



THE VERY GROUP

CCMA Online event: Tuesday 30th March
“Why organisational design is critical to delivering exceptional CX”
Mark Billingham - Q&A Synopsis



Q. Can you give us a bit of background on your digital journey within The Very Group and what you set out to achieve?

A. Our history goes back 90 years now. We were originally a mail order catalogue company and high street retailer. We are now a pureplay online digital retailer and also a significant Financial Services business as 95% of what we sell is on credit. We are basically a department store online.

We set out a new vision 10 years ago to take away all of those fixed costs and move to digital. The changes we have implemented have not happened overnight. It's not just a one or two year journey, and we are not fully there yet.

Q. How did you go about making sure that customer experience was at the very heart of your operating model and design?

A. It all starts with the structure, making sure the business is centred around Customer Experience and we are still learning. When I entered the organisation 4 years ago we were sliced into different divisions - such as FS, Retail, Regulated - and we didn't talk the language of customer. We've spent that time making sure that everyone in our business talks the same language and that everyone understand the customer.

We have a rigid set of 20 KPI's – which determine whether customer experience is doing well and I as CX lead talk to the rest of the business about. Whether at board or senior manager meetings we talk about our core KPI's. Everything correlates back to NPS. We look at promoters, and passive customers versus detractors, and analyse customer behaviours. We use those stats to change processes and improve customer journeys.

Q. How has this focus on CX helped to deliver the levels of year-on year growth the business has experienced?

A. By improving those 20 KPI's on a daily basis. Previously we had too many channels, and for me simplicity is everything. We've added a chat bot which acts as a concierge service. It's not about self service deflection, but getting the right people to the right channel and an empathetic person first time.

Q. What is the role that Webhelp has played and what value does it bring to the partnership?

A. I've worked closely with Webhelp for 10 years now. Webhelp provide nearly 1000 people in the UK and South Africa to support our customer service strategy. We've worked hard to understand how their people can best integrate with our operating model. That's where Webhelp have been different from other BPO providers. They were very clear from the outset on what they can and can't provide and empathetically do a fantastic job. TNPS is at plus 56 from minus 48 just 4 years ago. Webhelp were clear on which elements should be on-shore versus off-shore. Working to put the right people, in place with the right skills at the right time to service our customers.

Q. Thinking about CX delivery and the role of organisational design, how do you see the "new normal" looking in this space for The Very Group moving forward?

A. For us it's more about constant development and improvement of the tools we currently use. A customer care advisor moving forward needs to show a huge amount of empathy, have complex problem solving skills and to have longer conversations with customers. We now have fraud investigators, financial difficulty specialists, councillors, investigators etc. - skills that perhaps we didn't need 5 or 6 years ago. To set ourselves up for success we are working hard to understand the different roles we now need, and the type of people we need. It's a different demographic now of advisor and again we recognise that we are not fully there yet.

