

The lens customers buy through

This team exercise tackles perhaps the most important mindset shift engineers need to make to put them in a stronger position to help customers make buying decisions.

Engineers tend to prioritise their own logic. They can tend to look at problems with a solutions focus and *their* logic. Whereas their customers are looking down the lens the other way, from the problem side rather than the solution side, and with an *emotional* lens. Makes it kind of hard to see eye to eye! This needs attention.

It's emotional

Their 'chimp brain' leads. They scan you, your engagement and offering around trust, risk to them (or their reputation), what they'll tell their boss about any outcomes, hassle and pain, praise, status, power, advancement, impact on team or end-users, ownership of significant change, safety, enjoyment of work, getting home on time, etc The list goes on. This all wraps around the apparent logical discussion you're having with them!

These things make them feel a certain way. And ultimately they end up *feeling* more like saying 'yes' or 'no'. And they'll rarely tell you (or even realise) it was emotionally charged.

Team discussion

With your team, discuss the emotional component in your customer's buying decisions. Your goal is to get this idea on your radar early, and the rest of the training will help you more fully understand how to leverage it. **Don't go too detailed in your answers. Just get the idea in the forefront of your mind. Keep this to 30 mins if you can.**

Explore the following:

1. What typical emotions do you think your customers experience as you first engage them? Are they open? Hesitant? Excited by what you're saying? Untrusting? Would they follow you in this area as a 'leader'? Or protect themselves fast and say 'no'?
2. What emotions do you think mostly drive their decisions to proceed with your proposals? (Tip: this might be easier to explore on a specific situation you're all familiar with). And what could you do to amplify the right emotions?
3. For an opportunity that didn't go ahead, what emotions do you think the customer might have felt that ultimately ended up in a 'no'? They probably wanted to avoid something that they perhaps feared happening. What was that? Why?
4. How do you think your typical customers feel when engaged by you or your engineering team? How do you come across to them? Do they think you're smart? Relevant? Do they think you listen and probe to understand? Do they think you have their best interests at heart? Or do they think you seem excited about your solutions but that you're just not understanding their situation and challenges as well as they'd like? And therefore it appears too risky for them to proceed?
5. What ideas do you have as a team to increase the chances of you getting this right with your customers and steering positive emotions that keep the customer engaged, happy, and feeling like the fit and value is there? Thought: most engineers don't meet the customer where the customer is at well enough. That's where it all goes wrong.