

Customer experience: The marriage of marketing and technology

 By [Paula Sartini](#)

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For many years marketing and technology departments have worked independently, meeting a specific mandate.



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Marketing has traditionally focused on creating awareness of brands and enticing the target market to select their brand over the competition. IT, on the other hand, has been focused on improving business efficiencies by providing the technologies that meet the company's needs. However, the business environment in which we work in today has evolved and customer experience, which is becoming central to the success of every organisation, requires marketing and technology to work together.

Defining customer experience

According to Forrester, customer experience (CX) is the discipline of defining the step-by-step customer journey from marketing through sales and service. It defines the key capabilities, content, and interfaces that need to be present at each customer touchpoint and how those touchpoints work together to form a cohesive experience.

Customer experience is a critical contributor to a company's success. This is supported by the Forrester CX Index which found that from 2011 to 2015, companies that scored near the top of the Index increased customer retention, had greater cross-selling opportunities and generated higher revenues than those companies that scored poorly on the index.

Some CIOs would argue that CX should be the marketing department's responsibility as they already have so much to focus on and cannot afford to take on any extra responsibilities. In this scenario, it would make more sense for the marketing department to decide what it wants and let IT support it with the technology solutions needed to achieve the marketing goal. However, while this may seem like an efficient approach, it is a roadblock for the delivery of a great customer experience.

Embracing new technologies

To deliver great customer experiences, marketing departments agree it is critical that they embrace new technologies that

enable them to meet customer expectations. It would be more beneficial to take the relationship a step further and have the marketing department work closely with the IT department to develop solutions to meet the needs of the customer throughout the full CX lifecycle. As such, IT would need to adapt from providing background support to being a part of the discussions to develop solutions that can improve the customer experience.

This isn't a foreign concept as leading companies such as Google and Uber have managed to bring the development teams and business teams together to work as a single unit, making decisions together about the customer experience and delivering solutions that consistently meet customer expectations.

While the use of technologies such as bots, for example, are being adopted at a rapid rate, it is important that technology does not replace the human element of the brand, as people strive for human connection and authenticity. As such technology should be used to enhance the customer experience and make it easier for the customer to do business with you.

For example, in the case of brand automation, technology should remove repetitive functions from employees so that they are able to focus more attention on being strategic and meeting customer expectations. Equally important is empowering the entire organisation to deliver a consistent brand experience across every department by providing the right tools to help them to achieve this.

CX should be at the centre of everything

Other benefits that technology brings to the CX mix is the ability to personalise campaigns according to individual usage patterns. This includes engaging with customers on their preferred platforms, reaching out to them at the most convenient times and providing relevant information specific to their individual needs. For example, if a customer purchases the same meal every Wednesday, proactively reach out to them with additional offerings to add to the order.

However, with so many new technologies available from artificial intelligence (AI) to virtual reality things can be complex for IT departments which are being asked to embrace these new technologies to enhance the customer experience. Customer experience should be at the centre of everything an organisation does and technology should be used to drive and enhance these customer experiences while freeing employees up to deliver the human touch in customer interactions.

Technology provides real-time data that can and should be used to help make relevant and timely business decisions for both improved customer experience and better business performance. After all, today the customer is still King and a tech-savvy one at that.

ABOUT PAULA SARTINI

With over 20 years' experience helping leading organisations overcome various business challenges, Paula understands the challenges that companies face in delivering a consistent brand experience and the impact this has on their bottom line. An analytical thinker that strives to solve business problems with innovative solutions, Paula believes that technology plays a major role in solving critical business and branding challenges. As such, she established BrandQuantum to help businesses overcome their branding challenges in the digital age.

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