

The CXA Awards - What it means for South African consumers

 By [Chantel Botha](#)

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It was an honour to chair the CXA judging panel for the 2017 awards. And after gruelling hours of judging I want to acknowledge and thank the companies and individuals who put themselves out there to be considered for this prestigious award.

What is customer experience management?

I want to start with what is customer experience management as a subject area and maybe what it is not ...

- It is not a marketing campaign executed well
- It is not a new innovative app
- It is not agents giving great service on the phone
- It is not an exceptional team handling and solving most of your complaints about your brand well.

It is an integrated, collaborative approach to ensuring the brand promise is delivered to the customer across any functional area of the organisation that he may interact with during any part of his journey with your brand. It is a focused approach to designing scalable, consistent experiences irrespective of where he enters your eco system or what questions he has.

Customer experience management demands the following focuses and development of these competencies as defined by Bruce Temkin:

- Customer-Centric Culture
- Voice of the Customer, Customer Insight, and Understanding
- Organisational Adoption and Accountability
- Customer Experience Strategy
- Experience Design, Improvement, and Innovation
- Metrics, Measurement, and ROI.

So, what does it take to be good at Customer Experience?

To be a great brand, you need to have a real authentic connection with your customers. This does not mean things will not go wrong at times, but it means that when things do go wrong, you are responsive and you will have banked enough love in the good times to be forgiven.



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Consumers in South Africa are still very forgiving and don't demand the kind of service and experiences we see in other parts of the world. They just don't feel strong enough or often don't have the time or inclination to correct service that was suboptimal where a brand has broken its promise. This leads to brands being complacent and not really feeling enough pressure to up their game. Social media has given the consumer an easy, low-effort way to get attention. In South Africa. But many brands are still not listening and don't really pay attention to what is being said on social media. This gives consumers the idea that they just don't care.

So, what does it take to be great at designing and delivering purposeful and remarkable experiences?

As far as the entries are concerned, I would first like to comment on leadership as a theme. I saw very strong leaders emerge who refused to take no for an answer, and who were determined to achieve results and take their people along on the journey. In the words of Theodore Roosevelt, they were in the arena, their faces "marred by dust and sweat and blood".

Then there were the innovators who, despite budget constraints, regulatory constraints, and "pain in the ass bosses", got the job done through sheer determination, using unrivalled resourcefulness.

Not all entries were equal, and although we strived to understand scale, complexity and budget it was very hard to level the playing field. However, I do want to acknowledge those entrants who worked with shoe-string budgets and really made magic by being resourceful.

In the entries I saw the dedication to get back and fix the basics, to pay respect to the customers of a brand, and, as a minimum, to give them what was promised. And I also saw a real passion to delight, to be remarkable.

Great customer experience is simple yet hard because it relies on us collaborating. It demands that you focus on the eco-system not the ego-system. It requires you as a leader and team member to be human, vulnerable and to see failure as that which is going to make your next idea better rather than kill your current brilliant idea.

It was truly an honour to be part of this judging journey for the first Customer Experience Africa Awards (CXA). My wish is that brands will seize the opportunity to enter next year, to showcase their hard work and really focus on exceeding the expectations of the people who keep them in business.

ABOUT CHANTEL BOTHA

I'm Chantel Botha, the author of "The Customer Journey Mapping Field Guide" and the founder of BrandLove.

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