

THE SCIENCE BEHIND SUCCESSFUL CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

With Big Data and AI becoming all pervasive today, CX platforms are turning increasingly smart. Today, they are turning into a digital experience platform where experiences are managed and delivered in a seamless manner across digital touch points

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A little over a decade ago, customer experience was at its nascent stage. A brand reached out to its customers, potential or already existing base, through mass media, flyers, door-to-door campaigns or phone calls. It was through these interactions and in-store experience that a customer's experience with the brand was defined. The communication was often one-way; there were no platforms for the customer to offer feedback. Brands on their part didn't have access to data that would help them tap into a customer's buying journey and enhance loyalty. However, largely, brands dominated the relationship, and had sway over the consumer.

Enter the earliest smartphones and everything changed. Over the last decade, handheld devices, tablets, affordable and easily accessible internet connectivity have been instrumental in transforming a largely brand-centric relationship to a customer-centric one. Today, it is the customer who is dictating the terms of the relationship. Today's customers are online 24x7, expect brands to reach them on a channel of their choice. They expect seamlessness and intuitiveness from the brand.

Brands today need to think beyond matching customer expectations. They need to predict pain points and be ready to meet the customer at any stage of the journey, be it discovery, research or purchase.

Voice of the customer (VOC)

Also, a major element of today's customer experience strategy is to tap into what the customer is saying (or not) about the brand's offering. Measuring customer experience is an important step and brands would need to use a voice of the customer (VOC) programme. Such a programme collects all feedback, whether unstructured or structured, and offers brands a chance to tweak strategy constantly.

Other metrics

One of the most popularly used measurements is the net promoter score or NPS. The NPS is aimed at asking customers about their likelihood of referring/recommending a brand and its offerings to friends or acquaintances. The responses are categorized into scores, and customers are marked promoters, detractors or passives. The score helps brands assess satisfaction and loyalty levels. Another metric is the customer satisfaction score or CSAT. The CSAT is one score that has the most clarity, as it allows the business to deploy customer satisfaction queries at key points of interaction with customer. These could in-

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clude stages of discovery, consideration or purchase of a customer's journey.

Keeping track of churn or attrition rates helps businesses stay in touch with their performance. Is business doing well enough to retain its customers? Churn rate is the percentage of customers who have chosen to stop using a brand's offerings in a specific time frame.

A CX platform offers a business all the tools to track and measure customer behaviour and performance. There are several points of interaction between a customer and the brand, including the company website, social media, ads and other channels. A CX platform offers tools that help businesses manage these points of interaction. Survey responses are also integrated into the platform, making it a one-stop shop for not just collecting feedback but also managing and closing the feedback loop.

Role of technology in CX

With Big Data and Artificial Intelligence (AI) becoming all pervasive today, CX platforms are turning increasingly smart. Today, they are turning into a digital experience (DX) platform where experiences are managed and delivered in a seamless manner across digital touch points.

Self-serve tools such as chatbots and live chat also enhance customer experience and cut costs. Then there's the Internet of Things (IoT), ensuring a huge cache of data to tap into for insights. The explosion of digital assistants will also turn out to be a win for not just customers but also for brands, owing to the availability of data.

Summing up, successful customer experience involves a comprehensive strategy that takes into account tools and platforms to measure and analyse customer feedback.

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