



case study: grocery store

client: organic grocery store

This all-organic grocery store contacted us because year-over-year sales growth had been falling drastically for the past six months – they were barely holding steady despite a growing industry, many new products and six new employees. The new employees were not performing their jobs to the satisfaction of the owners. The atmosphere in the store was palpably tense, even to customers. And overall, the owners felt that the store was falling far short of its potential.

Michelle's involvement with this client was particularly intensive, so she was able to work on all facets of the Engagement Competency Model with them.

The result of her work with them was a significant turnaround in the sales trend, a noticeably improved culture and a much more sustainable business model.

client: organic grocery store

purpose (customer engagement)

before

- Minimum quantities of each product kept in stock. Re-orders placed only when item depleted. Staple items (bread, dairy) frequently out of stock. Up to 1/3 of a customer's order could not be fulfilled. Result: lost revenue, low customer loyalty.
- Product range quite narrow and specialized, except for produce. Result: lost customer loyalty, as customers have to shop elsewhere for their full grocery list.
- Products arranged in a confusing, crowded way. Result: Lost revenue, as customers left without items on their list – because they couldn't find them.
- Many customers felt a relationship with the two owners, but little was done to build customer relationship and loyalty further. Result: Lost loyalty, lost revenue.

after

→ Recommended that staples items be overstocked to avoid out-of-stock situations. Also, recommended that "par" quantities be established for each item. Now, out-of-stock situations are rare.

→ Recommended expanding range to capture the full grocery list. Several categories added, including personal care and household cleaning products.

→ Designed in-store signage to highlight new and specialty items. Recommended grouping products together more clearly by category.

↗ Introduced name tags for all employees. Gave the clear message that they were empowered and expected to connect with customers, too.

→ Organized and promoted store-sponsored community events to attract new customers, increase customer loyalty and drive additional purchases. Designed event handouts, with recipes and other relevant information.

↘ Posted information about the benefits of organics and about the local organic farmers. Organized outings to local organic farms.

before

- Owners had not yet implemented an accounting system. Result: they couldn't invest wisely and comfortably in growing the business.
- There was no tracking of how new customers were attracted. Result: potentially missed opportunities to invest in things that worked.
- Little information was shared with employees about how the store was performing or about new developments. Result: employee frustration and disengagement.

after

- Recommended tracking expenses and store profitability in a more deliberate way. They hired an accountant and began to receive monthly reports.
- Oversaw the introduction of a system to track how new customers learned about the store. Conducted staff training on the new system.
- Created a series of charts to display several trends, such as daily sales, average ticket, number of new customers per day.
- Created a staff bulletin board where announcements and new product information could be posted.

before

- New employees were expected to learn on the job, with training information given in a haphazard way. Result: High turnover, owner frustration at mistakes, customer frustration at poorly trained staff.
- Employees were hired based on their passion for organic food. Result: a disjointed team of clashing personalities.
- There were high levels of tension and discord that customers could frequently sense. Owners regularly shouted at employees in front of customers. Result: Customer alienation, low staff morale, high turnover.
- Employees generally liked each other but they didn't always support each other well on the job. Result: Lost productivity, suffering morale.

after

- Developed employee training manuals, including a comprehensive produce training guide.
- Created the training initiative "August is Meat Month!" which included an all-team field trip, a staff tasting event and various handouts. The goal was to promote a high-profit, high-loyalty category.
- Helped the owners revise their hiring criteria to focus on attitude and fit as well as interest in organic food.
- Facilitated several team meetings at which people could voice their frustrations and satisfactions. Coached both owners on leadership and interpersonal issues.
- In the staff bulletin board, created a system for employees to post informative notes for each other.
- Coached employees on how to give constructive feedback and ask for what they needed to do their jobs well.

before

The original logo was cluttered, a little confusing and English-only. It had a somewhat heavy, stiff feel that doesn't correspond to the store's down-to-earth, hippy atmosphere.

The Real Green Grocer



after

The new logo is fresher, cleaner and clearer. It matches the actual culture of the store nicely. It is easy to create in English or French. And it retains the tree element from the original so that customers can still identify with it.



We strive to be ecological in everything we do.

This is shorthand for an evolving but consistent way of thinking and acting in the world. We seek harmony of place, person and materials. And we know our actions are right when they contribute to the integrity and beauty of the community.

To do this, we:

- Provide our customers with a full range of products that represent the most ecological choices available.
- Inform people so they can make wiser, more nurturing choices -- for themselves and for future generations.
- Inspire people to savor the luscious experience of food – choosing it, preparing it, enjoying all its sensations – because this feeds the soul as it feeds the body.
- Encourage people to connect with each other in meaningful ways, both through the experience of sharing delicious food and through the EcollegeY community (and sometimes through both!).
- Offer an example to the world of an “organic company.”

The first result of our efforts will be a happier community.

The second result of our efforts will be a clear contribution to a planet that can support humanity indefinitely.

The third result of our efforts will be a self-sustaining, thriving business that generously rewards us all with money and opportunities for personal fulfillment.

And the ultimate result of our efforts will be a planet full of people living better lives, as our example spreads and business itself is transformed.