

The ‘undercover customer’ challenge

5 MIN READ



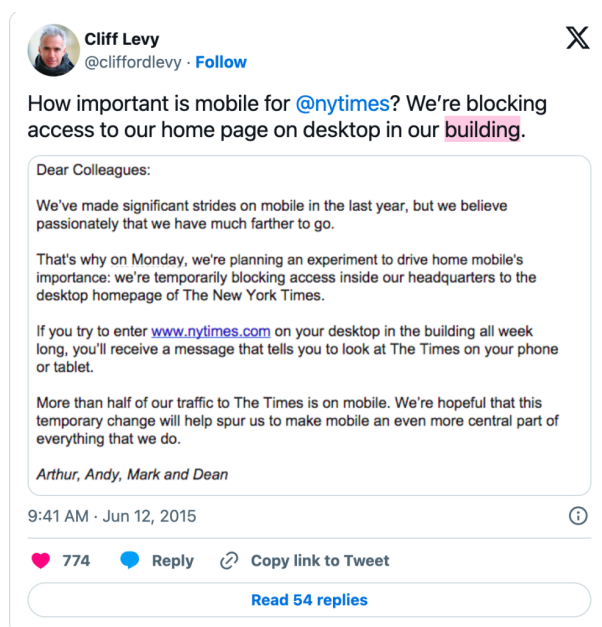
Going ‘undercover’ to experience your business from a different perspective isn’t new.

If you don’t watch *Undercover Boss* – a TV show in which “high-level corporate execs leave the comfort of their offices and secretly take low-level jobs within their companies to find out how things really work and what their employees truly think of them” – I suspect you’ve at least heard of it and understand the concept.

The journey of the C-level executive on *Undercover Boss* provides valuable insight into behind-the-scenes jobs that are super critical to running a successful business. The goal of the undercover mission is to understand the employee experience and then make the necessary changes to improve it when and where possible.

I’d like to flip the script and challenge live events organizations to send their staff members, from C-level execs to those on the front lines, undercover to experience, well, the customer experience.

The New York Times ran a similar experiment by blocking access to their home page on desktops in their Manhattan headquarters. The memo to employees, which was [Tweeted](#) by the company’s Deputy Managing Editor Clifford Levy, said more than half of the *The Times* is on mobile and that the temporary change would spur them to make mobile an even more central part of everything they do.



We challenge you to experience the entire lifecycle of **your customer** using these steps:

- Search for an event on your website.
- Buy the tickets. Yes, with a *real* credit card.
- Select the delivery method most commonly used by your customers.
- Drive to the event from your home at the same time as the rest of your event-goers. Or take mass transit if that is the more typical experience.
- If you do drive, leave your staff credentials at home. Park in a lot with your customers. And pay for the parking.
- Line up and have your tickets scanned at the door.
- Enter the venue.
- Find your seats.
- Buy a drink. And a snack. And merchandise. Consider doing so at different times so you can experience the line during intermission / half-time.
- Enjoy the event.
- Leave the event when everyone else does.
- Engage with any follow-up marketing such as post-event emails and surveys.

Take notes as you go and solicit input from your guest. How was your customer experience? What can be improved? How was the customer service? How much did you spend? Did you feel valued as a customer?

This type of undercover mission is a great first step towards creating a customer-centric culture within your organization. Encourage everyone in your organization to go undercover once a year. Form a small committee to review the results and create action items that will improve the customer experience.

If everyone in your organization is focused on the customer experience, you will get even better.

Are you willing to accept my challenge? If so, I would love to [hear about your experience](#) and invite you to be a guest blogger to share it with our audience.