

Customers are wanting personalised experiences from winning brands

 By [Haydn Townsend](#)

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Today, experience is king and 80% of customers say they are more likely to do business with a company if it offers personalised experiences. This emphasis on experience is arguably at its greatest today because the structure of almost everything we do - how and what people buy, how and where they work, how they interact with others - has been upended by world events in 2020. Nearly every experience has changed, and now as companies look to move from recovery mode and pivot to growth, they need a new approach.



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An experience renaissance is afoot

Customers were already expecting more from brands, but now they're demanding it. The consumer behaviour shifts we're seeing today are not a blip and are likely to stay with us for a long time. Some have been in motion for years, and many have been accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic. For example, over 80% of consumers who increased their digital usage in a variety of channels during the pandemic expect to sustain these levels moving forward.

With the influence over marketing and buying power shifting more to millennials and centennials, and brands that are authentically focused on supporting their customers, will prevail in the long run.



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Around 60% of outperforming companies acknowledged that they need to stand for something bigger than the products and services they sell and that they expect to always seek the best outcomes for their customers. Brands need to be more

empathetic, flex experiences to suit the individual, and accelerate their uptake of available technologies to support new ways of working.

Although we have made huge strides in improving customer experience (CX), as defined by the sum of these interactions through touchpoints, it has become too homogenised, leaving little differentiation.

Our latest [research](#) at Accenture Interactive, reveals that after the pandemic started, CX dropped down the priority list by 33% among CEOs, and one of the newer concerns that emerged is “lack of clarity about ROI for CX investments”. However, when companies orient around experience, growth follows.

Leaders need to think beyond CX and embrace a new approach to orient their entire organisation around being in the Business of Experience (BX). These are companies that drive commercial impact by driving positive human impact, and they have proven to outperform their peers in profitability by at least six times year-on-year.

Future customer-centricity

A new marketing landscape has emerged with new rules, and companies that put experience at the heart of their organisation will ignite growth and be our new category of leaders into the year and decade ahead. The stats speak for themselves: some say happy customers spend 140% more, others say 300% more, but everyone agrees they spend more. If a company gets it wrong, customers will vote with their feet and tell everyone they meet to shop elsewhere.

Becoming a BX leader starts with becoming customer obsessed and 77% of CEOs agree that their company will fundamentally change the way it engages and interacts with its customers. Beyond the CEO, every C-level executive and leader inside both front- and back-office functions needs to be invested in shifting their thinking about experience. This includes making experience innovation an everyday habit, expanding the experience remit across the organisation, and syncing the tech, data and human agendas.



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Intelligent technologies such as conversational Artificial Intelligence (AI), the Internet of Things (IoT), Machine Learning (ML) and Mixed Reality (MR) are no longer the stuff of science fiction. Organisations are adopting them to optimise operations, automate workflows, produce targeted messaging at scale and reduce costs.

Customers are starting to benefit from the personalised experiences they open up such as AI-powered voice assistants who do everything from managing our calendars to providing real-time traffic updates, or smart insulin pens that tell users the time and dose needed for their next injection, sharing data via a custom dose calculator on a mobile app.

Companies will do well if they ensure to generate actionable insights by working out what questions the organisation needs answers to, then gathering and analysing the data that will answer those questions. Uncovering these insights is most effectively done by people and machines working together in partnership, and for insights to be actionable, they need to be easily accessible to everyone who needs them within the organisation.

Ambitious marketers will seize this opportunity to raise their game, embrace the potential of new technologies and champion data-driven insights across their organisation. They'll work with trusted partners to ensure that they have the skills and tools they need to innovate and delight the customer at every touchpoint.

ABOUT HAYDN TOWNSEND

Haydn Townsend is the managing director of Accenture Interactive, He's a qualified chartered marketer who has worked across the FMCG and advertising industry, including Ogilvy Johannesburg, where he reached deputy managing director and as chief strategy officer at The Jupiter Drawing Room (TJDR). He was also CEO of sponsorship and activation company Sail Sport & Entertainment.

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