritise clear, jargon-free communication to equip pet parents with practical knowledge and confidence.
- We continue to drive digital convenience in the fundamentals, from appointment booking to streamlined check-ins.



# What advice do you have for businesses without a dedicated function to 'get started' with their customer focus?

Listen! Find ways to listen and capture feedback from your customers and be relentless in acting, often the things which can have the biggest impact for clients are the simple things to find solutions for. And don't forget to listen to your people - your front line teams are your best source of information and ideas for great customer experiences.



"Ecosystem thinking means understanding how our service fits into their broader life context—even before they own a pet!"

#### STEPHEN DRUCE

Chief Customer Officer, VetPartners

### Do you foresee any significant shifts in the way organisations understand and design customer experience going forward?

**Ecosystem thinking** We need to design experiences that go beyond the four walls of a vet clinic, reaching touchpoints across the entire customer ecosystem. That means understanding how our service fits into their broader life context—even before they own a pet!

**Emotional intelligence** There's growing recognition that customer experience in healthcare isn't just about efficiency, it's about emotional connection. Our best clinicians instinctively understand this. I'm keen to explore how we can better respond to customer emotions across their journey—I think technology can play a big role here.



#### Trying to be better at experience? Same.

That's why we made **Inside Out.** One free, quick read every second month to inspire ideas and action from the best examples.

Don't miss the next issue, subscribe today

**SUBSCRIBE** 

# 5 top habits of brands that nail customer experience

The companies that always seem to know how to make you feel heard, and valued. It's not magic; it's simply a focus on creating great experiences at every turn. If you're wondering how they do it, here are five habits of experience-led brands that make them stand out.

#### 1. Actually Listen to Customers

Experience-led brands don't just ask for feedback, they truly listen to it. They pay attention to what customers are saying, whether it's a suggestion, a compliment, or a complaint. They take that info and use it to make improvements that matter. Listening isn't just about collecting data; it's about making customers feel like their opinions are heard and valued.

#### 2. Anticipate Your Needs

Ever walked into a store or clicked on a website and felt like the brand knew exactly what you needed? That's because experience-led brands think ahead. They don't wait for problems to crop up, they try to predict what might make things easier for you. Whether it's sending a helpful reminder or offering suggestions before you even think of them, these brands make your experience feel effortless.



#### 3. Keep It Consistent

Experience-led brands make sure that no matter where you interact with them, whether online, in-person, or over the phone, it always feels the same. The tone, the vibe, the way you're treated, it's all consistent, which builds trust. When you know what to expect every time, it makes you feel comfortable and connected.

#### 4. Empower Their Team

Great service starts with happy, empowered employees.
Experience-led brands make sure their team has what they need to do their jobs well and make decisions on the spot.

When employees feel trusted and motivated, it's easy for them to pass that energy onto customers, creating an experience that feels personal and genuine.

#### 5. Always Improving

The best brands know that there's always room to grow. They never sit back and assume things are perfect. Instead, they're constantly looking for ways to improve the experience, whether through new technology, better customer service, or small adjustments to make things smoother. By keeping things fresh and adapting to changes, these brands continue to wow their customers.

## Experience-led brands know that it's the little things that make a big difference.

By putting customers at the heart of everything they do, they build lasting relationships that turn firsttime buyers into loyal fans.

Why settle for good when unforgettable is in reach?



## BUILDING TOMORROW'S LEADERSHIP PIPELINE, TODAY



Tourism is an exciting and professional career choice. And the way we develop and retain our people needs to reflect our growth and tourism management ambitions-modern, future-focused, dynamic. Great experiences are built by great people.



#### What's our secret sauce?

- Modern and practical
   Our bite-sized, real-world learning fits into busy schedules and addresses current industry challenges.
- Delivered online, on-demand
   No time out of the office
   needed—our programs are
   accessible anytime, anywhere.
- Powerful self-reflections
   Learning comes to life through self-reflection, ensuring it's applied in the real-world.

   How good!

Real-world case studies

Learning is delivered through the lens of well-known operators who have been there, done that. Want to know how AJ Hackett Bungy New Zealand delivers exceptional customer experiences, or how Hobbiton Movie Set navigates the complexities of distribution? These things are all baked-in to Grow's courses.



Attracting visitors is just the beginning. Delivering exceptional experiences is where the real work begins.

Let's grow tourism from the inside out.

The Grow Tourism team