

Colonial's Charles Schwab Challenge: Constantly Elevating the Experience

Last Thursday, the **Southlake Chamber of Commerce** welcomed **Michael Tothe, Tournament Director for the Charles Schwab Challenge at Colonial Country Club**.

Michael shared that while the tournament is an annual success on Memorial Day weekend, the tournament committee and Charles Schwab continually innovate.

Check out these new attractions:

- **Clubhouse renovations** and the addition of a premium steakhouse
- New three-deck **Choctaw Club hospitality tent** along the **#10 fairway**
- An average of **five marriage proposals** on-site during the tournament
- **Food Truck Fairway** welcomes local food trucks to serve guests along the **#1 fairway**
- **1992 restored Jeep** to the champion, along with a \$1.7 million cash prize; 1992 is the year Schwab created the Charles Schwab Trust Company for mutual funds

And nothing new, but \$20 million will be presented among 33 local charities.

Because Colonial does not have high-tech security to screen for handguns and knives, the club contracts with Dickies Arena to provide this service because Dickies deals with this issue regularly.

And yes, the Charles Schwab Challenge is the **ONLY PGA Tour event** that pauses play on Sunday's final round (at 2:15 p.m.) for a **fly-over of military aircraft – the brainchild of Lockheed Martin**.

What are YOU doing to continually elevate your customer experience?



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KPMG Customer Experience Excellence Report: How would YOU Rank? Why?

Accounting/Consulting firm KPMG recently released its 2024-25 report, showcasing the 10 elite companies defining excellence in service delivery.

The Super Six are listed below. Please note that half of these companies are food-related: **H-E-B**, Publix, and Costco.

1. USAA
2. H-E-B Grocery
3. Patagonia
4. Publix Grocery
5. Fidelity
6. Costco Wholesale

So, what defines excellence? The top three companies share mutual tools that you and I can replicate in our own business if we choose to:

1. Align customer service with **your core values**
2. Communicate and **demonstrate authenticity**
3. Foster a **deep understanding of customer needs**
4. **Humanize** technology
5. Use AI for **personalization**
6. Strike a balance between **empathy and innovation**

Those read like a bunch of corporate jargon, so what does it mean to YOU? Let's take the case of H-E-B. During the pandemic, when local restaurants were locked down, this Texas grocer reached out to local restaurants and did the unthinkable.

H-E-B bought food from these restaurants and sold the meals in its stores. H-E-B understood customer needs and communicated authenticity and empathy.

What are you doing to make yourself authentic, empathetic, and memorable?
Please click here to receive the KPMG Report.

USAA

USAA returns to the number one position. For this insurance organization and bank, which serves military members and their families, empathy is intrinsic to its mission. USAA's representatives are trained to understand the unique challenges faced by their customer base, which is reflected in every interaction, whether through human agents or AI-driven chatbots.

USAA has created an Empathy Lab that helps understand how new technologies can help veterans cope better with PTSD. This empathetic approach helps build trust and loyalty, explaining why over the past 10 years USAA has consistently been in the top two companies in the study.

1

H-E-B

Similarly, H-E-B, a Texas-based grocery chain that takes second position this year, demonstrates empathy through its commitment to community support and customer well-being. During times of crisis, such as natural disasters, H-E-B has been known to prioritize community needs, showcasing a level of care that goes beyond transactional interactions.

During the pandemic, H-E-B showcased and sold food from local restaurants unable to open due to lockdowns. This empathy-driven approach has fostered strong emotional connections with customers, reinforcing their loyalty to the brand.

2

Patagonia

Patagonia moves up 16 places. Renowned for its environmental activism, it extends empathy beyond the customer to the planet. The company's purpose-driven stance on sustainability resonates with a growing number of consumers who prioritize ethical consumption.

Patagonia's commitment to the environment and its transparent communication creates a powerful emotional bond with its customers, driving both loyalty and advocacy.

3

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Wendy's Pokes Fun at Katy Perry

As the #3 burger retailer, **Wendy's** – my first large client under a now-retired Central Texas franchisee – has taken to social media to poke fun at current events and earn its share of free media exposure.

The latest episode was clever, but also risky, as it leaned toward alienating many of its female customers. After **Blue Origin** completed its 11th human space flight, carrying its first all-female crew into outer orbit for 11 minutes, Wendy's social media had some fun with one of the crew members – pop singer **Katy Perry**.

The original post: [Katy Perry has returned from space. Can we send her back?](#)

The second post, [showing a photo of Katy Perry kissing the ground](#) after returning to earth: "I kissed the ground and I like it," a riff on Perry's hit song, "I Kissed a Girl."

After catching heat, [Wendy's issued a statement that read](#), "We always bring a little spice to our socials, but Wendy's has a ton of respect for Katy Perry and her out-of-this-world talent."

The crew consisted of Katy Perry, Gayle King, Jeff Bezos' fiancée Lauren Sanchez, Amanda Nguyen, Kerianne Flynn, and Aisha Bowe.



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Fletch's NEW Client: A Southern Delicacy

There are entertaining clients, and then there are FUN clients. This is a fun one.

Last October, I received a call from the son of my former Wendy's client. The family had closed its popular Holiday Deli & Ham restaurants in the Memphis area due to the pandemic, but co-owner **Trey Jordan** had an interesting perspective:

When a door closes, a window opens!

Indeed, it did. While honey-glazed ham was the top seller in the family's deli business, the second-best seller was the family's wildly popular recipe for "**Papa's Original Pimento Cheese**," which Trey's father, **L. Donald Jordan**, had tinkered with for more than 50 years.

The three delis combined to sell **80,000 pounds of this Southern delicacy per year**, so a **Kroger executive** approached Trey to sell Papa's Original inside **Kroger** within a four-state area.

You can also buy Papa's Original here in Texas at Central Market and in Tom Thumb/Albertson's/Randall's.

Here's the BIG news: This Southern brand has finalized a collaboration with an even larger Southern brand: **Willie Robertson of Duck Dynasty fame!**

Trey and I have grocery meetings today, and then he drives to West Monroe, Louisiana, to shoot videos and photos with Willie and the family at Willie's home.

Savannah Bananas owner Jesse Cole quotes his father saying, "Son, swing for the fences just in case you might hit the ball!"

Trey swung for the fences! Watch out for where else you can soon find some of the eight flavors of Papa's, which is part of the **Pimentos Brands** company.



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Smart Volunteerism: James L. West Volunteer Knocks it out of the Park

The 1980s Christian song, “**Pass It On**,” offered an inspiring opening line: “It only takes a spark to get a fire going!”

Thrisha Suketh, a sophomore at Fort Worth’s **Trinity Valley School**, lives that lyric. She was recently awarded a \$400 grant from the Fort Worth Trailblazers Chapter of the **National Charity League** to do something for seniors.

Since her grandfather has dementia, she decided to volunteer at my client, the **James L. West Center for Dementia Care**. Her initial efforts included delivering flowers and cookies.

The next step dazzled everyone, as Thrisha recruited FIFTY fellow students to join her in making table decorations and **handmade** greeting cards between Halloween and Thanksgiving.

She has worked alongside **Tia Viera**, The West Center’s bilingual educator, and Life Enrichment Director, **Valynda King**.

Now that the grant’s goals have been met and exceeded, Thrisha is still going strong, as she continues to visit. She also plays the piano and sings with the residents of The West Center.

Music therapy is one of the most engaging and effective ways to reach people with dementia. Her 50 school friends are also helping her make knotted blankets, which comfort dementia residents when they are fidgeting.

At a recent celebration, the National Charity League chapter presented one of its inaugural **18 Under 18 Awards** to Thrisha. This young leader is teaching us that **nobody is so busy that they can’t pause to serve others**.



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Tiebreaker: Savannah Bananas Learns from Mistakes

Savannah Bananas owner Jesse Cole is my hero because he goes against the grain with his innovative approach to baseball.

[Check out these revelations](#) and [look on YouTube to watch this past Saturday's game](#) in front of **81 THOUSAND FANS** at Clemson's Death Valley Stadium.

1. Realize we're in the **entertainment** business, not the baseball business
2. Look at what everyone else is doing and then **do the opposite**
3. Be willing to **make mistakes and learn** from them
4. Make work **fun!**

If you need help in reinventing your game – and your business—we need to talk. Rebecca and I are doing something similar for a new client that is revolutionizing the company's impact in its category. To reinvigorate your business, please call me at 817-205-2334.

