It's All About Me

A Guide to Customer Experience Design

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CHAPTER 1

Customer Focus

Age of the Impatient Narcissist

"I want what I want, and I want it now!" That's the mantra of today's consumer. Why? Because they have become accustomed to such a high level of service from today's leading companies, who have essentially redefined the standards for the customer experience (CX).

Amazon can deliver almost anything to your doorstep in about two days. Google can answer practically any trivia question instantly, and give you an encyclopedic explanation immediately. If you can't remember the name of a song playing in a restaurant, just ask Shazam, and, poof, the artist and song name will be displayed for you, along with the lyrics.

The challenge for today's corporations is to live up to these standards and meet their customers' expectations for amazing, immediate service, 24/7. If your CX doesn't quite measure up, you could be in danger of losing market share, until you concede that, "It's all about me."

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"I Want That"

The industries that consistently rate the highest nationally for customer service are grocery stores and fast food restaurant chains. Why? Because their customer interactions are very basic and repetitive every day. Nothing too complex, so there is very little that can go wrong. And, we like it that way.

We like to be able to easily find what we want, learn what we need to know in order to make an informed decision, and quickly complete the transaction. Shipping should not be a hassle, and I should get my product or service quickly.

Where companies fall down is when they add complexity because they are trying to prevent fraud – clumsily – or when their focus is on achieving internal goals, rather than on the customer experience.

Clean up those unnecessary speed bumps and you're on your way to a more positive CX.

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Assembly Required

If your product is not intuitive enough to assemble it without reviewing an instruction manual (who reads manuals any more?), or to use a service without a call to customer service (who has time for this?), then it may need to be simplified or streamlined to improve the customer experience.

Consider the difference in experience when you buy a children's toy that requires assembly vs. the experience when you buy and set up a new iPhone. Night and day, right? So, why is that? Because Apple works very hard to understand its customers, and deliver to them a product that is easy and intuitive to set up, so they remain happy and loyal. Toy manufacturers, historically, have struggled to get this right.

Companies that lead in CX make it very easy for their customers to consume their products or services. It does take longer to design simplicity into a product or service offering, but the impact on the customer's perception of a company and loyalty to a brand can be significant.

Keep in mind that the growth of mobile devices as a means to buy products and services has recalibrated customer expectations for the level of service that is possible. How do you stack up?

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"Know Me, Guide Me"

Mass personalization is the expectation today, especially for an ongoing relationship like a subscription-based online service, or a long-term relationship like health insurance. The user expects to be able to customize their interactions with your product and service offerings that are delivered digitally to suit their specific preferences.

Health insurance provider websites are notoriously weak in providing such a customizable experience to their customers. Instead, they tend to hide important information like prescription history data and co-payment fees, making the user resort to a search function in order to find them.

The company that understands and recognizes its customer preferences – starting at their first interaction – generates much greater customer loyalty and referral business than one that requires the customer to "reintroduce" themselves at every interaction.

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CHAPTER 2

Diagnosis

A Team Effort

A 360-degree view of the CX across customer touchpoints (e.g., customer research, sales, product usage and customer support) will identify opportunities where people, processes or technology are promoting or detracting from the desired customer experience. Understanding these touchpoints is a good starting point for any CX improvement initiative.

Ensuring the CEO buys into the initiative and gets all other relevant business groups onboard is key in the success of your initiative and a priority that should happen before the work begins.

We recommend that CX redesign initiatives be co-led by the CIO, CMO and Customer Service executive. This creates a very important balance between the customer service process (CMO), the technology that underlies CX-defining touchpoints (CIO), and the people who are engaged in actual customer interactions (Customer Service).

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Voice of the Customer

To address CX issues, we advocate becoming a customer of your own organization in order to build a sharper perspective on the best and worst elements of your service design.

Expressly soliciting the voice-of-the-customer (VOC) to identify service roadblocks will provide you with the data needed to determine the most critical areas of your service model that require correction.

We recommend conducting formal surveys and focus groups, as well as analyzing data from customer service channels, social media and online review sites to get a fuller picture of your CX and to identify key areas to address.
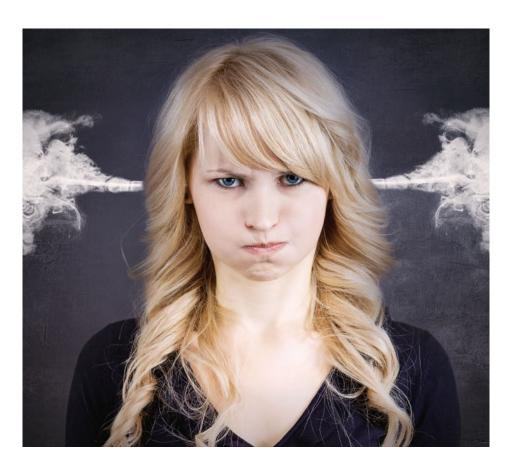
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Rules, Rules, Rules

Based on VOC feedback, create a list of broken processes and pay especially close attention to documenting offensive and unnecessary rules that fail to deliver a great customer experience.

Weigh the economic value of a rule versus the impact it has on your customers. Many customer service rules are legacy elements from well-intentioned efforts in years past that are no longer necessary. Others are based on meeting certain financial and operational metrics that fail to understand the impact on the customer. Finally, rules designed to prevent fraudulent customer activities have a tendency to punish all of your customers.

We recommend taking a close look at all of these rules to avoid codifying them into software, where they will be much more difficult to remove later.

CHAPTER 3

Transformation

Elimination

Once the diagnostic process is complete, we recommend triaging business rules that impact CX into three categories - candidates for elimination, simplification or automation. Those that are candidates for elimination include:

- Rules that imply that your customers, left to their own devices, would take advantage of you;

- Rules that coerce your customers into taking actions that seem irrational or not in their best interests;

- Rules that blame your customers for acts of omission (failing to do something) or commission (doing something incorrectly), which are really just shortcomings in your business processes or systems.
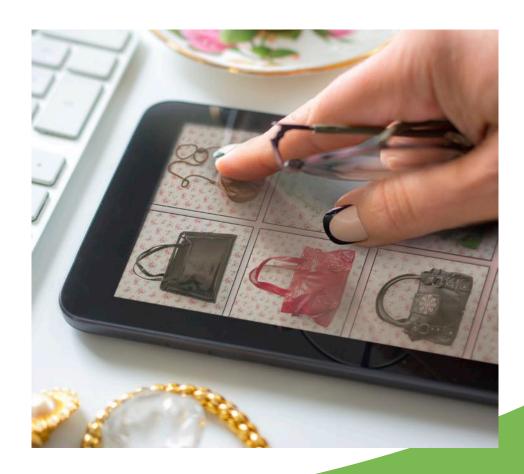
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Simplification

Next, we identify rules that are candidates for simplification because they are overly complex.

Mobile devices can serve as a useful benchmark for measuring product and service simplicity. Their form factor limits the level of effort required by customers in using your product or service to a few simple keystrokes. This is relevant for companies whose products or service offerings are information-based.

In general, products or services that require a call to a customer service center or a thorough reading of the user manual can mean that they are too complex.

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Automation

Lastly, rules that are candidates for automation, are the last segment to be addressed. These candidates include:

- Technology that can infer customer preferences after multiple interactions

- Technology that captures and shares information across multiple customer engagement channels

- Technology embedded in your products and processes that is intuitive and valued-adding to the customer experience

Streamline your processes and rules before any discussion of information technology that would enable those processes. In other words, avoid using technology to automate an inherently inefficient business process. Simplify first and then automate.

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About Cimphoni

At Cimphoni, we help companies realize the potential of their technology investments by working directly with IT and business leaders to address their most pressing challenges and opportunities.

The Cimphoni team is comprised of senior IT and business leaders who have practical, hands-on experience improving the agility and responsiveness of IT organizations and accelerating the deployment of technology-enabled solutions that deliver real business value.

If you are interested in harnessing the full potential of IT— including the ability to improve your business performance and your customer experience— visit us at www.cimphoni.com or call 888-365-4176 to learn more about how we can work together to transform your business and IT function.

We also welcome you to engage with us on Twitter, LinkedIn or Facebook.