

# Meet Customer CEO



**Most companies still operate in a world where they mistakenly believe they control their customers.**

In today's market, this notion has been made obsolete by a collision between self-empowering technology, competitors coming from out of nowhere and the daily destruction of cherished business models.

**This business anarchy has shifted power from companies to customers at warp speed.** To survive in this new landscape and build a better future, organizations must adapt quickly or they will die. Welcome to the age of Customer CEO.

There have been three distinct eras of marketing, meaning the activities necessary to acquire and retain customers. First there was the production era, with a mind-boggling array of new inventions that lifted people up by providing previously unimagined convenient solutions to everyday problems like washing machines. With greater competition, we shifted into the sales era, driven by creative advertising designed to convince people to buy the “next big thing”. Now, we are in the social era, when customers rely more upon the recommendations of their friends than the messages from brands themselves.

MarketPower Group has had the good fortune to interview and survey over 100,000 of our clients’ customers. Nine distinct patterns have emerged that we describe in the book, *Customer CEO: How to Profit from the Power of Your Customers*. Here’s a snapshot of each customer power.

**The Power of Me:** Simply put, it’s all about them. They are self-possessed and they know it. This means they expect every enterprise to cater to them. Power of Me companies like Amazon and Starbucks continuously build customer first cultures.

**The Power of Value:** Most people are still living with personal fallout from the economic problems of the past few years. As the U.S. economy shifts to more of a part-time and free lance workforce, they are still extremely price sensitive. That’s why brands like Hyundai and Costco have prospered.

**The Power of Performance:** This power revolves around a design thinking approach to business. Better design - be it products, services, etc. - leads to better customer experiences. People are willing to pay more for a consistently better experience. Apple and Dyson have proven this in the marketplace.

**The Power of the Heart:** Customers make that emotional connection with companies and brands that understand them and take the time to really get to know them. Look at the amazing success of Trader Joes. Cult-like loyalty isn’t an accident.

**The Power of Simple:** Customers are fatigued with too many variations and options. Smart brands consistently make things simple to delight their customers. Brands like Ikea and In-N-Out Burger excel at simple.

**The Power of Yes:** Treat customers the way that you want to be treated. Empower employees to always do what’s right for the customer. Eleanor Roosevelt once said, "Never allow a person to tell you 'No' who doesn't have the power to say 'Yes.'" Discount Tire fixes over 6,000 flat tires for free everyday to say “yes” and it’s what has made them the largest tire dealer in the country.

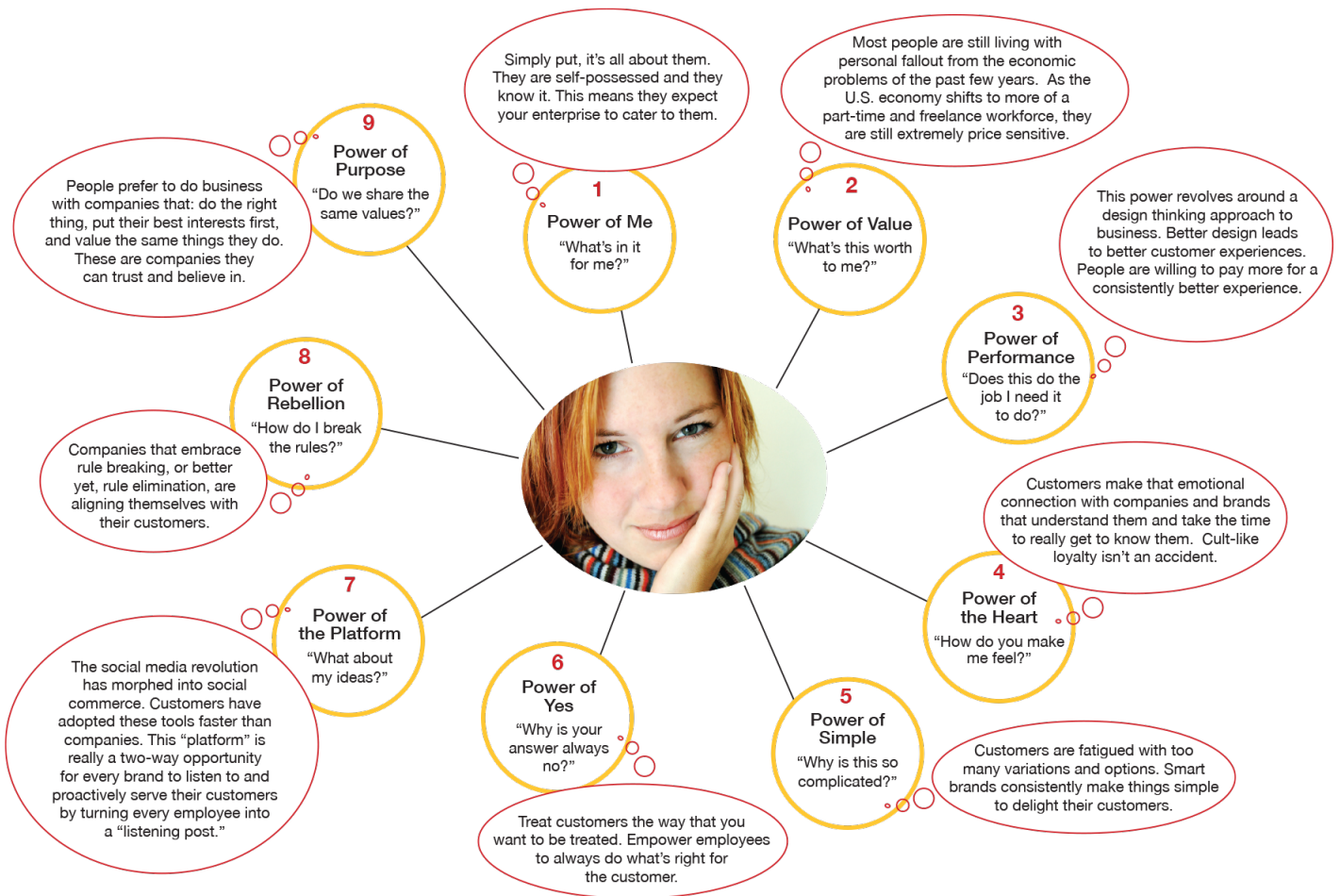
**The Power of Platform:** The social media revolution has morphed into social commerce. Customers have adopted these tools faster than companies. This “platform” is really a two-way opportunity for every brand to listen to and proactively serve their customers by turning every employee into a “listening post.” JetBlue and Morton’s Steakhouse have made this an art form.

**The Power of Rebellion:** How do I break the rules? Companies that embrace rule breaking, or better yet, rule elimination, are aligning themselves with their customers. That’s why brands like Red Bull, Dos Equis, Harley Davidson and Big Ass Fans have carved out unique niches that they dominate.

**The Power of Purpose:** People prefer to do business with companies that: do the right thing, put their best interests first, and value the same things they do. These are companies they can trust and believe in. Think TOM’s Shoes.

It’s not enough to just understand these powers. You must actively embrace them because someone, somewhere, is already listening to your customers to discover a new way to steal them from you. Their solutions might be to do what you do better, cheaper or faster. But the smartest ones will be those that engage them emotionally to fully understand how they can make their lives richer and more fulfilling.

Today’s customer demands that you deliver much more than just trying to separate them from their money. If you want to succeed with today’s Customer CEO, remember they are the people that hold your future in their hands.



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