



# **Do You Have an Executive Empathy Program?**

**by Curtis N. Bingham**

**CHIEF CUSTOMER OFFICER  
COUNCIL**

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## Do You Have an Executive Empathy Program?

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*Curtis Bingham is the recognized authority on chief customer officers and the first to promote this role as a catalyst for competitive advantage. He is the creator of the CCO Roadmap, a groundbreaking work containing 100+ critical strategies essential for customer centricity. As an international speaker, author, and consultant, Curtis is passionate about creating customer strategy to sustainably grow revenue, profit, and loyalty.*

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I've been working with chief customer officers for nearly a decade now and one of the things that perpetually hampers CCOs and other customer executives in their efforts to become customer focused is the struggle for CEO buy-in. There are a number of reasons for this lack of support, including the distraction of other priorities; a lack of awareness that a problem exists or of its severity; or the inability to outweigh the seemingly guaranteed ROI of more traditional investments. However, they all boil down to the same root cause: becoming customer centric is not a sufficiently high priority in the CEO's mind.

Embarking on an executive empathy program is a sure-fire way to elevate customer centricity to a strategic imperative. The purpose of the program is to bring the customer into the boardroom, both figuratively and literally, by using data, customer anecdotes, and first-hand experiences to show executives the nature and scope of customer issues and, most importantly, the negative impact on the business of maintaining the status quo. Solid data is a prerequisite for this program. Without data showing the frequency, severity, and impact of customer issues, priorities will not be realigned. Assuming this data is in place, here are seven recommendations to expose executives to customer issues and create more passionate support for your efforts on behalf of the customer and business:

1. Play selected audio excerpts from call center calls during executive committee meetings
2. Either video customer interviews or invite customers to record their own videos describing their challenges with your products, services or interactions and play them back in executive meetings
3. Simulate customer interactions to highlight convoluted or broken processes
4. Select a customer with a complaint representative of a systemic issue and ask an executive to call the customer, listen to the issue, and commit to address it during the month. Have the

executive write about the experience, the issue, and the resolution on an internal blog. Engage each member of the executive team each month

5. Bring a strongly dissatisfied customer into the executive committee meeting to tell his or her story personally
6. In advance of an executive retreat, assign each executive to shadow a front-line employee for a day, withholding judgment of personal skills and committing to come away with one key issue or process that harms customers or hampers front-line employees from serving customers; share, prioritize, and commit to resolve during the executive retreat
7. Assign executives sponsorships of key accounts, with responsibilities to meet face to face with decision makers to discuss key indicators of relationship health, uncover dissatisfiers, and commit to fix within one month.

There are many more ways in which executive empathy can be cultivated. How else are you doing so?

Logic makes people think, but emotion makes them act. Show compelling data to get their attention. Tell the customer stories using powerful and compelling vehicles to make them act.\*

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## About CURTIS N. BINGHAM

As Executive Director of the Chief Customer Officer Council™, Curtis Bingham is the recognized authority on chief customer officers and the first to promote this role as a catalyst for competitive advantage. He is the creator of the CCO Roadmap, a groundbreaking work containing 100+ critical strategies essential for customer centricity. As an international speaker, author, and consultant, Curtis is passionate about creating customer strategy to sustainably grow revenue, profit, and loyalty.

## About THE CHIEF CUSTOMER OFFICER COUNCIL

The CCO Council is a powerful and intimate gathering of the world's leading customer executives from widely diverse industries. The Council helps executives achieve objectives faster and more easily by leveraging best practices. It helps validate and refine strategies and initiatives to avoid experimenting at customer expense. Membership is by invitation only, and purposefully cross-pollinated with the most forward-thinking companies, large and small, so as to help customer executives deliver solid, customer-centric business results. For more information, email [info@ccocouncil.org](mailto:info@ccocouncil.org) or call 978-226-8675.



**Powerful Influence on Customer Centricity** – Authority is the currency of the C-Suite. Greater Authority means greater ability to influence the organization to take a desired action. So how do you increase your authority and better use the authority that's been granted to you? How can you build stronger relationships and demonstrate and communicate results? In this **Bingham Advisory**, you'll not only learn about the three types of chief customer officer authority: Positional, Borrowed and Earned, you'll also learn five ways to borrow and four ways to earn greater authority, with specific examples of each.

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