



 Mighty Guides

Transform Your Global Digital Customer Experience

10 Experts Share
Their Secrets

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FOREWORD

Creating a good digital customer experience is about an organization's entire ecosystem: people, processes and technology. It brings together insight and action within the context of an aligned strategy that takes into account both global and local needs. This means aligning the goals of everyone in your organization that contributes to the customer experience. From marketing to sales, and from product and services to ongoing customer support. It also means meeting your customers at every channel on which they interact with you including mobile sites, websites, apps and support documentation and services.

This is a wide topic that spans across multiple systems and areas. This eBook shares the expertise of key players from some of the world's top companies who operate in these complex ecosystems, every day and around the world. Their essays provide great insight into how organizations and professionals transform the customer experience into an individual experience.

I hope you are inspired by the valuable insight contained within these pages to create truly defining moments for your customers.

We remain committed to be your partner in that journey.

Enjoy!



Adolfo Hernandez
CEO
SDL

INTRODUCTION

The importance of crafting a quality global digital customer experience has never been as critical to business success as it is today. The competition is never more than a click or finger swipe away, and customers can easily find the exact product, service, or experience they are looking for. Of course, it has never been so easy for customers to express dissatisfaction, either, whether it be through negative online reviews or simply taking their business elsewhere.

Businesses are investing heavily in research and technologies to improve their digital customer experiences, but are they investing wisely? With the support of SDL, I asked ten global digital customer experience experts the following question:

As a customer experience leader, what advice would you offer a colleague looking to implement a global digital customer experience change that will have a big, positive impact on the customer-brand relationship?

It turns out that what has changed dramatically in recent years is how you discover what customers want, and then how you adjust your business to fulfill those desires. The essays in this e-book show that global digital customer experience is not just an extension of sales and marketing. Modern customer experience has become central to businesses' mission. It goes to the very heart of why a company is in business.

I am sure you will find that these essays provide insights that can help any business rethink and improve its global digital customer experience strategy.



All the best,
David Rogelberg
Publisher



Mighty Guides make you stronger.

These authoritative and diverse guides provide a full view of a topic. They help you explore, compare, and contrast a variety of viewpoints so that you can determine what will work best for you. Reading a Mighty Guide is kind of like having your own team of experts. Each heartfelt and sincere piece of advice in this guide sits right next to the contributor's name, biography, and links so that you can learn more about their work. This background information gives you the proper context for each expert's independent perspective.

Credible advice from top experts helps you make strong decisions. Strong decisions make you mighty.

ALL CUSTOMERS ARE CONSUMERS



SHAWN BURNS

Senior Vice President,
Web and Digital
Marketing,
Schneider Electric

As senior vice president of Web and Digital Marketing, Shawn Burns supports the strategy, design, development, and implementation of Schneider Electric's flagship Web property and the more than 100 countries it supports. As part of the Digital Customer Experience group, Shawn is responsible for digital marketing, growing the core, partner, and consumer businesses globally. His passion for generating high-volume Web traffic and converting it into sales opportunities is a key reason for Schneider's growth across businesses in all geographies.



Twitter | Website



When people go to Amazon.com to shop for an electric toothbrush, they can immediately see several high-quality photos for the product. They can flip through those pictures, viewing images from every possible angle. If other Amazon.com customers have added their own photos, as well, the customer could scroll through nearly endless views.

What Amazon.com delivers you must deliver: the expectation already exists.

We recently undertook a complete website redesign, with content housed on the SDL platform to improve the customer relationship. Our guiding design directive was that any door is a good door as long as customers find our content. It cannot matter if they navigate directly to content they have bookmarked, if they enter through a search engine, or if they use our onsite search appliance.

It is working. People are getting to our content faster and more easily, translating to a 10 percent increase in customer satisfaction.

“What Amazon.com delivers you must deliver:
the expectation already exists.”

KEY LESSONS

- 1 DESIGN MOBILE FIRST.
- 2 KNOW THE WORDS YOUR CUSTOMERS USE.
- 3 MASTER ONSITE SEARCH.



ALL CUSTOMERS ARE CONSUMERS

I was asked to answer the question, “As a customer experience leader, what advice would you offer a colleague looking to implement a global digital customer experience change that will have a big, positive impact on the customer-brand relationship?” My answer consists of three points:

- **Design mobile first.** We see a high retirement rate among our traditional customers, so we need to generate loyalty and growth from new customers. People under 45 years of age expect a strong mobile experience: they are essentially mobile workers. Any organization that does not have a robust, mobile strategy in which it has invested heavily is going to fail dramatically over the next 12 to 18 months.
- **Know the words your customers use.** Obsessively focus on search. We do keyword reviews of search queries weekly by business unit because at a global level, we find that 10 percent of all search queries are brand new to us. Why? Perhaps people are looking to solve a new problem in efficiency or sustainability. Maybe a new buzzword has taken on a new marketplace definition. Scrutinize queries: they are the source of new business opportunities.
- **Master onsite search.** Enterprises often forget about that one guy in the basement who manages the website search appliance. They shouldn't. Customers do not care whether they are using Google or your website's search function: they expect any search tool to deliver relevant results. When it does not, customers default to Google. There, any competitor can grab their eyeballs.

Everyone, from the thought leader in the C-suite to the electrician at the building site, is a consumer. So, every individual has built-in customer experience expectations. Remember: they have all been to Amazon.com.

As a business, you must hit that bar. It does not matter what segment or industry you are in.

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KNOW THY CUSTOMER



JON GOLD

Director, Web Strategy
and Design,
Blackboard

Web strategist Jon Gold combines technical and design expertise with marketing best practices to deliver online customer experiences that increase engagement. His expertise spans hands-on strategic planning and execution in all areas of digital marketing and communications. As director of Web Strategy and Design at Blackboard, Jon oversees the planning, strategy, and digital experience for all customer-facing websites. He earned his bachelor of arts degree with an emphasis in imaging and digital arts from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County.



Twitter



| Website



| Blog

To me, loyalty is the product of helping customers understand that the brand with which they are working understands what they need. To that end, we recently revamped our corporate website and our help site for end-users. We have also improved our mobile experiences significantly in these redesigns.

That latter point is particularly important. Previously, we did not see much engagement with our mobile traffic on our websites. With our revamp, however, we have made strides toward improving our mobile engagement.

The redesign's goal was to improve the user experience, and to guide both existing and prospective customers seamlessly to the material they are looking for most. We have succeeded, partly by introducing portals specifically for students and educators, but also by launching a federated site search and improved pathways into the support and help channels through our Blackboard.com site.

I was asked to offer my advice in response to the following question: "As a customer experience leader, what advice would you offer a colleague looking to implement a global digital customer experience change that will have a big, positive impact on the customer-brand relationship?"

“To me, loyalty is the product of helping customers understand that the brand with which they are working understands what they need.”

KEY LESSONS

- 1 PUT YOURSELF IN THE CUSTOMER'S MIND.
- 2 OPTIMIZE FOR MOBILE.
- 3 THINK GLOBALLY.



KNOW THY CUSTOMER

Here are my thoughts:

- **Put yourself in the customer's mind.** Providing the right mechanisms for help and support in all aspects of your user experience is crucial. To do that, we took heed of email feedback through our web forms and closely monitored onsite search queries, the most popular of which was, "How to log in." Understanding customer pain points helped us improve their experience and greatly reduce their frustrations. Listen to your customers.
- **Optimize for mobile.** If you are in a position to design for mobile first, do it. We were not afforded that luxury: we had to build out from an existing desktop site. We did, however, build an adaptive Web experience that completely changed our navigation for mobile devices. I think our new mobile friendliness is a key driver behind the 8 percent increase we have seen in website engagement and the 9 percent reduction in our mobile device bounce rate. Spend a lot of time up front learning about mobile users' expectations.
- **Think globally.** In some ways, we are relatively new to the global game, but our experience so far with SDL has shown us that many of our customers expect in-region, relevant and multi-lingual experiences. Every region across the globe offers unique metrics and goals, but you must convert that data into useful insights. We find the globalization capabilities of the SDL platform an essential vehicle in helping us formulate those insights and provide meaningful content and experiences.

It takes just one mishap to damage customer loyalty. It is possible that in the past we were guilty of damaging a few relationships with our customers—we did not successfully bridge the gap between our various support channels, for instance—but I think that the improvements we made will have a great effect on customer loyalty.

It only makes sense. Certainly, as a consumer, my most positive experiences happen when I am working with a brand that "gets" me. Why would my customers be any different?

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BRAND RELATIONSHIPS ARE EASIER TO BUILD, AND EASIER TO LOSE



ALLAN HALL

Executive Vice President,
SDL Global Content
Technologies (GCT)

As Executive Vice President of SDL Global Content Technologies (GCT), Allan is responsible for SDL Web and SDL Knowledge Center solutions.

Since joining SDL in 1998 as an engineering manager, he progressed through to project management, operations management and business management and has shaped many of SDL's largest language service divisions and technology leaders. Today, Allan is focused on delivering technologies that bridge the gaps between language and content to deliver world-class digital experiences.



Website | Blog



Many forward thinking businesses looking three or five years down the road are actively re-thinking their entire engagement strategy. A big driver behind this is consumers moving to brands that treat them as individuals. Consumers want interactions that add value to the engagement. They don't want more marketing messages. Nearly all customer engagement begins with a digital experience, and in many cases, digital is the medium for most of the customer journey. Whether the engagement is through video or a web site or a mobile app, there is a common denominator cutting across all customers and business types. Companies are beginning to carefully design their digital experiences to help customers achieve their own personal outcomes.

It sounds simple, but pursuing a digital engagement strategy can have unexpected business consequences. For example, many companies invested heavily in self-help support for consumers. The original business rationale was that self-help provided a more cost-effective support delivery model than call centers. As it turned out, most consumers actually preferred self-help. It was a faster way to get answers to questions. However most companies failed to redesign their support content so that it delivered a truly great self-help consumer experience. Consumers found better answers by going to Youtube, or Google, or crowd-sourced content. They stopped going to the brand for support because the brand was not giving them the support they needed.

“Companies are beginning to carefully design their digital experiences to help customers achieve their own personal outcomes.”

KEY LESSONS

- 1 NEARLY ALL CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT BEGINS WITH A DIGITAL EXPERIENCE, AND IN MANY CASES, DIGITAL IS THE MEDIUM FOR MOST OF THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY.
- 2 DIGITAL CONSUMERS ARE MORE ADVENTUROUS AND LESS LOYAL TO BRANDS. CUSTOMERS CAN QUICKLY JUMP TO A COMPETING EXPERIENCE.



BRAND RELATIONSHIPS ARE EASIER TO BUILD, AND EASIER TO LOSE

There are several factors shaping consumer-oriented digital experiences. These include:

- **Consumers are always “on”, always connected, and can engage at a moment’s notice from anywhere.** That means customers will engage across a variety of channels during their journey. It may start on a mobile device and continue on a desktop and a TV, and there may be an Internet of Things that touches the customer along the way. Businesses must develop a multi-screen, multi-channel services strategy.
- **Analytics play a critical role in learning what is effective and what is not.** This enables businesses to very quickly test experiences, and change them in real time. It also enables business to personalize product offerings based on knowledge of individual customer preferences, and in that way provide a more satisfying global digital customer experience.
- **There is a social component.** Consumers talk to one another and share common experiences. Business can use this information in many ways to be more personally responsive to customers’ needs and concerns.

Some industries are further along in developing digital experiences for their customers than others. The airline industry is a great example of one that has gone a long way to developing a multi-screen digital experience. Customers select seats and book tickets online, do online check-in, and get mobile boarding passes. They can also check flight status online.

Some airlines send real-time personalized notes of apology to fliers whose flights arrive late. They take the awareness of a less-than-perfect situation to send a message that helps offset the negative experience that flight might have caused. The communication isn’t about selling more to the customer. It’s a small thing, but it’s one more way to close the loop with the customer and strengthen that brand relationship.

Airlines are constantly innovating. Some now offer social check-in options, where you use Facebook profile information to decide who you will sit next to when you are selecting a seat. Some travelers like this service, especially for long flights. If they see someone in their industry, they might arrange to sit next to that person so they can have a conversation while they travel. The airline sees it as a valuable innovation to their seat selection model.

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The ultimate
success strategy
in digital
experiences
is offering
continuous
innovation.”



BRAND RELATIONSHIPS ARE EASIER TO BUILD, AND EASIER TO LOSE

Automotive is another industry on the cusp of big changes through digital experience. One aspect of this is self-driving cars. But another is updating operational features in the car through software downloads, just like you might update a smartphone. Tesla recently updated user's cars with an auto-driving feature that was simply a software upgrade. Drivers did not have to go to a garage or service center to get this feature. It happened automatically, and that is another dimension of the digital experience consumers are growing to expect.

Digital makes it possible for existing businesses to extend their service offerings, but it also opens the door to entirely new business models built around a digital experience, such as Uber. New digital businesses can thrive by offering modest services that make people's lives easier. One example is a new car rental concept called Silvercar. Silvercar only rents silver Audi A4s. Customers use the Silvercar app to arrange for car rentals at selected airports. When you land at the airport, you go out to the curb and the car will be there waiting for you. Someone hands you the keys and off you go. It's another way of closing the convenience gap.

Digital engagement offers flexibility and a fast path to brand relationship building. The key to success is personalizing the experience in a way that enables customers to achieve their own outcomes. Building personalized outcome-oriented digital engagements accelerates learning about customers and shortens the path to a deeper brand-to-customer relationship. However, the technology that makes digital experiences possible also reduces brand loyalty. Digital consumers are more adventurous and less loyal to brands. Customers can quickly jump to a competing experience. The ultimate success strategy in digital experiences is offering continuous innovation.

The largest gains from digital experience in the near term will come to B-to-C businesses looking for new ways to build brand differentiation and strengthen their customer relationships. Ultimately this will expand to B-to-B businesses, because B-to-C experiences condition our expectations for the kinds of business and transactional relationships we prefer.



SILVIU CROITORU

Head of Products,
Fashion Days Shopping
SRL

Silviu Croitoru has been with Fashion Days since its beginnings in 2009. He is currently head of Products, where he has built and managed the user experience (UX) team, taking care of UX, SEO, conversion optimization, and mobile apps. Silviu has a special interest in digital customer experience and user interfaces, and he believes that the road to success in e-commerce is a customer-centric approach.



Website

Fashion Days began as a European “flash sales” website in 2009. We quickly generated a large and loyal customer base that relied on us to provide them with fashion deals of the day. We always knew that our future lay in full-service online retail, though—not flash sales.

The trick was to make that transition without drastically disrupting the business. We saw it happen to our former competitor, Fab.com, a \$900 million company that tried to make the same transition. In my judgment, that company moved too fast and failed to manage customer expectations: it killed its business. We wanted to avoid that at all costs.

I was asked to offer my advice in response to the following question: “As a customer experience leader, what advice would you offer a colleague looking to implement a global digital customer experience change that will have a big, positive impact on the customer-brand relationship?” Let me do that while describing some of the key steps my team took to transition Fashion Days successfully:

- **Listen to the customer.** We conducted several customer surveys prior to re-launch. Happily but surprisingly, they disrupted our plans. Our plan was to implement SDL’s internal website search functionality as our first enhancement, but the surveys told us that customers really wanted product filtering. We listened and implemented that feature, again with SDL’s help. That change doubled our conversion rates among customers who used filtering. We continue to gather data by monitoring 15,000 screen recordings a month and conducting regular consumer surveys and research. There are many ways to listen to customers.

“We conducted several customer surveys prior to re-launch. Happily but surprisingly, they disrupted our plans.” ➔

KEY LESSONS

- 1 **TRANSITIONING A BUSINESS TOO QUICKLY WITHOUT MANAGING CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS COULD PROVE FATAL.**
- 2 **TECHNOLOGY IS HUGEY IMPORTANT, BUT A THOUGHTFUL BUSINESS STRATEGY IS EVEN MORE IMPORTANT.**

EASY DOES IT

- **Think incrementally.** Our goal was to attract new in-season fashion shoppers, but we did not want to lose existing customers. So, we kept flash sales active, relegating them to secondary status. We also avoided implementing a huge, confusing array of new features immediately. Instead, we first introduced product filters, then a few value-based navigations, and gradually other features over time. (In fact, those implementations are ongoing.) In the end, the step-by-step approach was right for us. I think it is probably a good idea for any business.
- **Never think you are finished.** When it comes to online and mobile business, you are never done. I do not see our transition to e-retail as a one-off; rather, I see it as part of our plans for continuous growth. There is always room to improve, which is why I recommend that companies hire workers specifically dedicated to user experience management. Their role, in the end, is continually to optimize everything related to customer experience.

Fashion Days now offers 500,000 products and 1,000 brands to customers in Central and Eastern Europe. Technology played a huge role in re-creating Fashion Days into the successful site it is today. For instance, by implementing SDL Trados Studio translation software, we cut costs and standardized our messaging across several languages with 99 percent accuracy.

Technology is not the be all and end all, though. Business strategy matters more, and strategy must always focus on customers. To me, the definition of *customer experience management* is delivering exactly what customers expect. That requires more than technology: that takes thoughtful strategic consideration.

It is easy to get caught up in technology when you consider using automation to transform your business. Don't let that happen. Lose sight of the customer, and you will lose in the end.

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WALK IN THE CUSTOMER'S SHOES IN THE DIGITAL AGE



BRUNO HERRMANN
Director of Globalization,
The Nielsen Company

As director of Globalization, Bruno Herrmann leads global content operations across six regions at The Nielsen Company, focusing on global content design and product management as well as on international customer experience. He joined Nielsen initially to lead international content and digital marketing programs. Previously, he managed online globalization programs at HP and, before that, content management initiatives and Web localization at Compaq. Before Compaq, he worked in the marketing communications and localization industries, taking part in major international projects for high-profile technology clients.



Twitter | Website



An internal team had to deliver on an important product program in China, and they needed to train new client users there. That team designed the training sessions, but it developed them as remote sessions conducted half in English and half in Chinese.

It was a clear mistake both culturally and linguistically. For Chinese audiences, face-to-face meetings are expected as they signify harmony. In that culture, harmony is key. Attendees complained that the trainers considered them as if they were foreigners living in China. These sessions had to be redone, in person and entirely in Chinese. Ultimately, those clients' respect and their business were won.

As a director of globalization leading international customer experience efforts, my main bit of advice is to walk in the customer's shoes. I'll break that down into three key recommendations:

- **Understand your customers from day one.** It only makes sense: you create the global digital customer experience from day one. From a global perspective, it is crucial to understand what customers want, what they expect, what type of aspirations they have, and the cultural standards by which they live. Doing so has been a pitfall for global business in general. Historically speaking, companies tend to assume that the whole world behaves and is delighted in exactly the same ways. That is a wrong assumption. Each country and region is different in many ways. Failing to understand and deliver on that is probably the best way to miss targets internationally.

“ A solid foundation of customer understanding prior to product and content development is imperative. ”



KEY LESSONS

- 1 IF YOU WANT TO MASTER GLOBAL CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE, WALK A MILE IN YOUR CUSTOMERS' SHOES.
- 2 AUTOMATED SOLUTIONS CAN BE VALUABLE, ESPECIALLY WHEN CREATING A GLOBAL CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE WITH MANY STAKEHOLDERS.

WALK IN THE CUSTOMER'S SHOES IN THE DIGITAL AGE

- **Design should be internationalized.** I recently heard Apple CEO Tim Cook explain why he will market a gold-colored iPhone in Asia. That product might turn off Westerners but—as Apple well knows—not the Chinese. I think Cook's design philosophy is the one that every global company should follow: a solid foundation of customer understanding prior to product and content development is imperative. Internationalizing designs and localizing them subsequently is a huge task, of course, but you make it easier when you understand diverse customers' tastes and aspirations. From a global customer experience perspective, that's important. Do it right up front and customers will feel that your products were made for them.
- **Use automation wisely.** Deploy automation tools in a targeted way, especially to assist with decision support and localization. Marketing automation tools and business intelligence solutions, which rely heavily on big data and business insights, are crucial for helping your organization understand and target international customers in the right way. Translation management systems help further by accelerating and controlling the localization of your products and content more effectively. The challenge of creating a truly global customer experience is that it involves a lot of work and many stakeholders, and these automation solutions can therefore speed up the process. I advise that people focus their automation efforts on those two areas when they want technology to make a difference in their global customer experience efforts.

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Deploy
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Whenever I talk about global digital customer experience, I always want to direct the conversation back to the customer, away from assumptions and personal considerations. Customer experience needs to start with the customer in mind, even before products are designed. That means understanding customers with a 360° approach by walking in their shoes, following their path through their journey. That's the best recipe I can give for global digital customer experience—not only as a general concept but also in terms of making that concept work on a global scale.

WHEN BUILDING A DIGITAL EXPERIENCE, START WITH A GLOBAL VIEW



DOMINIC KINNON
President, Global
Language Solutions
for SDL

Dominic Kinnon is President, Global Language Solutions for SDL and has 19 years' experience in delivering innovative language solutions for global communication. Dominic leads an organization of more than 1700 professionals across 34 countries, working with the world biggest and best known brands. He has evolved the Language Solutions group at SDL from providing pure translation services to an organization that delivers high value, language related solutions for delivering personalized, locally relevant experiences across every customer touch point. Dominic is also proud to be a trustee of the SDL Foundation.



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In today's business environment, the reality of customer engagement for many companies is that it is either partly or largely digital. The digital experience plays a big role in how customers engage, even when shopping in traditional brick-and-mortar retailers. That is why optimizing the digital experience has become such an important part of marketing strategy.

When companies design a digital experience, they typically begin with their home market and work hard to understand the details of how customers engage with them. Then they spend a lot of effort designing relevant global digital customer experiences, working out how they can use technology to personalize the engagement across channels. After all that hard work is done, they step back and say, now let's do this across 30 global markets. "It's almost an afterthought of how do we make this relevant, not just on a local scale, but globally," explains Dominic Kinnon. Of course, trying to repeat that process in 30 different global markets is a difficult and costly way to design a global digital experience. "Companies need to think globally at the very outset," says Kinnon.

"To act globally, you need to have a very slick organization that's able to capture data and quickly respond to changes on a regional and personalized basis," Kinnon says. "This means being able to quickly change your communication strategy, your campaign strategy, your product pricing strategy, and other aspects of your engagement."

“To act globally, you need to have a very slick organization that's able to capture data and quickly respond to changes on a regional and personalized basis.”

KEY LESSONS

- 1** COMPANIES NEED TO MAKE FUNDAMENTAL DECISIONS ABOUT THE GLOBAL ASPECTS OF THEIR DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY EVEN BEFORE THEY BEGIN
- 2** HOW MUCH OF OUR DIGITAL EXPERIENCE CAN WE MANAGE FROM OUR GLOBAL HEADQUARTERS, AND HOW MUCH CAN WE ROLL DOWN TO REGIONAL OFFICES, WHILE MAINTAINING BRAND INTEGRITY AND MARKET AGILITY?



WHEN BUILDING A DIGITAL EXPERIENCE, START WITH A GLOBAL VIEW

Any company with global interests needs to begin by recognizing that customers in different parts of the world will expect different things when engaging with a brand. These differences mean that companies need to make fundamental decisions about the global aspects of their digital engagement strategy even before they begin designing its details. For example:

- Should we take a culturally neutral approach in our marketing, or do we need to be culturally specific for each of our global markets?
- What languages must be represented in the different global regions? Which content can we translate using automated language translation systems, and which content must be manually translated by human translators?
- How do we manage racial and cultural differences in the imagery we present to our different global regions?
- How do we manage relevant global digital customer experiences for market segments that are regionally and culturally specific?
- How do we manage different brand perceptions and preferences? For instance, some regions respond well to big global brands while other regions prefer local brands.
- How do we manage customer and technical support in all our different global markets?
- How do we build agility into our regional digital experiences that allows us to tap local cultural happenings that are relevant to our customers in those places?

When taking the global perspective, perhaps the most fundamental question of all is this: How much of our digital experience can we manage from our global headquarters, and how much can we roll down to our 30 regional offices, while maintaining brand integrity and market agility?

So much of what resonates in one region will have no relevance in another. Answering these essential “global view” questions at the beginning of your digital experience design process will dictate how you execute on the design plan and how you manage your digital engagement once it is out there. “Taking a global view first is very important, because most businesses do not have budgets big enough to build global digital engagement as an afterthought,” says Kinnon.

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BUILD A CUSTOMER-CENTRIC BUSINESS STRATEGY



CHRISTINE CRANDELL
President,
New Business Strategies

Christine Crandell is president of New Business Strategies, a B2B customer-alignment consulting firm. She is published in *BusinessWeek* and *B2B Marketing*, blogs for *Forbes*, and speaks on how to build customer-centric organizations. Christine was recognized in 2014 as one of the 50 most influential people in sales lead management, in 2012 as one of the top 20 women in sales and marketing by the SLMA, and in 2010 as one of Silicon Valley's Most Influential Women by the *Silicon Valley/San Jose Business Journal*.



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I talk to companies about customer experience. In doing so, I consider two essential perspectives: How does the customer experience fit into company strategy, and how does it look through the eyes of the customer? Here's a true story that illustrates this approach.

I have a client who runs a business-to-business cloud-based business that serves customers of all sizes across many industries. This company needed to reduce customer churn and increase contract renewal rates. The organization thought it knew what customers wanted, needed, and should do. Unfortunately, none of that was actually happening.

When we came in, we decided to find out what the customers really wanted. We spent time with customer organizations of all sizes and asked them, Now that you have purchased a three-year contract, what interactions do you want with this company? It turns out that they wanted four things they were not getting. Four things that were critical to shaping the customers' definition of value and which defined the decision to renew:

- They wanted a simpler on-boarding process.
- They wanted a relationship with a person behind the brand—someone they could talk to, the same person they could talk to, over the life of the contract.

“ It did not matter what we thought or what the company thought: The only thing that mattered is what the customer thinks. ”

KEY LESSONS

- 1 MANY COMPANIES FOCUS MORE ON CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE WHEN THEY REALIZE THAT THEIR FIGHT FOR REVENUE IS REALLY A FIGHT FOR CUSTOMERS AND MARKET SHARE.
- 2 THERE HAS BEEN A GREAT DEAL OF INNOVATION IN DIGITAL MARKETING TECHNOLOGIES IN RECENT YEARS, BUT NOW WE ARE SEEING CONSOLIDATION, AS WELL.



BUILD A CUSTOMER-CENTRIC BUSINESS STRATEGY

- They wanted quarterly contact, with communication that was specific to them, such as metrics of their use of the service with advice on how to better leverage it or information that was relevant to their business.
- When it came time for a renewal, they did not want to be badgered. Their message was that if you engage with me the way I want you to engage with me over the life of the contract, the renewal will be a “no brainer”.

Addressing these customer-engagement preferences and providing a more personalized and contextually relevant customer experience resulted in a reduction in customer churn and greatly increased renewal rates. The lesson here is that it did not matter what we thought or what the company thought: The only thing that mattered is what the customer thinks.

Many companies focus more on customer experience when they realize that their fight for revenue is really a fight for market share. If they do not align people, processes, technology, and strategy to their customers' expectations, they will not grow market share. This is especially true now, as customers use technology to better fulfill their consumption needs. Customers have all the power in the customer–business relationship.

Organizations must think of customer experience as part of their business strategy, not something that sits to one side. Everyone across the organization must know what the customer wants, and then collaborate more effectively to do their job in that context to deliver on that customer's experience.

There has been a great deal of innovation in digital marketing technologies in recent years, but now we are seeing consolidation. New tools have capabilities that help break down the traditional barrier between the businesses and the customer, enabling companies to bring their customers inside the business. For instance, some customer management platforms now include collaboration tools so customers can provide information and manage their own engagement profiles. Analytics is also extremely important to building personalized engagement.

Businesses must be responsive to their customers, and not just in a timely sense. They must respond in ways that are relevant to the outcomes each individual customer seeks and values.

“Organizations must think of customer experience as part of their business strategy, not something that sits to one side.”

EXCEED CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS AT EVERY TOUCH POINT



NICHOLAS J. WEBB

Partner at Lassen
Innovation, Author, and
Speaker,
Lassen Innovation

Nicholas Webb is a world-renowned customer experience thought leader and the author of six books about customer-driven innovation and the new science of customer experience. He is a prolific speaker on the topic of customer experience. Nicholas provides customer experience consulting services to the top brands in the world as well as patient experience consulting to top health care companies.



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It used to be that delivering great customer service was the measure of success. Today, that is simply not good enough. With hyper-competition and uber-connectivity, companies must be more granular and more surgical about the way they engineer customer experiences. Three elements will, I believe, drive the future of customer experience:

- **Innovation.** All the new, best customer experiences are driven by innovation that provides better insights across the customer journey. Companies must ask, How can we look at both digital and nondigital experiences to create value above the customer's baseline level of expectation? How can we become more granular in the way we identify customer types?
- **Hyper-consumerization of everything.** Today's consumers have unlimited options. They influence each other through the social networks they check before making purchases, and they can quickly find their best value proposition. A new book called *The Patient Will See You Now* shows the changing relationship between patients and health care providers: that title really tells the story of the future of customer experience.

KEY LESSONS

- 1 THREE ELEMENTS WILL DRIVE THE FUTURE OF CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE: INNOVATION, HYPER-CONSUMERIZATION, AND CONNECTION ARCHITECTURE.
- 2 TO DELIVER EXCEPTIONAL CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE, COMPANIES MUST TAKE AWAY THE PAIN AND DELIVER WHAT CUSTOMERS LOVE AT EVERY TOUCH POINT.

“For companies to succeed today, they must exceed their customers' baseline expectations.”



EXCEED CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS AT EVERY TOUCH POINT

- **Connection architecture.** This is the stuff from which the best customer experiences are crafted. For example, Uber did not reinvent the taxicab; rather, it created a hyper-influencing social network based on a connection architecture that delivers an improved human experience for people who need to get somewhere. This is happening in other markets, too. Anthem has created a solution called *Live Health* that provides immediate video access to a board-certified physician from a computer or mobile device. Instead of waiting days for an appointment or sitting for hours in a waiting room, you are literally “seeing” a physician in minutes, any time, day or night. Live Health is the “Uber-ization” of health care.

For companies to succeed today, they must exceed their customers’ baseline expectations. The challenge for businesses is understanding their customers well enough to know what this baseline is for each customer type—what I refer to as *node type*—and then architecting the right experience for each. For example, Apple Stores are set up to recognize two node types. One is the *transactional type*, which is the customer who wants to come in, make a purchase, and leave as quickly as possible. Apple makes it easy to find the product and make the transaction. Another node type is the *nurturing buyer*, and for these customers, Apple has the Genius Bar. Apple Store employees are adept at guiding customers to the experience they seek.

A traditional approach to defining customer types is to look at demographic groups such as Baby Boomers, Gen-Xers, millennials, income levels, or ethnicities. Each of these groups is made up of people who have different preferences, however. Node type analysis focuses on what people hate and what they love. To deliver exceptional customer experience, companies must identify what a node type hates, take that pain away, identify what a node type loves, and then deliver that at every touch point. Every business must understand its own node types as they relate to that company’s own products and services. They must understand the baseline level of expectation for each node type. Then, they must design and deliver a perfect experience for each node type across each touch point.

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CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE IS ALL ABOUT CUSTOMER ENABLEMENT



PETER FISK

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Peter Fisk is a global thought leader in strategy, innovation, and marketing. He was educated to be a nuclear physicist and has worked for Coke and Virgin. Peter is now CEO of GeniusWorks, a strategy and innovation consulting firm, and a professor at IE Business School in Madrid. He has written seven books, including *Marketing Genius*, which has been translated into 35 languages, and *Gamechangers*, nominated as Marketing Book of the Year 2015.



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The old way of thinking about customer experience centered on touch points with the company and the brand. For 30 years, we have been talking about being customer-centric, yet we still ask customers what they want from the product and what kind of experience they would like when they come to our store. Game-changer companies, however, are looking at customer experience very differently.

For example, if you want to make your house more beautiful, you go to a home improvement store to buy tools and materials. The home improvement store regards your customer experience as going to the store, finding the right products, interacting with staff, deciding what is best for your project, paying for those items, and leaving the store a satisfied customer. For such customers, however, that is just the beginning: their experience continues when they go home and start drilling holes in the walls, building things, changing colors, and doing all the things they plan to do to improve their home. The in-store experience is almost incidental. The customers' goal is not to go to the store to buy things: their goal is to feel better about their home, or impress their friends, or improve their lifestyle. The new way of looking at customer experience focuses less on the experience that leads to a transaction and more on enabling customers to achieve their larger goals.

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KEY LESSONS

- 1 IN THE OLD WAY OF THINKING ABOUT CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE, WE STILL ASK CUSTOMERS WHAT THEY WANT FROM THE PRODUCT AND THE KIND OF EXPERIENCE THEY WANT WHEN THEY COME TO OUR STORE.
- 2 GAME-CHANGING COMPANIES ARE THINKING ABOUT THEIR MISSIONS IN TERMS OF WHAT THEY ARE ENABLING THEIR CUSTOMERS TO ACHIEVE.



CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE IS ALL ABOUT CUSTOMER ENABLEMENT

Many companies create their mission statements around what the company does or what the brand achieves. A bank may decide it will be the best bank in the world, or an airline company may have as its mission taking more travelers around the world than any other airline. Game-changing companies are thinking about their missions in terms of what they are enabling their customers to achieve. For instance, Swarovski, the jewelry company, sees the purpose of its business as bringing sparkle into people's everyday lives.

By recognizing this broader customer experience relationship and knowing also that customers use technology to connect with each other based on shared experiences, preferences, and aspirations, companies are able to deepen brand loyalty through expanded offerings. For instance, Harley-Davidson is a motorcycle company that sells attitude and lifestyle as much as it sells motorcycles. Harley-Davidson now works with partners all over the world to sell "Harley-Davidson Authorized Tours." Harley riders can travel to distant places, rent bikes, and go on guided tours. It is a way of extending the Harley experience through a new, shared experience for its customers.

To gain a broader view of customer experience, companies must look beyond averaging data to have in-depth customer dialogues and identify microsegments in their market. By gaining this customer knowledge and having those customer dialogues, organizations learn about what customers really want to achieve and the things they are frustrated they cannot achieve. Every one of those frustrations is a business opportunity. Businesses can begin to think about how they can play a bigger part in those customers' lives, to help them achieve what they really want to do.

This approach to customer experience begins with understanding what the customer dreams of achieving. Building a successful customer experience is all about enabling the customer to make that goal or ambition come true.

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YOU MUST UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU ARE TRYING TO CHANGE



ANNETTE FRANZ

Consultant/Author,
CX Journey

Annette Franz has passion for helping companies understand the importance of employee experience and its role in delivering an exceptional customer experience. Always eager to transform cultures to put the customer at the center, she has been recognized as one of the 100 Most Influential Tech Women on Twitter by *Business Insider* and a top influencer in customer experience. Annette is an active CXPA member, a CX Expert, a CX Mentor, a Local Networking Team Lead, and a Board Member.



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Any effort to improve customer experience begins with recognizing that you cannot transform something you do not understand. Three levels of understanding must take place before a company can successfully redesign a customer experience:

- **Understand the customer.** You must know who the customers are and what they are trying to do. For customer experience design initiatives, to understand the customer, you must develop customer personas and define the different reasons they engage with your business. For instance, are they coming to buy something? Are they coming to you for support? Are they coming to learn? Personas bring the customer to life and help everyone in the organization understand who the customer is.

“ To understand the customer, you must develop customer personas and define the different reasons they engage with your business. ”

KEY LESSONS

- 1 ANY EFFORT TO IMPROVE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE BEGINS WITH RECOGNIZING THAT YOU CANNOT TRANSFORM SOMETHING YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND.
- 2 IMPROVED CUSTOMER RETENTION IS A KEY METRIC FOR MEASURING THE SUCCESS OF THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE YOU ARE DELIVERING.



YOU MUST UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU ARE TRYING TO CHANGE

- **Understand at a granular level what customers do when they engage with you.** You must build journey maps of the exact steps each persona takes to complete the tasks they are trying to accomplish when they engage with you. Some businesses look at journey mapping at a high level to see how customers move through a purchase funnel. That is useful for marketing, but from the customer experience design perspective, you need to get to the exact steps and actions each persona takes for each specific kind of task he or she is trying to accomplish. The result is a set of journey maps for each persona.
- **Understand the customers' perception about the experience.** Journey maps must reflect the experience totally from the customer perspective. One way to do this is to create an assumptive map based on input from key stakeholders who think they know the steps customers take, and then validate those steps with customers. A better way is to meet with customers directly, talk to them, and build the map straight from their input. This approach enables you not only to capture the journey from the customer's perspective but also learn what customers think and feel about the experience.

When building journey maps, it is essential that you not only capture what the customer is doing but also what the customer thinks and feels about what he or she is doing. In this way, you can identify pain points that might create a mishap or even become a make-or-break point in the customer relationship. Getting that input from customers gives you a good picture of the current state of the customer experience. You can also use that journey mapping discussion to ask customers about what an ideal experience looks like for them. In some cases, the answer can reveal new business opportunities.

Before designing a change in the customer experience, you must gain a deep understanding of who your customers are, what they do when they engage with you, and how they feel about what they do. Then, and only then, will you have the basis for building a better customer experience. Improved customer retention is a key metric for measuring the success of the customer experience you are delivering.

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