

BLOG entry - 10 February 2007

Sex, lies and relationships

I noticed that the Financial Times appear to agree with my concerns over the quality of Dell's relationship management. They have printed several articles on this topic in the past few weeks, most recently one from Stefan Stern, who was invited to Dell's facility following his column where he complained bitterly about their service. Like myself, he pointed out that Dell have very good products, but these are let down by inadequate customer service when things go wrong. So serious seems to be the situation that Michael Dell has reinstalled himself at the head of the company and their Chief Executive Kevin Rollins has stepped down.

Dell's difficulties rely in the 'Sex' department i.e. relationship management rather than the 'Rock'n'Roll' one i.e. performance and delivery. It certainly has one of the most efficient supply chains in the world. Unfortunately most things can be appropriated in today's 'karaoke society' where copies spring up overnight. Hewlett Packard and Lenovo of China have upped their game significantly to match Dell's prowess in the logistics area.

What we are then left with is the power of the brand and how this is represented to customers. Unfortunately I am not the only one to have spotted Dell's weak spot in the customer service area. A good reputation can take years to develop but minutes to destroy in an age where customer feedback can get round the world in seconds via the internet. It may take longer for Dell to turn its performance round in the 'sex department'.

Anyway, on to other matters. Recently I delivered an event at the Hard Rock Café in Leeds which was an excellent venue to set the message of 'Sex, Leadership and Rock'n'Roll' in. Hard Rock Café excel on service – perhaps Dell should pay a visit to learn something about sex and computers?

And finally, we had an article accepted by an academic journal on the 'backstage story' of the World Tour. The story has a number of very 'Spinal Tap' features and I will be giving some seminars on what you can learn about project management from this glorious failure in the Isle of Man shortly.

All the best / Rock on

Peter aka The Dean