

## Staff 'false smiles' won't bring customers back: study

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(PhysOrg.com) -- Companies should invest effort in convincing their staff about their marketing messages as well as trying to convince their customers, according to The University of Queensland's Associate Professor of Marketing Frank Alpert.

Associate Professor Alpert from the UQ Business School said many managers simply ordered staff around, instead of genuinely engaging them in the company's marketing messages and mission, and this resulted in disengaged [customer service](#).

"If you order staff around, you get false smiles and everyone can tell when the checkout person for example is giving you a false smile," Dr Alpert said.

"You need to spend the time to explain the values of the company, the mission of the company and the position of the company to staff to convince them, so they internalise the message and can therefore implement it in their engagement with customers."

Dr Alpert and Engaged Marketing founder and CEO Chris Roberts — who is also a UQ Business School Industry Fellow — took the unusual step of co-authoring a scholarly paper on Mr Roberts' Total Engagement Model. The paper will be published this year in the international Journal of Product & Brand Management.

"The model is based on a simple premise where what you 'say' what you

'do' and who you 'are' is in complete harmony and importantly designed to drive business growth," Mr Roberts said.

Dr Alpert said to do that well in all dimensions — advertising, products and the customer experience — was hard.

"Organisations must remember that to have engaged customers you must first have engaged staff," he said.

"The model points out how to align all of those components, so everybody in the company knows and believes in what the company is doing."

Dr Alpert said a 2008 global benchmark study of businesses demonstrated that there was a huge chasm between companies' intentions and their execution of strategy.

The study showed that although 80 per cent of executives thought customer strategies were more important than ever, only 23.9 percent of employers agreed that their staff were well-versed in how to please customers.

"Mere satisfaction is not enough anymore, merely satisfying customers doesn't get you loyalty," Dr Alpert said.

"Loyalty requires you to delight the customers, which is a higher level and a harder goal."

Dr Alpert said that, although the total engagement approach required more effort from employers, it would result in greater staff and [customer](#) loyalty.

Provided by University of Queensland

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