

Zappos company essay sample

[Business](#), [Customers](#)



The company that stood out the most among those listed was Zappos. Having some personal experience with this company, it seemed to be the best choice for me. After using Zappos on several occasions for purchases, this assignment would allow me to further research it and get an even greater understanding of the company's culture, its climate and what it stands for.

At Zappos, their belief is " If you get the culture right, most of the other stuff - like great customer service, or building a great long brand, or passionate employees and customers - will happen naturally on its own (Burkus).

Zappos feels that their relationship with other companies is a two sided coin, with the culture of Zappos on one side and the other company's brand on the other. The brand of a company may lag behind the culture of Zappos, but it is felt that eventually brand will catch up to the culture.

At Zappos their culture is their brand. For the company, culture starts from the point that an employee is going through the hiring process. This occurs with two different sets of interviews for a perspective employee. The first interview is conducted by the hiring manager and his team where they perform a standard set of questions looking for relevant experience, technical ability, and fit within the team. After which, the Human Resource Department then conducts a different set of interviews, where they are looking primarily for a cultural fit. Before being a hired a perspective employee must pass both sets of interviews. This process has caused a lot of highly qualified individuals to be turned down for positions within the company. Although these candidates could have helped the company with its' bottom line, they did not fit culturally with the company.

After the interview process and being hired an employee must then be trained on the culture of Zappos. Anyone hired by Zappos must go through the same training that the Customer Loyalty Team, call center representatives, go through. Regardless of position title, whether an accountant, a lawyer, or software developer, everyone goes through the exact same training. This is a four week program that covers the company's history, the importance of customer service, the long term vision of the company, the philosophy about company culture, and then they must work as a call representative for two weeks (Heathfield). The company believes that customer service is not just a department, it is the entire company.

Along with being trained as a call representative, all employees learn the ten Family Core Values of Zappos, but only five will be discussed while the other five will be listed. The first core value is " Deliver WOW through service." In order to do this an employee must do something to differentiate the company from others, this means to do something unconventional and innovative. Zappos feels that its employees must do something that is above and beyond what the customer normally expects, and whatever it is it must have an emotional impact on the receiver (Kerr). Delivering the " WOW" just does not mean working with customers, it also means delivering internally with partners and work associates.

The next core value that is taught in training is " Embrace and Drive Change." Zappos believes that most large companies do not like and are not prepared for constant change in the market place. Zappos employees are taught not to fear change but embrace it and even encourage it. That

change is encouraged to take place from the bottom up, from employees who are on the front lines and who work with customers directly. Who better understands and comes in constant contact with the issues and concerns communicated by customers in that changing market place.

“ Create Fun and A Little Weirdness,” is the next core value instilled at training for Zappos employees. Zappos differentiates itself from a lot of other companies by valuing fun and allowing its employees to be a little weird. In an effort not to become a large company that feels corporate and boring. They want their employees to be able to laugh at themselves, look for the fun and humor in their daily work. In an effort to make the company unique and memorable, they want their employees to be a little weird. The type of weird that makes a person interesting and fun, not the type of weird that makes a person crazy or an extremist. When you combine a little weirdness with making sure everyone is also having fun at work, it ends up being a win-win for everyone (Shoultz). Employees are more engaged in the work that they do, and the company as a whole becomes more innovative.

Allowing employees to be weird transitions into the next value, “ Be Adventurous, Creative, and Open-Minded.” Zappos wants its employees to take risks and not be afraid to make mistakes. Through mistakes the company feels its employees will develop and improve their decision making skills. This value also keeps employees from becoming complacent and accepting the status quo. It allows employees to explore new possibilities and have the freedom to be creative in their solutions. Being creative and adventurous causes unconventional solutions by thinking outside the box,

but that is what allows us to rise above and stay ahead of the competition (Morris). The next core value of Zappos is that it is important for employees to grow both personally and professionally.

The belief to “Pursue Growth and Learning,” is that it is important that employees constantly challenge and stretch themselves and not be stuck in a job where that don not feel like they can grow or learn (Burkus). Every employee has more potential in them than they realize, and it is the goal of the company to unlock that potential. The last five core values start with “Build Open and Honest Relationships with Communication.” Xappos believes that openness and honesty make for the best relationships because it leads to trust and faith. “Build a Positive Team and Family Spirit,” Zappos places a lot of emphasis on our culture because they feel they are both a team and a family. “Do More with Less,” this has always been a goal of the company. “Be Passionate and Determined,” passion is the best fuel that drives the company forward. “Be Humble,” although the company has grown quickly in the past, they recognize that there are always challenges ahead (Morris). While examining these core values and determining whether they actually live up to them, I used my personal experience with the company as a measuring stick.

As stated previously, I have used the company on several occasion to purchase items such as shoes, clothes, and household items. Each experience was routine except for one, I purchased some shoes to wear to a specific party. The shoes arrived and did not look like those on the website. I called Zappos customer service and spoke with Doug, explaining to him the

situation I received an unexpected response. Doug actually agreed with me about how the shoes look in person compared to the website. He then recommended a different shoe that had the same style, and he guaranteed they would feel good. Recognizing I was a reluctant, Doug then gave me 30% off the price as a measure of good faith. I purchased the shoe and love them. I called Zappos back with Doug's ID number and gave him great praise for his recommendation, honesty, and pursuit of customer satisfaction. The culture of Zappos has been impacted by two different sets of factors. The first set of factors that has shaped the culture of Zappos deals with structure.

The first is vision, this determines what the organization is doing and what it wants to do. The next is purpose, this determines why the organization is doing what it does. After this is the business model, which establishes how the vision of the company is going to be accomplished. Once the business model is determined, the next factor is that 'WOW' factor. This demonstrates how the company is going to stand out amongst its rivals. The last factor is values, this is what the company and its employees care about (Kerr). The second set of factors deal with people and their behavioral expressions within the culture. In order to sustain culture development and transformation behavioral alignment with the structure had to be fostered. These behavioral expressions consist of: habits, routines, shared language, common beliefs, and mutual decisions (Kerr). The type of leader that best fits Zappos is one that is transformational. The charisma of a transformational leader helps to provide vision and a sense of mission, while instilling pride, respect and trust. This fits in with the belief of building a positive team and family spirit at Zappos.

The inspiration that a transformational leader creates goes with the goal of employees being adventurous, creative, and open-minded, along with being passionate and determined. The intellectual stimulation of the transformational leader that promotes intelligence, rationality, and problem solving skills correlates with the value of pursuing growth and learning within Zappos. The last characteristic of a transformational leader, individualized consideration, treats employees as individuals and this is exactly what creating fun and a little weirdness is all about at Zappos. The transformational leader would excel in the culture of Zappos, broadening and elevating the interests of employees and getting them to look past their own interests but in to those of customers (internal and external) is what Zappos is all about. In times of a crisis in which services supplied by Zappos would be dramatically hindered, there are two core values that should be changed. The first is the core value of creating fun and a little weirdness.

The basis of this value is having fun while expressing yourself as an individual in an effort to be more innovative. In a time of crisis with a decline in demand of service, the company would need to rally the troops and become cohesive in its procedures and not individualistic. The other core value that would need to be altered is being adventurous, creative, and open-minded. While creativity would be needed to help develop ways of solving issues causing a decline in business, being adventurous may not be needed. At that point the company cannot afford to make too many mistakes while developing new trends. Only calculated mistakes can be suffered at this point, not careless mistakes that become costly over time.

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