9 CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE TREND TO WATCH IN 2023

1 *Disconnected, unintegrated technologies will plague customer experiences.*

Customers will favor digital-first companies that simply are easier to do business. They demand integration because they experience it with digitally native brands because their technologies were created in an already integrated fashion. Legacy companies will need to invest or lose market share to more innovative competitors.

2 *Companies and customers will start to realize the benefits of asynchronous messaging (i.e., WhatsApp, Meta Messenger, iMessage).*

Who uses the phone anymore? Even in business, we now message a party to check if it would be OK to call. The same trends apply to customer experience. Messaging is efficient and a more convenient channel for customer support, especially for non-urgent matters. Customers can start and resume the conversation at their convenience much like we message friends and family. They have the freedom to walk away to multi-task other activities. And the ideal experience is one where if a voice interaction is required it is scheduled so to respect everyone's time. What is not to like about this channel?

3 *Customer experience will mean cross functional teams getting back to the basics of the customer.*

Complicated transformations are not required to have excellent customer experience. In fact, they usually do not result in a materially different outcome. It's about rolling up the sleeves, listening to customer interactions, understanding customer journeys from a customer lens, and making changes across multiple functions within an organization that will drive real results. If your organization across all its functions is not walking the shoes of your customer, then you lost in your core purpose. Customer service teams can provide a lens to the customer experience, but change comes from an organization wide commitment to those customers.

4 *Citizen development in customer experience will become a "thing."*

This is such a novel concept. It is where the users of technology solutions are actually the ones that program and optimize how those technology solutions work. Many technologies now have a low-code, no-code user interface which would enable "citizens" to develop for their particular needs. It fast tracks gains that can be made by an organization and a great example of agile organizations. An example is citizen development of robotic desktop automation which can deliver more than 30% efficiency in customer support handle times!

5 *Companies will focus on customer intent interaction optimization to accelerate growth outcomes.*

Companies will stop attempting to delight the masses with generic solutions that attempt to be a one-size fits all approach to making improvements in the customer experience. Leading organizations peel back the onion and focus on customer intent analyses that enable a deep understanding of specific issues. From there, businesses can solve those challenges and produce an immediate ROI, increase customer share of wallet, and build brand loyalty with customers. It is like any relationship, if you apply effort, it brings rewards.

6 *Companies will migrate their view of their contact center as a cost center and start determining the optimal cost of their contact center to help grow their business.*

Cost reduction exercises in contact centers usually result in the same mess for less. This is great if you are ambivalent to your customer. Not happy with how much your service experience costs your company? What is creating the need for service experiences? Greater than 2/3 of service interactions result from failures within a company to do something as committed to a customer. We call this failure demand. Customer experience companies will want to eliminate failure demand interactions to create capacity for value-based interactions to bestow their brand's culture, renew/elevate trust, drive innovation, and deepen relationships. They will minimize failure demand creating opportunity for value work and this equilibrium will be seen as the optimal cost to grow!

7 *Businesses will realize that managing multiple channels of interactions is easier and much more efficient on a single platform.*

Companies will want an out-of-box approach to omnichannel solutions so their customers can seamlessly shift interactions from one channel to another. This is best done on a singular unified platform where those experiences can be personalized based on the context of prior interactions. This saves time and money while improving the customer experience. And shifting technologies to this singular platform are no longer daunting, so more will appreciate the benefits of an out-of-box unified solution.

8 *AI Bots alone are not the final solution. A new standard for bots is emerging to provide a more efficient and effective solution than a human experience.*

It used to be that digital workers were going to replace humans. The reality is that the right mix of both is ideal. If a digital worker is quicker and more efficient than a human, customers welcome them in an experience. The effectiveness of a digital worker needs human supervision and training. Front-line service team experts are best to take on this role and companies will move service teams to take on these roles.

9 *Service teams will shift focus from solely service volume reduction goals to eliminating customer issues.*

Reducing volume alone results in bad experiences with AI bots or self-service menus that make it seem a company is creating obstacles in talking to a human support team. Saavy companies are realizing that can optimize cost by resolving upstream issues and leveraging self-service solutions to create more efficient processes for customers.

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