



## Why We Love EMC's *Total Customer Experience* Changing the Way We See Ourselves and Our Customers

By Shawn Santos, Senior Program Manager, SSPA

Drawing on the shared goals of engineering and customer service, EMC Corporation has aligned itself to deliver the “*Total Customer Experience*”. With only a couple of years since its inception, the results are already noticeable, and the good news is: it's working.

EMC's Total Customer Experience project, or TCE as it's called internally, was derived from an important initiative established by the Chairman and CEO, Joseph M. Tucci, to implement and maintain the best possible experience when anybody at EMC came into contact with a customer. Overall, the initiative is a top-down approach meant to support all facets of customer contact. However, if you drill down a level, there are interesting details of the program that are unique, and complimentary, to different organizations within EMC.

### Engineering & Support: United at Last?

The two key organizations of the TCE program are the design engineering group and customer service. Although on the surface they might appear to be light-years apart in terms of structure and focus, their one common attribute—customer contact—connects them at the hip, and has proven to be motivator for collaboration on several other initiatives.

**EMC has a number of different platform products:**  
***Symmetrix*: a high end storage product,**  
***Clariion*: a mid-range networked storage system,**  
***Celerra*: a network attached storage product,**  
***Centera*: a content addressable storage product,**

**There are various engineering organizations that do the development and ongoing maintenance for those different platforms and the software.**

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The common areas between engineering and customer service can be aligned to focus on specific things which compliment and benefit each other. One example is a reduction in data unavailability (DU) and data

lost (DL) statistics as a percentage of the installed base. Of course, there are several different factors that can affect these statistics. It's possible to have a product problem, a customer usability problem, or a customer service technician slip-up. However, with the alignment of engineering and customer service, there are several ways that EMC can identify what could cause those percentages of data unavailability and data lost to increase, and consequentially add measures of prevention.

Both engineering and customer service establish specific objectives, predominantly focused on decreasing the percentage of these DU and DL numbers. This is made possible working collaboratively across organizations, as well as individually, to make sure that the factors that could cause DU and DL events to occur are reduced. In a recent conversation Leo Colborne, EMC's Senior Vice President of Global Customer Service, he cited a specific example. "Say we launch an initiative with the requirement of a 25 percent decrease in DU/DL statistics over the next 90 days. We tie bonuses to these metrics with the 90 day deadline, and if people in both engineering and customer service work together to accomplish this goal, they get paid their bonus, and if they don't, they don't."

With shared goals comes the spirit of cooperation, and cooperation ultimately fosters a better relationship and understanding between disparate organizations. For example, you can imagine what your operations might look like if the design engineers were constantly wondering, "How can servicing this product be simplified, so the service folks can do their job more efficiently?", and the service techs were focused on how they can help communicate product improvements back to the engineering department. The reality is that when you hit people in the pocketbook it tends to inspire projects—in EMC's case, the new view is "how can I help fix this thing because if we don't make this shared goal happen then neither one of us are going to get paid."

### **A Little TLC**

Another common objective for these organizations is to try and lower the overall cost of service for each of their individual products. For example, in the past, the engineering organization didn't focus on building serviceability or diagnostic capabilities into their products or in conjunction with them. If you were to look at service costs as a percentage of revenue for a particular product, it might run 38 to 40 percent. This is very high, and when transitioned under the TCE program umbrella, preventable.

In response to these high service costs, EMC launched their "TLC" (or Total Lifecycle Costs) project as an initiative falling within the TCE program. The TLC program proved financially successful in just a couple of years by:

- **Determining how products could be developed to lower the service costs,**
- **Streamlining customer service processes,**
- **Creating more relevant support information so people could solve problems more quickly.**

Ultimately, EMC lowered their product service costs to 12 - 15 percent, which resulted in not only millions of dollars of savings for EMC, but much more satisfied and efficient customers. The internal impacts at

EMC were noticeable as well. Numerous people in different organizations were affected by the goals tied to decreasing the percentages of DU and DL. The organizational and individual goals were black and white—if they hit their committed targets, they got bonuses. Colborne commented “When you have those kind of incentives hanging over your head as part of your compensation plan, you can guess what kind of focus these projects actually get.”

### **Measurable Impact**

EMC measures customer satisfaction in relation to the TCE program through both internal and external surveys. Since the inception of TCE, the numbers for customer loyalty and satisfaction have markedly increased. Not to mention, when a company creates a more stable, reliable product then the potential for significantly increased sales can be dramatic.

For EMC, this became a reality with their Clariion product. Struggling with some initial reliability issues, technical people in the field began a concerted effort to feed information back to the engineering organization. The TCE program inspired a structured collaboration between customer service and design engineering to improve the product based in part on feedback from the field. This resulted in product improvements that significantly stabilized the installed base, and actually was utilized as design criteria for subsequent product releases, which have proven to be many times more reliable.

Additionally, because of the augmented stability of the improved product, it allowed EMC to slow down hiring, utilize lower-cost employees, and off-shore more functions which didn't make sense before reliability was improved. Colborne states, “Off-shoring wasn't a possibility with a less-reliable product because I needed my best and brightest involved.”

Ultimately, customer satisfaction and product reliability—whether it's software, hardware, or networks—is paramount to growing your business and increasing your margins.

### **Why We Love TCE**

EMC's Total Customer Experience program is a perfect example of “if you build it, they will come”. Very different organizations fell in line under Tucci's directive, and the pay off—in various forms—has been significantly high. The program is ongoing and evolving with EMC's products, people, and processes. TCE was never designed to be a short-term turn-around project, but a rich program which continues to cultivate customer loyalty and better margins. Every quarter, EMC holds a TCE executive summit where each of the operational disciplines presents what they've done to share goals, meet objectives and benefit the customer in the past quarter. It's a program that has proven to be very successful from a revenue and margin standpoint, as well as creating enhanced customer satisfaction and a better, more collaborative feeling amongst employees.

Comments? Suggestions? We would like to hear from you. Please email the editor at [sspanews@thesspa.com](mailto:sspanews@thesspa.com).

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