# Social Experiences: Consumers in the Big Wide World

**Tzung-Cheng TC Huan**<sup>*</sup>

*National Chung Hsing University, Taiwan*

**Rouxelle de Villiers**

*University of Waikato, New Zealand*

**Abstract**

Social experiences include all those interactions between the consumer, the brand, and those that touch their relationships with the employees of the organization, other people within the community and their role in or membership of groups and subgroups in society. In today's marketplace, these include the virtual marketspace of social media and other digital or online forms of communication and interaction. This section will prompt readers' thinking about service failure recovery and compensation for improving customers' social experiences.

*Key words*: membership; relationships; inter-personal interactions

Social experience means something more than relationships, social interactions with customers or relationship management. Klein (2013) describes social experiences as something designed to make customers feel something, whether that something is resonating with a personal mission, feeding a passion, or offering membership in something globally important. The argument is that it's only by engaging customers, by connecting with them as people, that we can realize the returns we all know are waiting for us (Klein, 2013). Social experiences become more powerful than corporate Web sites and CRM systems. Communities will be the driving force for innovation (Owyang, 2009).

The cases in this section provide some variety in perspectives on social experience that benefit researchers and practitioners by going beyond the typical literature. For example, the case by Bish (Medical Insurance Mayhem: One Woman's Struggle for Information) addresses customer service experience, negative word of mouth, customer relationship management, the importance of first impressions, negative experience, and brand equity. The case by Chan (Right about Student Rights?) demonstrates clearly that relationships are more complicated than client-provider power play or customer-employee service relationships. Customers

---
<sup>*</sup>Correspondence to: Tzung-Cheng (TC) Huan (corresponding author), Graduate Institute of Sports and Health Management, National Chung Hsing University, 145 Xingda Rd., South Dist., Taichung City 40227, Taiwan, Phone: 886-(0)916-051-041, Email: tchuan@dragon.nchu.edu.tw.

are keen to be treated as partners and co-creators of products and services, in a mutually satisfactory social relationship. The case by Gibb (BurgerBarn Blunder) covers different material. Topics are brand loyalty, evoked set, damage control, word of mouth marketing, and price sensitivity. The moral of this story is that the organization needs to ensure that all levels of staff are aware that damage control and service recovery are critical to long-term success. This case study also demonstrates that even young customers understand that they do not merely buy food at a fast food restaurant – they buy an experience.

Some cases are easy to relate to. In the case relating to Burger King (The Once upon a Future Burger King) Rubenstein asserts the need to keep in mind that a Senior Exec's time is competed for by many. One also sees that a marketing executive's decision-making requires a unique balance. Vidal (Beach Resort in Margarita, Venezuela: Failed Reservation of Suite) addresses service failure and compensation in an emotional context. A key and reservations can be important. For getting a key, various service recovery and compensations considerations are discussed. Then from Zhang a potentially tragic outcome is considered. Zhang (To be a Savior or a Spectator?) presents a case from Tibet in which the inn owner might have been responsible in a tragic outcome. This demonstrates crisis management in a very practical context.

I think you can see that the cases in this section provide some variety in perspectives on social experience. Researchers and practitioners are likely to benefit greatly by going beyond the typical literature.

This section has good material to prompt some different thinking regarding service failure recovery and compensation for improving customers' social experiences. However, in concluding I'm avoiding the temptation to give you my take on any particular article. The fact that I'm associating myself with this section is evidence that I support the six articles included in this section. It is not evidence that I'd recommend the same best solutions as the authors.

I see the cases as reading material that should prompt critical thinking, discussion and reflection. The case by Bish (Medical Insurance Mayhem: One Woman's Struggle for Information) suggests that QPO Medical should reimburse the patient the full cost of the initial appointment and acknowledge the poor way in which the case was handled. Do you agree or have other ideas? There are issues that merit discussion. The case by Chan (Right about Student Rights?) brings up designing a new code of conduct and implementing training for the staff. Is Chan revealing a bias? Is a new code of conduct really going to address the problem? Or, will work on the code and training for it be a poor use of resources? The questions just given are the kinds of matters you no doubt thought about in reading the case. If such questions were not considered, of what value is the case? Reading the case by Gibb (BurgerBarn Blunder) in suggesting that apologizing and providing staff training should have provoked considering questions as they did for Chan. Even if you think the solution offered is the best of those raised, can you think of a solution that you think is better?

My goal in these concluding notes is not to suggest I disagree with Bish, Chan,

Gibb, Rubenstein, Vidal or Zhang. All the authors of cases present ideas worth reading and reflecting on. Reading this material should not be treated as preparation for an exam or self-evaluation on knowing what is in the cases. May I suggest that the cases be used to prompt critical thinking to stimulate reflection and to learn what should be learned from the variety of perspectives.

## References

Klein, D., (2013), "Creating Social Experiences that Customers Care About," UX Magazine, Article No: 930, https://uxmag.com/articles/creating-social-experiences-that-customers-care-about.

Owyang, J., (2009), "The 5 Phases of Social Experience," http://www.destinationcrm.com/Articles/Columns-Departments/The-Tipping-Point/The-5-Phases-of-Social-Experience-54733.aspx.