

BLOG - Les Tartes de Françoise: masters in sharing happiness for 30 years!

Olivier De Bolle is clearly passionate, in his office at home, when we ask him to tell us something about his work and experiences working at Tartes de Françoise.

Since 2018 he has been responsible for sales and marketing of this retail company's now 24 locations. At the time he joined the company to 'bring in retail competencies.' This has positively influenced the organization. Together with Multi-Value he created a new path, in order to make les Tartes de Françoise a premium brand when it comes to customer experience as well. With great dedication Olivier tells us about his experiences.



Since 1994 masters in sharing happiness

The history of les Tartes de Françoise goes back to 1994. Françoise, the wife of founder Olivier Laffut, had a great passion for receiving people in a homely atmosphere and sharing her happiness

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By Multi Value - <https://multi-value.com>

with cakes, which she made in a traditional way with the very best ingredients. The enthusiastic responses to this prompted – back then – bank director Laffut to offer the cakes on a larger scale to local restaurants. Before he drove to the bank he worked at, he put the cakes in the oven. During his lunch break he drove back home to take the cakes out of the oven and put the new ones in.

Les Tartes de Françoise was not yet a retail company at the time. They mainly supplied the catering industry from a bakery in Ixelles. During an “Open Door Days” event in Brussels, the business opened to the public for the first time. Showcases were still taped up and people had to walk through a narrow corridor to the bakery to smell the delicious, freshly baked cakes.

It took some time before they realized that selling these cakes from bakeries without taped-up display cases and narrow aisles was also going well. And worked even better. The product-oriented, business-to-business oriented concept gradually transformed into a retail company for private customers. And that is where Olivier De Bolle came into the picture.

His mission was clear: to make les Tartes de Françoise a premium retail brand, where customers can get the best customer experience. An experience created by delicious products and an inviting store appearance at convenient store locations. But also with a customer ceremony, that exceeds customer expectations from the moment they open the shop door until they close the shop door behind them when they leave. Letting customers get a taste of their happiness is what they call Les Tartes de Françoise.

From ‘helping’ customers to ‘enchanted’ customers

About three years ago we developed a customer ceremony, which we realized that in practice it was a little difficult, too abstract and not very sales-oriented”, Olivier De Bolle admits.

Customers’ feedback, which was collected through Multi-Value’s customer experience reports, among other things, showed that customer experience was not yet moving sufficiently into the direction we had in mind. When we met Stefaan Vandroogenbroeck from Multi-Value last year, we reexamined the customer ceremony and greatly simplified it. Much more concrete and much more focused on sales. And that turned out to be the right step.

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“For us, Stefaan is an incredible asset. You can tell that Stefaan is someone who understands the store environment and can also give concrete hints to our people, which they understand and can actually work with.”

Stefaan then started a training for all store managers, and later we also involved the employees and assistant managers. Our people are now much more aware that the customer is central to us and that selling is a real profession. Where we used to mainly ‘help’ customers, today we mainly want to ‘enchant’ customers. We now understand much better that you have to go the extra mile to exceed our customers’ expectations. And



this is reflected in, among other things, better customer support, for example by asking better questions and by providing better advice about products and ingredients.

While our people used to be afraid of “reaching into our customers’ pockets”, service-oriented sales are now much more part of the service we provide. And with proven results. Our turnover in cookies has doubled, and we have also seen significant increases in the sales of our wines and coulis.

“If you sell a pack of cookies costing €6 with a €30 cake, you will have sold 20% more.”

We also see the evolution in the monthly customer experience visits that Multi-Value carries out at our stores. We see the report scores improving nicely. The average score is already above 80% and we have set a target of achieving 90%+ scores.

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You must keep a customer experience process like this alive daily. In Weekly Focus, our internal newsletter, in which we highlight all the highlights of the coming week, one of our topics is also the customer ceremony as a standard. Each time, a different store manager takes the turn to show in a video how you can make additional sales in a service-oriented manner, for example. Like recently with the champagne around Valentine's Day. We then share the videos with all our employees via WhatsApp.

It doesn't end with training the store managers

We still have a long way to go. We have seen that more actions are necessary to get everyone on board. As store managers and assistant managers, you can already succeed in exceeding customer expectations, but that's not enough. Only 30% of the cakes are sold by the store managers themselves. We have a company with around 240 employees, so we must do more to include everyone in this customer ceremony.

That is why we have also asked Multi-Value to train our store managers and our assistant managers in team management skills such as coaching their employees. And we are currently also looking at how we can get the approximately 150 working students on board with this, who work for us during weekends and at busy times.

Les Tartes de Françoise is well on its way to giving customers a premium experience that matches that of a premium retail brand. To my closing question about what advice Olivier would give to companies facing similar challenges, his answer is clear: "make sure you keep your sales ceremony simple and concrete and be assisted by people who have real, practical experience in creating the right customer experience."
