CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE STRATEGY AND DESIGN PRIMER FOR 2017

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SUMMARY

Customer experience can be the multiplier or rate limiter of business results. Customer experience leaders can use Gartner's research to define and execute CX strategy and increase satisfaction, loyalty and advocacy.

Scope

Customer experience (CX) management is the practice of using customer insight to design and execute a cross-functional CX strategy that increases satisfaction, loyalty and advocacy.

CX strategy and design will include insight and guidance on the following topics:

- **Customer experience strategy** — Defining your role in developing and implementing the broad-based CX strategy and making the business case for CX investment and initiatives

- **Customer experience insight** — Developing and driving adoption of insight and tools like VoC, personas and journey maps

- **Customer experience design** — Building and executing an effective CX strategy and prioritizing high-impact CX initiatives

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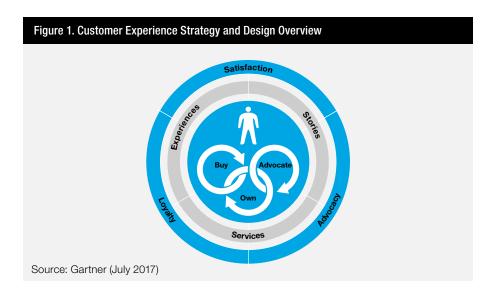
ANALYSIS

Many companies dive into CX improvements without a customer-focused approach or informed strategy, making ad hoc changes that may be suboptimal or harmful to customers. This approach can have negative downstream consequences, fail to deliver the intended benefits and jeopardize CX as a discipline in the company.

CX requires a well-considered plan. That plan isn't just based on thinking about your customers. It is grounded in thinking like your customers. But getting your organization to adopt this mindset requires insight into customer wants, needs and interactions. It takes tools like personas and journey maps to inform customer-centric design, and a CX strategy that defines priorities, justifies investment and drives cross-functional collaboration.

Use Gartner's 2017 research on CX strategy and design to bring the highest-value customer experience investments into focus. Connect your customer experience to business impact, build better alignment within marketing and across other functions, and use the insight to inform customer experience initiatives.

Top Challenges and How Gartner Can Help

Gartner's 2017 research agenda will help CX leaders across the enterprise map customer journeys, design and optimize interactions and deliver innovations, as well as create competitive advantage and increase customer satisfaction, loyalty and advocacy. In addition, our research can help you collect and analyze more data, creating a fuller and more actionable picture of your customers and their needs. Finally, it will help you to prioritize investments and measure results.

Figure 1. Customer Experience Strategy and Design Overview

Source: Gartner (July 2017)

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How do I prioritize customer experience improvement initiatives that deliver the greatest business impact?

Customer experience strategy should be executed through improvement initiatives as a proactive organizational priority and not a reactive response to customer complaints. Successful organizations elevate customer experience projects by weighing associated costs against the potential customer payoff.

Companies also must understand the challenges that organizational complexity and interdepartmental siloes present to planning, launching and demonstrating the ROI of a customer experience improvement initiative. Overcome disjointed customer experience efforts by creating an integrated, cross-functional leadership team to improve collaboration inside and outside of marketing, and steer customer experience improvement initiatives.

Gartner's research will help you define customer experience strategy by identifying opportunities for CX improvement. The opportunities will yield business impact, spot dependencies between different departments' workflows, launch CX improvement initiatives in line with mandates and measure the success of improvement initiatives against set objectives.

Planned Research

- **How CX Can Be Correlated With Business and Financial Outcomes:** The most relevant metrics for CX are all leading indicators of success — satisfaction, loyalty and advocacy. But CX leaders are pressed to support quarterly financial and business outcomes. Use CX insight and tools to understand drivers of satisfaction, loyalty and advocacy and incorporate that understanding into CX strategy and design.

- **How CX Leaders Can Best Encourage and Participate in Enterprisewide Collaboration:** Because different touchpoints on the customer's journey are managed by different portions of the organization, collaboration is a vital element for success. Our research will explore ways to invite better collaboration and CX tools and insight to motivate greater participation.

Successful organizations elevate customer experience projects by weighing associated costs against the potential customer payoff.

How do I use customer insight I need to design and improve the customer experience?

Success in customer experience involves selecting the right set of methodologies and metrics to deliver actionable insight that shapes CX strategy and design.

The selected tools and infrastructure must capture direct, indirect and inferred customer insights, Funnel these insights to the stakeholders within the organization who can take action. Enable internal teams to close the loop with customers to restore relationships. Identify the root causes of the issues for continuous improvement.

Gartner's customer experience research provides best practices and how-to advice to continuously listen to and learn from the voice of the customer.

Planned Research

- **How to Develop and Use Voice-of-the-Customer Insight:** VoC platforms and programs are essential to not only diagnose CX problems, but also to gather customer insight and measure outcomes. Investing in the right VoC strategies and platforms is critical to customer experience success.

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What tools do I need to develop, design and execute a powerful customer experience?

CX leaders understand the concepts and goals of customer experience. But, figuring out how to practically and economically design a customer experience, through a series of well-orchestrated improvements and innovations, can be a challenge.

Too many persona projects and customer journey mapping efforts end with attractive visual assets rather than a set of plans and actions. And too many customer experience programs end up chasing and fixing broken touchpoints, rather than considering how new digital technologies and channels can work seamlessly with real-world touchpoints to elevate brand affinity, loyalty and advocacy.

Gartner's CX research provides practical resources and advice to help CX and marketing leaders build actionable personas and map persona-driven customer journeys. Use our research to design or redesign CX based on customer feedback. What you learn will empower you to develop front- and backstage blueprints that connect outside-in CX design with the inside-out view of how your business actually operates.

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Planned Research

- **How to Develop Effective Personas:** CX efforts start by identifying the key customers, understanding their wants, needs, goals and expectations. Gartner's research will guide CX leaders through this process of creating and leveraging actionable personas.

- **How to Understand and Map the Customer Journey:** CX strategy development and design takes translating personas into persona-driven journey maps. Gartner's research will guide CX leaders through mapping an outside-in view of the desired journey from the customer's perspective, with the goal of delivering more potent CX processes and assets.

- **How to Encourage and Reward Loyalty and Advocacy to Deliver Customer Experience Benefits:** The goal of improving customer experience is to increase loyalty and brand advocacy. Although both will occur organically when brands do the right things, marketers that deliver the most powerful customer experience benefits deploy strategies and tools to encourage loyalty and unleash word-of-mouth at scale.

- **How to Launch a Customer Experience Improvement Effort:** Successful organizations focus on eliminating silos and reducing complexity in customer experience management.

GARTNER RECOMMENDED READING

Suggested First Steps

"How Marketing Can Lead Organizationwide Customer Experience Maturity"

"Key Customer Experience Foundations for Marketing Leaders"

"Use Gartner's Buy/Own/Advocate Framework to Map Customer Journeys and Deliver Better Customer Experiences"

Some documents may not be available as part of your Gartner subscription.

Essential Reading

"Build a Voice-of-the-Customer Strategy to Harness the Power of Customer Data"

"How to Align Customer Experience With Marketing Channel Operations"

"How to Manage Effective Customer Journey Mapping Processes"

"How Marketing Leaders Make Personas Actionable"

"How to Design Customer Experiences Using Persona-Driven Customer Journeys"

Tools and Toolkits

"Toolkit: A Marketer's Checklist to Guide Customer Experience Efforts"

Analyst Profiles

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Evidence

This research was created based on primary and secondary research, and client and vendor interactions.