

Why we need to talk about emotion in the boardroom

 By Leigh Andrews

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In the first keynote session of the Customer Experience Management (CEM) Africa Summit 2018, Diane Magers of the CXPA explained how to build and execute a CX strategy in an ROI-driven world.



MC Leeanda Reddy kicked off CEM Africa 2018 with an overview of what to expect from the conference, explaining that attendees and speakers are a concentration of the best in the business.

As a result of this, we were encouraged to absorb the insights shared as best we can, while also interacting with the diverse range of industry experts hosting workshop sessions and participating in panel discussions, so as to return to our desks better armed and better informed. That we did!

Now in its seventh year, Reddy shared that the 2018 version saw almost 600 delegates in attendance, which is almost double last year's figures, hence the bigger venue. She said there's clearly an appetite for excellence in customer excellence, with the intention of the CEM Africa Summit to quench that thirst.

Then it was time to introduce the first of four conference tracks for the year - driving customer emotions.

Diane Magers, CEO of the global Customer Experience Professionals' Organisation (CXPA), based in the US, warned us we would need to listen fast as she talks fast, as part of her opening keynote presentation of CEM Africa 2018, on 'connecting the dots to experience value'.



#CEMAfrica2018: Why CX is the only competitive advantage left

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Magers said there's often a mismatch of expectation and outcome when customer experience specialists speak with the C-suite in the company, as the executives are looking for a financial return on the investment. That means you need a clear, direct link showing how customer and employee experience connect to impact on the brand. Sadly, that's what many are missing.

To reach that value creation end-goal where both sides are happy, CX professionals need to change both their language and their value story. Here's why...

Build and execute CX strategy in an ROI-driven world

It's only logical that senior executives want definitive proof, but sadly that CX-C-suite conversation often ends up feeling more like a scene from *Jerry Maguire* than like a communal Kumbaya moment.

“ ☐☐ *“What random movie quote dominates your life?”*

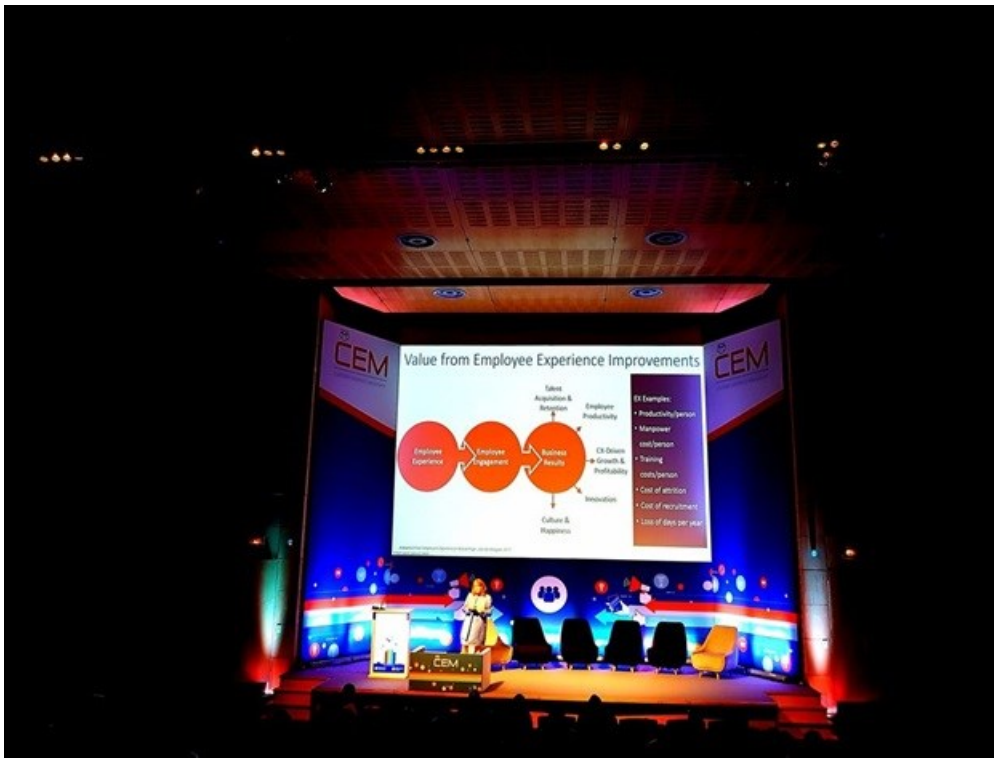
Show me the Money! From Jerry Maguire Movie <https://t.co/D1loGRZDbX> pic.twitter.com/urFORs7DuT— huxleyboyce (@huxleyboyce) [July 25, 2018](#) ”

To flip the script on this, we need to streamline the way we demonstrate that CX knowledge. First, Magers, who shared that she's also a clinical psychologist, told us to close our eyes and picture either an awesome or horrible experience we'd recently had with a brand, as these are the stories we tell others. Now, we need to learn how to do this in our own organisations.

There are three steps to this process:

1. Explain what happened
2. Share how we felt about it
3. Figure out how we will do things differently in future

Magers said just the fact that we share these stories hints at the power of emotion in customer experience, and that how we feel drives customer behaviour, which is in turn what drives business results.



Magers also spoke of the fact that brands can provide value by tapping into their consumers' emotional needs. Often, consumers are willing to pay more to have those emotional needs met.

It's 2018. Are you aware of your consumers' emotional needs?

There's no doubt that almost everything is being commoditised today, and while we have no problem attaching value to a process, it's much more difficult attaching value to a customer experience.

“ That's where the boardroom problem lies, because when we talk about the human element related to process, those metrics are dependent on the customer's experience and the emotional response - and those don't factor in for the financially minded. ”

So what measures and metrics should you use to define the value for CX?

Many dashboards exist, but how do you tell a business case study around them? There's an opportunity to fill that gap.

Magers adds that lots of research supports the value of CX, and many do journey mapping to identify points of delight and opportunities, but rarely does this process show any financial impact. There's nothing in the tools we typically use that speaks to the financials, so we need to add them in.



Explaining the shift from CX-speak to C-suite speak, Magers said we are all concerned about the business in different ways but not necessarily talking the same language about it, so you need to learn to talk the business unit's language.

From concept to concrete; from journey mapping to journey management

So while a metric like 'increased client satisfaction' is common, it's merely directional and not quantifiable. Magers says to keep that as your focus, but shift your language to include those metrics of satisfaction as well as measures like improved efficiency, so as to shift from the conceptual to the concrete.

The C-suite makes decisions not to make customers happy but rather to drive revenue and lower costs, so the CX speak needs to match what the other executives are talking about in the boardroom, as that's what you ultimately compete against to make that business case.



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So change your story to speak of the financial impact of those CX metrics. **You also need to look internally at the employee experience and the measures of that, as opposed to just the external customer journey. Stakeholder analysis is also important**, so find out what matters to the other divisions like sales, marketing and HR, too. That was your CX becomes more holistic.

Magers suggests doing the customer and employee journey map together for a shift towards journey management. Find the overlap and manage the catalysts, and remember to add a swim lane for financial impact. Once done, look at the full journey for an additive effect to the financial business case.

Magers ended by saying to keep the stories your brand tells human, and to focus on the stories, not the calculations, as **numbers give credibility but stories move people to action.**

That's how it's done. You can read up on more on the [CXPA](#), more on [#CEMAfrica](#), and watch for our coverage of the two-day conference.

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ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

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