

DRIVING DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

in Customer Experience

A WNS South Africa PERSPECTIVE



Driving Digital Transformation in Customer Experience

DELIVERING SUPERIOR CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE DEMANDS DIGITALLY-DRIVEN AND SUPER-PERSONALISED INTERACTIONS.

Digital technology is changing the way that customers interact with brands and businesses are compelled to reassess the way they engage with customers by incorporating digital channels into their overall customer engagement strategy. Customers expect a seamless and personalised experience that they can access on-demand, from anywhere at any time. A traditional telephonic contact centre channel alone is simply not going to cut it any longer.

Given that good customer experience is inextricably linked to business success, a well-executed digital customer experience is a strategic business imperative – no questions asked.

Shifting customer expectations

The shift towards digital channels is driven by changing customer preferences as well as the rising population of Millennial and Generation-Y customers. As a mobile-driven generation, Millennials want optimised, but effortless customer experiences on the go. However, they are quite particular in the

way this should be delivered. Simply using multiple contact channels is not enough, the key to creating a winning customer experience with Millennials is to make every interaction meaningful, quick, and seamless.

Their expectations don't end there, though. Ask any Millennial and Gen-Y if they'd prefer a do-it-yourself approach to resolving service issues, and their answer would probably always be yes. That's because they're as head-strong and independent as they are fussy. Offering a selection of self-service options, including IVR menus and comprehensive Frequently Asked Questions sections will easily satisfy them – if it doesn't require much effort that is.

What this means is that an optimised omni-channel experience is a must; customers want the same experience no matter what channel they are on – which can sometimes be all of them. Millennials make a meal of multi-tasking, and jump between various channels, often simultaneously. Research by Innerscope has found that Millennials can move between different channels an average of 27 times per hour.

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Digital is here to stay

By 2020, the average person will have more conversations with bots than with their spouse. That is according to recent research from Gartner. The rapidly growing interaction with technology is invading on our lives and is shaping the digitised customer experience of the future.

This rate of change is unlikely to slow down as digital interactions are becoming increasingly addictive (and essential) through the daily dependence on our smartphones, tablets, virtual personal assistants (VPAs) or even the entertainment systems in our cars.

This points to the fact that digital interactions are here to stay and in order for businesses to make progress towards achieving digital transformation, a meaningful and distinctive digital customer experience needs to be delivered.



Crafting a next-level digital customer experience

The percentage of organisations engaged in digital transformation is expected to double, to 50%, by 2020; according to research firm IDC. While adoption amongst organisations will still lag, their competitiveness will ultimately be defined by their digital interaction, customer experience, responsiveness and hyper-personalisation.

In order to embark on a digital customer engagement transformation journey and deliver a superior customer experience, a suitable strategy needs to be crafted. The steps outlined below help to map a path from strategy to action:

“The key to digital customer experience transformation lies in the ability to be agile and move fast.”

STEP 1:

Assess the current state of digital customer experience

The first step in the digital customer experience transformation is for a company to understand their current realities versus customer expectations. This assessment process, in conjunction with accelerated learning exercises on best practices, can help businesses highlight gaps in their digital infrastructure and identify what is preventing the delivery of superior customer experiences.

STEP 2:

Get to know customers inside out

Getting to know your customers is a critical step in the digital customer experience transformation process. Here the related customer data needs to be mined to gain insights and understand their relationships, interests and behaviour; ultimately bringing this all into a single view.

STEP 3:

Design effective customer touchpoints

When gaps in the customer experience have been found, businesses need to design customer touchpoints, with digital capabilities that can provide personalised experiences, to meet the existing needs.

STEP 4:

Deliver spot-on customer interactions

The insights gained from customer data, together with the newly enhanced customer touchpoints converge to deliver smart customer interactions. These engagements are optimised and are delivered through the right channel at the right time. Understanding what the optimal channel mix for the brand's unique audience is critical, especially when generational divides still exist.

STEP 5:

Continuously improve customer engagement with innovation-first approach

The key to digital customer experience transformation lies in the ability to be agile and move fast. It makes sense given the rapid rate at which technology advances. Businesses should not be afraid of early delivery and promote evolutionary development, adaptive planning and continuous improvement to encourage flexible response to change. In this way, businesses provide customer experience solutions that consist of only the bare essential features, but keep improving it with continuous customer feedback. This allows for wasteful investment into unnecessary digital capabilities to be avoided, but instead plough resources into where efforts will be most effective.



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Striking a balance between digital and human experiences

While there is tremendous value to exploit with digital customer experiences, companies should not discount the value still found in human connections. Customers are people, and they are likely to remain that way indefinitely. Thus, there will always be a degree of appreciation for human interaction. Put simply, customers want to be heard, understood and share meaningful experiences with the brands they engage with.

A mix of digital and human experiences that is geared toward optimising customer lifetime value is what is needed. In order to keep pace with the evolving customer, companies need to be agile and develop interaction strategies that are spread across multiple channels, giving customers the freedom to seamlessly switch between their preferred channels, as they desire.

We are likely to see a rapid acceleration

in the digitisation of basically everything in the near future. Capitalising on digitisation requires developing identity-focused customer touchpoints, providing convenience and reducing digital customer effort, and leveraging data to drive hyper-personalisation. In doing this, companies are better positioned to win customer loyalties and remain competitive in a digitally disruptive, but equally demanding environment. ▲

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