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My IN OPINION...

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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane".

Is the Starbucks store closure just a publicity stunt?

Here's my take –

First, Starbucks has done the right thing by acting quickly. They are getting some push back that their decision to close 8000 stores for a day in May for employee training is a publicity stunt. I beg to differ. Here's why.

Clearly, Starbucks understands the depth and complexity of the situation or they wouldn't be taking such a dramatic step to correct the issue. They are making a huge investment in their employees, their customers and their culture by implementing the mass sensitivity training in a comprehensive way. The company has a history of addressing customer and community issues, so this isn't new for them.

I don't see the announcement of this step to garner publicity, but a courtesy they are giving their loyal customers. How would you feel if you arrived for your favorite latte to find your local stop closed without notice? I can only imagine the flurry of negative social media if that were the case. This may cause some customer inconvenience, but ultimately Starbucks will be better for the investment.

Their wide-reaching response is a testament to living their brand. From the beginning, Starbucks has been about the customer experience. This training will improve employee understanding and their ability to provide an even higher level of customer service, ensuring that all customers receive the experience Starbucks was founded upon. Employees will also know that leadership takes seriously the accusations and finds them to be unacceptable within the working ranks.

No doubt there will be internal changes following the training that will reinforce the learning taking place. For now, when a company does the right thing, we must give them the courtesy of trusting it has been done for the right reasons and their actions are sincere. For me, I can't think of a better example of a company living its brand.