What are the core requirements for building an omnichannel customer experience?

By Brent Haumann   16 Aug 2021

If asked, many organisations will tell you that they offer an omnichannel customer experience. A good proportion of them, however, would be wrong. What they're more likely to have in place is a multi-channel communication strategy.

Source: www.pexels.com

Multichannel customer engagement is provided across more than two channels. A company that offers multichannel service/support gives customers multiple different ways to interact with them. This enables businesses to meet customers where they are. Those channels, however, operate largely independently.

An omnichannel strategy, by contrast, means meeting customers on the channel or channels that they prefer at every level of interaction with your organisation. Omnichannel engagement, like its multichannel counterpart, involves companies offering customers numerous ways to interact. The innovation is that omnichannel customer engagement takes a holistic view by creating a seamless customer experience across all channels and devices.

What is an omnichannel customer engagement hub and why do I need it?
Brent Haumann 30 Jul 2021

But in order to create those seamless experiences, there are some core requirements that organisations need to meet.

The core requirements for omnichannel

1. **Customer-centric mindset**

   The entire omnichannel experience must be designed with the customer at the core of all decisions. If operational requirements, cost reduction, or legacy company structure are prioritised over customer experience - the outcome will not be an omnichannel customer experience.

   The wrong approach sees organisations sending customers on pre-defined journeys, utilising technology-based design, and having multiple departments with different agendas. The right approach, by contrast, involves dynamic journeys, customer centric design, and aligned agendas.
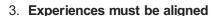
2. **Seamless integration**

   An important part of an omnichannel customer experience is seamless integration between channels. That means customers should have the ability to start an engagement on one channel and continue on another without having to resubmit any data or explain an issue over and over.

   Providing this kind of integration shouldn't be limited to business to consumer (B2C) organisations either. Millennials are now buyers in the business to business (B2B) space and they expect that same omnichannel experience they get from B2C providers.

   A single view of all communications channels is crucial to retain and grow the customer base
   Rob Lith, Telviva 12 Jul 2021

3. **Experiences must be aligned**

   In order for an omnichannel customer experience to be effective, there must be no fractures in the experience if a customer switches channels mid task. Customers must be able to choose which channel they prefer, and change their preference at any time without obstruction. That, in turn, means bringing established channels (set up to achieve operational outcomes) to the standard of channels newly designed with customer experience as a priority.

4. **Centralised, unified data**

   Omnichannel engagement cannot be achieved if customer data resides in silos. There needs to be one source of customer data, and a single view of customer interactions. Tracking of customer engagement must feed into this single source in order to refine the customer experience.

5. **An omnichannel engagement hub**

   An omnichannel engagement hub is a technology stack made up of platforms that are able to work in unison with each other to provide relevant, personalised, consistent, digital experiences across all channels.

   Critically, it allows organisations to bring together the data, intelligence, and activation technologies capable of

creating world-class customer experiences.

What good omnichannel CX looks like

The organisations that meet these core requirements are well set to provide their customers with great experiences. Just as Disney can manufacture experiences that make every single visitor leave the park feeling like they can't wait to return, so your organisation can leverage omnichannel communication to ensure that customers come back to you over and over again.

For the organisations which fail to adopt this approach, the end result is customer attrition, which is the opposite of the loyal, engaged customer base all organisations aim for because they spend more. The organisation will, in the end, also face an increased cost to serve its customers. In contrast, those that succeed will achieve longer term retention of customers, an increase in customer life-time value, and a growing customer base.

Finally, it's important to remember that omnichannel customer engagement isn't a "once-and-done" deal. It needs to be constantly measured and improved. Customer needs change, new channels emerge and technologies evolve. In order to succeed, organisations must understand this and act accordingly.

ABOUT BRENT HAUMANN

Brent Haumann is the Managing Director at Tilte.
▪ What does the ideal customer look like? - 22 Dec 2022
▪ 5 ways to better digital engagement for your business in 2023 - 25 Nov 2022
▪ Seamless communication is key to CX: Here's what it should look like - 24 Jan 2022
▪ Digital first-impressions matter - 8 Oct 2021
▪ How intelligent communications orchestration drives engagement, adoption, and experience - 6 Sep 2021

View my profile and articles...