

# HOW ENTERPRISES BENEFIT FROM A COMPLETE COMMERCE APPROACH

## INTRODUCTION

Customer experience (CX) is a hot topic these days. But the concept is much more than just a buzz phrase. The ways in which organizations interact and engage their customers are key to whether those customers will purchase their offerings and continue to come back for more business as long-term customers, or ultimately choose a competitor.

It should be no surprise then, that enhancing customer experience needs to be a high priority for C-level business and technology executives. The CX initiative within mid-size and large enterprises should be top of mind when competing with direct competitors in their market space as well as small, more nimble businesses. In fact, numerous studies have demonstrated that customers are evolving to buy more often on experience instead of price.

Many enterprises are conducting commerce on a global scale and need to continually deliver quality customer experiences, or risk losing commerce opportunities to competitors and organizations with a heavy online presence aimed at making engagement easier for their customers.

It's with these mid-size and large enterprises in mind that ECENTA Digital created The Complete Commerce Implementation, a methodology for optimizing the customer experiences its enterprise clients deliver to their end customers. This methodology, which the company delivers as a set of strategic services, is designed to benefit not just ECENTA Digital's clients, but their clients' end customers as well.

## CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE (CX)—THE KEY TO COMMERCE SUCCESS

When it comes to conducting a commerce presence of any kind, CX is paramount. In fact, it's not a stretch to say if the customer's experience is a negative one, engagement with that organization will decrease. That puts revenue at risk and might even mean losing a customer entirely.

As industry research has shown, most organizations can deliver a good experience some of the time, but delivering a high-quality experience all the time demands high levels of connectivity across key processes, engagement channels and customer journeys.

According to Gartner's June 2019 report, 75% of the 244 organizations in seven countries surveyed increased their customer experience technology investments in 2018.

Customer analytics continues to be one of the biggest investments, the firm said, with 52% of the organizations intending to increase funding in 2019, focusing on customer journey analysis among other areas.

The survey showed that when organizations grow in customer experience maturity, a greater investment in technology is placed on increasing customer understanding and delivering relevant experiences.

Organizations need to understand that CX is broader than just delivering products to consumers on time, in the right quantities and to the right location.

It includes acknowledgement of and action on consumer's previous buying patterns, delivery preferences, and personalization, such as communication channels, messaging, and important dates.

Any organization, no matter how large, needs to treat customers on a one-to-one basis when offering goods or services to consumers or to other businesses. This is no longer a common misconception in the space.



When it comes to CX, ECENTA Digital's philosophy on business-to-business (B2B) and business-to-consumer (B2C) is rooted in a "business-to-human" (B2H) approach. Organizations should look at these relationships under the B2H lens because it's the individual who is at the center of every customer experience.

While B2B and B2C strategies are not new, ECENTA Digital subscribes to a newer B2H concept of commerce. B2H reflects the importance of understanding the customer (at an individual level) to deliver modern commerce experiences resulting in transactional engagements.

## Customer Centric

Put the individual at the center of every interaction.

Organizations must understand the challenges their customers face, the context of those challenges, expectations

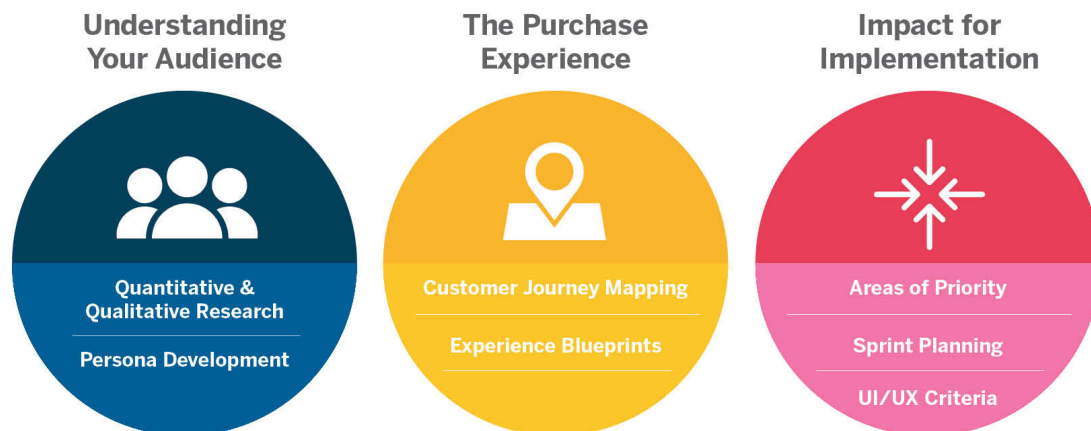
on the experience, and sentiment around an experience in order to provide for the customer throughout their commerce journey.

B2H customer experience also involves creating a consistent experience for the customer across all digital and non-digital channels, including face-to-face interactions, phone (voice and text), Web and e-commerce, mobile devices, chat, email, and social media. While some of these channels might be more important to a given customer than others, a company should be prepared to provide consistent service across all, in the event the customer changes preferences.

In order to deliver the optimal commerce experience, organizations must also provide a deeper integration of data and platforms. Customer data is flowing into organizations today from all kinds of sources, including channels such as email, social, web, PPC, and more.

If little or no integration exists between systems such as customer relationship management (CRM), Web and e-commerce platforms, customer support applications, and other sources, there can be no cohesive mechanism for getting the most value out of all this data. The result is that customer data exists in siloes, with no easy way of digesting and acting on the insights the data delivers.

## The Complete Commerce Implementation Methodology



ECENTA Digital's The Complete Commerce Implementation methodology provides a complete roadmap for enhancing CX and maximizing the benefits of commerce.

The cornerstone of the methodology is based in understanding the customer. To truly connect with customers in meaningful ways, companies need to understand who their customers are rather than making assumptions about them, their purchase activity, demographic or societal standards. A complete understanding of the customer is not possible without proper customer research. Customer research is necessary to dispel assumptions around key customer segments and to create valid customer personas.



Organizations often make assumptions about their customers. For example, a heavy machinery manufacturer sells construction equipment used primarily by men whose job is that of equipment operator. Without conducting research into buyers of the equipment, including their pain points and needs, the manufacturer could fail to account for the possibility that most companies purchasing this type of equipment are employing women as procurement officers.

These procurement officers may have different pain points and needs than do the operators who use the equipment. But defining and understanding the buyers enables the manufacturer to sell and service more effectively.

## **BREAKING DOWN CUSTOMER RESEARCH**

Customer research should consist of two main components: quantitative research that includes database segmentation and surveys; and qualitative research that includes customer focus groups, interviews, and workshops.

Understanding the audience requires developing key customer personas. Such personas are data-driven, realistic representations of a company's key customer segments. A persona might include information about an individual's background, goals, pain points, challenges, values, and factors that drive commerce-based behaviors. Additionally, personas may include information on the most utilized sections of an organization's commerce site, devices most frequently used for transactional behaviors and communication channel preferences.

For commerce software solution implementations, personas are used to recruit for customer journey mapping workshops. Customer journey mapping uncovers the existing purchase journey; identifies pain points and crux points of the existing experience; and prioritizes key commerce features leading to recommendations on commerce optimizations and highest level of impact for implementation and sprint planning.

## **CUSTOMER JOURNEY MAPPING – YOU'VE HEARD THIS BEFORE**

A vital component of The Complete Commerce Implementation methodology is customer journey mapping workshops. Organizations can map the purchase experiences of their customers by leveraging journey mapping, which is a framework used to understand the existing commerce experience as a whole.

Journey mapping sessions are collaborative, with participation from key client stakeholders including IT, marketing, sales, service, other business representatives, and most important the organization's customers. Touchpoints are mapped across five phases of the commerce journey: awareness, consideration, purchase, service, and loyalty.

These sessions also identify the activities, touchpoints, and people involved at every phase of the purchase journey, and uncover engagement gaps, areas of opportunity, and most essential points in the journey.

Customer journey mapping initiatives are delivered via a purchase experience blueprint. An experience blueprint is created for each key customer persona group represented during a journey mapping session. A universal experience blueprint is all delivered to put focus on areas that have the most impact across all customer groups.

As an example, a blueprint for a manufacturing company might include priorities such as parts look-up, request for quotes, and look up customer's existing equipment. The company's solutions (features and functions) for optimizing customer experience might include mobile-enabled applications, search, real-time pricing, images, product recommendations and reviews, related product updates, and recommended packages.

After the session is completed and following a deep analysis, the universal experience blueprint is created. This approach helps to maximize return on investment for all customer segments in the shortest period of time.

## **BENEFITS FOR ENTERPRISE AND MID-SIZE ORGANIZATIONS—AND THEIR CUSTOMERS**

Taking these steps to enhance customer experience enables mid-size and large organizations to leverage The Complete Commerce Implementation approach, and this approach can yield a number of benefits for these companies as well as their customers.

**The benefits include faster speed to market, improved traction and return on investment with target customer segments, and decreased risk of misusing their marketing and IT budgets.**

By having a better understanding of what each customer wants and needs, companies can more efficiently work with those customers.

Here are some of the other notable benefits for organizations:

- Savings of time and money on change orders and work done on incorrect requirements.
- Dispelled assumptions about existing purchase experiences, customer expectations, and needs.
- Alignment of cross-functional teams on features, functions, and priorities.
- Greater efficiency for sprint planning and phase priorities.



This methodology delivers the most impactful purchase experience, based on real customer needs; uncovers additional insights to utilize when planning marketing campaigns, which are relevant and resonate with individual customer personas; and engages with customers at the point in the purchase journey that is most impactful for them.

Additional benefits include organizational alignment on priorities, which ensures the ability to stay closer to initial implementation schedules; limits on rework, which expedites final delivery. Alignment with internal client stakeholders on priorities at an early phase saves time and money and limits project fatigue and frustration.

## **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

For any organization looking to improve their commerce customer experience, the key is to focus on the individual and leverage The Complete Commerce Implementation, including customer research, persona development, customer journey mapping, and blueprinting.

By employing a B2H approach and utilizing The Complete Commerce Implementation method, companies can enhance customer experience and reap a variety of benefits including faster speed to market, enhanced traction and return on investment with their target customer segments, and less risk of misusing their marketing, IT and operating budgets.

By delivering optimized experiences for their customers in every commerce transaction, companies can gain net new sales and enjoy greater brand loyalty and increase customer retention.

The focus on enhancing customer experience will no doubt continue in the coming years, as mid-sized and large organizations look to succeed as not only providers of services and products but digital experience leaders.