

eBay and Delta Air Lines

How companies like eBay and Delta Airlines are defining the new and different world which the youth of America are living in.

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I keep telling people that the world of my generation (second half twentieth century) has already slipped away, died, never to return ... that the world for the millenniums is completely different from my generation. How? Well, I just had a stark demonstration of how that world is so very different from my world. I've



been getting rid of some of the things I've accumulated over the years by putting them on the auction service eBay. One item was a radio control transmitter, almost never used, that was in excellent condition, and I anticipated selling for a good price. I had a severe problem with eBay's system that resulted in selling it for a fraction of what I expected. I tried to send an email detailing the problem, only to find I was limited to just 100 characters. Below is the email I tried to send, which best explains my problem.

I had a Radio control transmitter, Hitec Laser 6 channel FM (PPM) R/C up for auction this last week with a starting bid of \$15, item number 152531590747 ending this last Sunday evening. I had a lot of interest, something like 116 views the last time I checked, about a dozen or more watching, and six or more bidders. Trouble is, despite all these bids, the bid amount remained fixed at the \$15 I specified for starting. And so that's what it sold for!

Now just what is going on here? With the product type and interest shown, I would expect it to have sold for \$80 to \$100, instead I practically gave it away. Is this suppose to be some practical joke by one of the mirid of programmers sitting on your payroll? Considering the time and effort I put in with the pictures and written description, I would have been better off just to have taken it down to Goodwill!

As a degree electronic engineer having spent most of my career with embedded systems, I'm shocked by how poorly your software has matured. Your software is as buggy as flour full of weevils!! I see the basic system is continually being changed, with snags which I considered should have been resolved years ago. Considering how long your company has been operating, your system should by now be very stable requiring few changes to its design.

I consider my loss to be the result of the poor performance of your software staff, in particular the management in the software department. It's past time for eBay to have a thorough house cleaning of it's software management personnel, particularly the upper levels of management,

and start getting qualified people in who have the knowledge and ability to manage large software systems.

But like so many other giant modern American business, eBay has insulated themselves from the troubles and bother of their customers by using technology. The little trick of limiting an email to just 100 characters, 40 less than a tweet, is a prime example. Just the first sentence of my proposed email ran 185 characters, almost twice what was allowed. Their idea for customer service, and it's the same for so many other large American companies, is to create some on-line 'puzzle palace' of canned answers, leading the customer around and around in software loops until they tire and give up.

The recent video on television news, of Delta Airlines arbitrary and capricious treatment of a paying customer being beaten and bodily dragged off their airplane, graphically shows the companies real attitude towards their customer base. And these two events made me realize just how different today's millenniums world is from the world I grew up and came to know. In my youth, companies bent over backwards, jumped through hoops making sure their customers were taken care of, the axiom of American business being:

Take care of your customers ... or somebody else will!

But not today. Today's companies consider their customers as nothing more than livestock to be cultivated and herded around using the modern technologies of mass media and the internet. I know . . . I used to live on a farm and worked with livestock. Their attitude is the same as any farmer or rancher towards their cattle or hogs. This typifies what I mean when I say the world of the millennium's parents has faded away and died, while the millennium's world is completely different from my world. In my time companies who acted in such a manner towards their customers would have found themselves lepers in American society, slowly dying just as surely as if they had leprosy. In the long run, this can only hurt American business and the economy.

But the same modern technologies which destroyed my world and created the millennium's commercial world has gone beyond the economic boundaries to be infused into America's political system, with the same disastrous results. Elected officials (Presidents, Vice-presidents, Senators and Congressmen) no longer work at the problems plaguing their constituents, instead they 'work their people' using the mass media and mass advertising technologies of commerce to cultivate and manipulate their voters to their own ends and means. For so much of the government, people are just livestock for them to use as they see fit.

In not addressing the problem of obsolescence of workers, they have destroyed the whole future of a whole generation, the generation of the millenniums and Z Generation. With 20% to 25% of new college graduates unemployed or under-employed, one shouldn't be surprised at the growing student unrest

No one cares about the young people, so no one is doing anything to address their problems.