



Execs In The Know



BRAND SPOTLIGHT

THE HOME DEPOT

Creating a Culture of Excellence & Remarkable Customer Experience

An interview with Michael Jones, Senior Director of Customer Care at The Home Depot

EITK: Tell us a bit about your background, how you came to be at The Home Depot, and a little bit about your current role.

Michael: After graduating from The University of Georgia in 1995, I joined The Home Depot as a sales associate in California and will be celebrating my 25th anniversary with the Company later this year. Since that time, I've lived in six different states and held many roles, including Store Manager, Director of Sales & Services, District Manager, Director of Tool Rental Operations and my current position as the Senior Director of Customer Care, which I've held since 2016.

In this role, I oversee business intelligence and continual process improvement for the Customer Care organization, which works to create an effortless customer experience for those who contact us via phone call, email and social media. Our focus is on resolving customer issues by working with internal and external business partners, including our stores

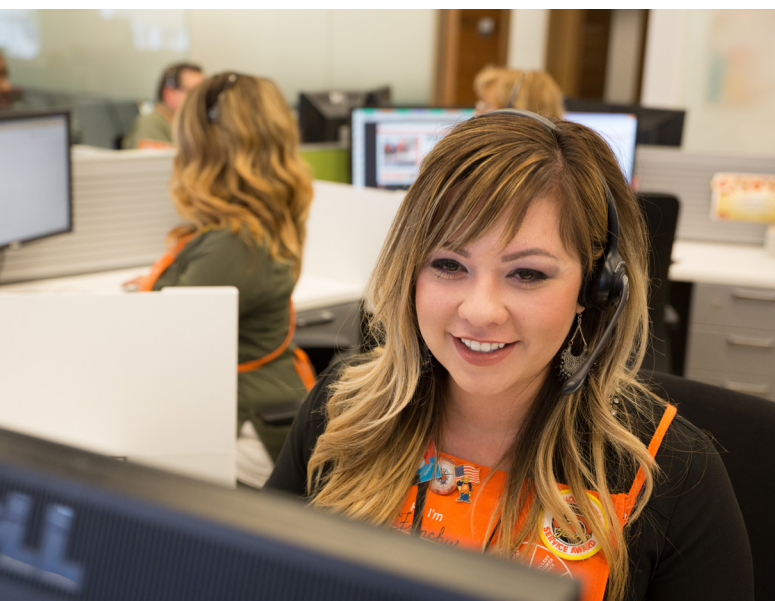
and vendors. Our work is also valuable in identifying customer pain points that help these partners improve merchandise, packaging, business process and more to further elevate the customer experience.

EITK: How would you describe The Home Depot's culture/values/overall mission?

Michael: The Home Depot is very much a values-based organization that abides by the same constructs our founders put in place before the first store opening in 1979. Our core values include things like Giving Back, Doing the Right Thing, Respect for All People and Building Strong Relationships, among others. Something I think is very unique to our corporate culture is what we call the inverted pyramid – a management structure that puts our customer-facing employees, like those on the floor in our stores and responding to customers in our contact centers, at the top. All support functions, including management and leadership, fall under that, allowing our frontline associates to focus on one thing only – taking care of our customers.

EITK: What value(s) do you find most important at The Home Depot?

Michael: In my opinion, Taking Care of People is a big focal point within The Home Depot's core values, and we hone in on this within Customer Care. As one of our founders said, "If we take care of our associates, they'll take care of our customers, and everything else will take care of itself." We still live by this saying today, and strive to provide our frontline associates with excellent work environments, top of the line training programs and ample growth and development opportunities, which in turn allows them to serve our customers to the best of their abilities.



The Home Depot understands the importance of meeting customers where they are and providing exceptional CX



**How does
get more done.**

MICHAEL A. JONES

Senior Director of
Customer Care



The Home Depot is focused on leading the way with an omnichannel retail experience

EITK: Describe the typical Home Depot customer, the importance of exceeding customer expectations, and how service/experience plays into that.

Michael: The Home Depot focuses on three types of customers: the Do-It-Yourself (DIY) customer, who comes into the store or orders online to complete a home improvement project on their own; the Do-It-For-Me customer, who utilizes our various services departments and brings in professionals to get the job done; and the Pro customer, whose career relies upon the products and services The Home Depot provides. While all three of these customers are looking to accomplish different tasks, they have one thing in common – they expect a seamless, interconnected shopping experience and the best value we can offer. In today's retail market, it is increasingly important to meet customers where they are and provide efficient service pre- and post-sale, whether that's in-store, online, or via phone, email, or social media.

EITK: Tell us about some of the innovation in the retail industry and what The Home Depot has done recently/has plans for to stay relevant to customers and to outpace the competition?

Michael: As I mentioned, today's customers are in search of a seamless, convenient shopping experience and The Home Depot is continually searching for ways to build upon that concept. For the past decade, we have been leading the way when it comes to providing an omnichannel retail experience, blurring the lines between the brick and mortar stores and our e-commerce platform to connect customers with what they need faster. By investing in both our stores and the online experience with a goal to reduce customer friction, we have been able to offer a variety of ways to shop with The Home Depot. Our automated pickup

lockers are a great example of this, as a significant portion of our online orders are picked up in store. Other investments in pursuit of that goal include increased same- and next-day delivery options, an improved online platform for our Pro customers, and in the world of Customer Care, an enhanced Interactive Voice Response (IVR) platform to connect customers with an associate who can solve their problems more quickly than ever before. All of these innovations tie back to our new tagline, "How Doers Get More Done."

EITK: What do you see as an emerging trend or key innovation in 2020 that you're either preparing for or investigating to continue innovation in CX?

Michael: Today's customer is starved for time. If they experience friction in their retail experience, whether online or in-store, they will choose to take their business elsewhere. For The Home Depot, this observation means that we are constantly in search of ways to speed up customer interactions and break down those friction points as quickly as possible. In the world of CX, I think the biggest innovation will be the optimization of consumer insights and analytics to eliminate points of friction. From a Customer Care perspective, we are making great strides to operationalize customer insights to inform business partners of potential changes that could improve the customer experience.

EITK: How has Execs In The Know helped you in your career OR what value do you get from being an active participant with Execs In The Know?

Michael: In the four years I've held this position, Execs In The Know has provided me with very valuable networking opportunities and continued education on the evolution of customer experience. The conversation, collaboration and hands-on nature of the Execs In the Know events certainly adds value, and I feel as though I walk away with actionable initiatives I can put into place with my team.



Execs In The Know

EITK partners with brands that are providing outstanding customer service experiences. The Brand Spotlight Series showcases innovations and solutions to CX challenges, from many of today's leading brands.

Thank you to Michael and the entire team at The Home Depot for taking part in this EITK Brand Spotlight.

Interested in taking part in our Brand Spotlight Series? Contact info@execsintheknow.com.