

# Delivering your customer experience at every customer touchpoint

 By Paula Sartini

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Customer experience is the driving force behind every business as it gives companies a competitive edge that earns customer loyalty and attracts new customers. However, getting the customer experience right can be a challenge for companies, particularly as there is uncertainty in terms of what customer experience really means and how to go about achieving it.



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Customer experience has been described as a holistic perception of an experience and results from every interaction a customer has with your business. Based on this, customer experience means meeting customer's expectations at every touchpoint along the customer journey. Each touchpoint needs to be viewed as its own customer experience.

While various factors are considered to contribute to the overall customer experience, PWC identifies speed, convenience, consistency, friendliness and most importantly the human touch as key to the customer experience. In The Great Customer Experience Opportunity by Genesys, customer experience is attributed to consistency, choice and context. As there is no single defined list of contributing factors for driving customer experience, companies should look at a combination of factors along the customer journey and consistently measure the customer experiences at these touchpoints.



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**Mapping the customer journey**

For companies to deliver customer experiences that keep their customers satisfied and attract new customers, companies need to put the customer at the core of their business and make changes that will affect positive customer experiences in every interaction.

According to McKinsey, to achieve this, companies need to pay attention to the complete, end-to-end experience customers have with a company. This means moving beyond individual interactions and touchpoints to looking at the entire journey from before, during and after the experience with the product or service. This includes all online elements from websites and bots through to the direct engagement with service staff, billing departments and after-sales service teams for example.

It is this end-to-end experience that shapes the customer's overall perception of the company and brand and will either keep the customer satisfaction levels up or leave them disappointed.

### **Getting employees on-board**

Employees are part and parcel of the customer experience and need to understand their role in meeting customer expectations and delivering on the brand promise. All too often marketing departments take control of the branding and marketing elements and neglect to get employee support to execute the delivery of the customer experience. As a result, internal teams are divorced from the campaigns and what the marketing department is trying to achieve.

This is supported by McKinsey which states that companies often overlook the need to engage all employees across various functions to get employees involved and establish a customer-centric service culture which is achieved by providing clear and ambitious objectives and earmarked resources.

To overcome this, companies should empower every single person in an organisation to communicate with customers consistently and deliver on the promises made in the marketing campaigns. This can only be achieved by giving employees the tools and content to serve the customers with the right information at the right time and consistently every time.

Employees need to be more than a vehicle to the customer experience. They should be a participant that is seen as part and parcel of the overall experience. To do this, they need a collective understanding of the brand purpose, their role in the customer experience and be given the right information and content to deliver consistent experiences.



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### **Delivering consistency**

Consistency is a critical component to the customer experience. No matter how customers interact with brands, they want a consistent experience[6]. This is important as customers engage with brands across various platforms and channels, yet seek the same experience from each of them.

While customers are engaging with brands across different touchpoints, they are looking for consistency along the journey. This is supported by PWC, which states that smooth, consistent transactions from machine to human is critical to the customer experience.

Whether engaging with brands in-person or across devices, customers are looking for companies to consistently provide exceptional value with minimal friction or stress. As such, all customer interactions should engage, interest and be consistent to drive the customer experience.

### **Measuring the customer experience**

Customer experience means delivering your customer experience at every customer touchpoint and in every interaction. This can be particularly challenging as customer needs can change throughout the journey or they may have different needs at particular points of the journey.

Typically, companies use written or verbal communication to conduct customer experience surveys at the last stages of the customer journey. However, companies would benefit from using a variety of methods to gain customer insights throughout the customer journey to determine which points of the experience are excellent, need improvement or provide recommendations. For example, companies could use images to help customers recall points of the experience and gain valuable insights in terms of what customer's value the most from the product, service and experience.

This insight should be used to improve the customer experience further. For example, if customers prefer to deal with a person on a personal or sensitive matter rather than a bot or social media platform, this option should be made available to establish a relationship of trust and improve the customer experience.

### **Using tools to meet customer expectations**

Brands are a combination of product, service and the people that engage with customers daily. As such, employees should be given tools that empower them to deliver exceptional customer service in every interaction with customers and at every touchpoint along the customer journey. However, it is important to note that these tools should enhance customer experiences rather than replace them.

For example, content can be pre-developed and pre-approved for employees to quickly and easily insert it into emails to ensure the correct information is being sent out and is consistent across the company.

As the landscape of new technologies grows, companies will need to adapt to meet their customer's expectations. All business decisions should be made with the customer in mind, and technologies implemented should empower employees to enhance customer experiences. The companies that implement solutions to create better customer experiences will see the greatest benefit from their investment.

## **ABOUT PAULA SARTINI**

With over 20 years' experience helping leading organisations overcome various business challenges, Paula understands the challenges that companies face in delivering a consistent brand experience and the impact this has on their bottom line. An analytical thinker that strives to solve business problems with innovative solutions, Paula believes that technology plays a major role in solving critical business and branding challenges. As such, she established BrandQuantum to help businesses overcome their branding challenges in the digital age.

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