



WE NEED A RENAISSANCE.

Metamorphosis of CX: The Human Experience

Customer-centric businesses may miss out on forging meaningful connections with humans.

Upon waking up, when we instinctively reach for our smartphones, we are bombardment with a multitude of advertisements. As we proceed with our morning rituals of brushing our teeth and indulging in a cup of coffee, we do not perceive ourselves as mere customers of these industries. We perceive ourselves as individuals; encompassing our flaws, unique preferences, emotions, and the pursuit for personal fulfillment, which defines us beyond the roles assigned by consumerism.

With the rise of augmented reality – blurring the lines between real and digital – it is all the more important to make an experience that is human, in its raw form.

The need for a human connection

The term "human experience" came about because of the stark contrast between powerful entities like big brands, global organizations, and influential corporations, who have the ability to create meaningful impact, and individuals who can only passively accept and consume without having much influence.

At the core of our thinking lies the habitual (Aristotelean) inclination to perceive distinct opposition and fixed boundaries, where the corporate world and consumers exist with disparate *raison d'être* - one focused on production, the other on consuming what businesses offer.

As brands try to appeal to us, we – as an individual – may dare ask, ‘Why should we care about your brand’s perception and ROI?’

Why do businesses need to consider human centricity?

When considering how to approach the category of individuals who utilize our products and services, we find ourselves pondering over various labels such as 'users,' 'customers,' 'participants,' or 'consumers.' However, it is essential to emphasize that irrespective of the terminology we use, our ultimate objective remains consistent: to create experiences that cater to the diverse range of needs and desires of potential customers.

There’s a caveat though. As highlighted in the Harvard Business Review article titled 'Marketing Malpractice,' each year witnesses the introduction of approximately 30,000 new products. However, around 90 percent of these endeavors fail, despite costly market research efforts. This trend prompts us to delve deeper into the underlying factors contributing to such outcomes.

And what are these factors, one might ask? The complexity of marketing segments, the proliferation of options, a crowded media landscape, numerous competitors, and the unpredictability of the customer journey all contribute to a low return on investment in new product development.

Changing the business landscape

By limiting ourselves to predefined "customer journeys," we miss out on the countless unpredictable moments that shape the intricate fabric of our collective human experience.

‘Brand loyalty’ and ‘outperforming competitors’ take a back seat, as authentic human connections hold far greater significance. As individuals, we are constantly engaged in the complexities of life, while our customer persona emerges selectively based on commercial fulfillment.

This paradigm shift calls for businesses to adopt a comprehensive approach that resonates with the entire spectrum of the human experience, unlocking new possibilities and fostering meaningful engagement.

“Human experience (HX) is overtaking customer experience (CX), and companies that acknowledge this shift will gain a competitive edge.”

Says Amelia Dunlop, US head of customer strategy and applied design for Deloitte Digital.

Settling the experience debt

Amidst the rapid advancements of technology, individuals desire one fundamental thing from businesses: to be treated as human beings.

We have discovered three remarkable instances where companies utilized a common set of values to foster interconnected and inclusive human experiences. These compelling examples serve as a catalyst for businesses seeking to elevate the overall quality of human interactions.

1. Nike+ and Apple

Nike+ and Apple went beyond the limits of customer experience in clothing and gadgets and transformed it into a kick-ass human experience – combining sportswear and music. This concept may not seem groundbreaking. I mean, who hasn't rocked their favorite sportswear while jamming to their go-to playlist during a run? But what made it truly epic was the ingenious synchronization of these two categories – along with additional features such as calorie tracking and health monitoring – propelling Nike+ to popularity. By going beyond mere customer satisfaction, they elevated the experience to a more profound level of human engagement.

2. Delta Airlines and Starbucks

This is what Delta Air Lines and Starbucks did when they announced a new partnership for customers to earn rewards – now their morning latte could help them save bucks on their next flight. Is this all about coffee? May be a little bit, but coffee is beyond just an add-on, it's an integral part of one's travel experience. They made sure when people go to an airport and look for coffee, they end up choosing Starbucks. Consequently, those who already drink Starbucks and consider flying will naturally prefer Delta Airlines, forming a mutually beneficial loyalty loop.

This ingenious collaboration transforms a daily routine into a tangible value proposition, effortlessly rewarding customers for their loyalty. But how did they do it? They just followed people on their life journeys and combined two of their favorite things. Genius.

3. Deciem

Canadian beauty company Deciem continues to boycott Black Friday, opting instead for a day of "nothingness" on November 29, when both their website and stores go offline. Instead, Deciem offers an in-store and online 23 percent discount for the full month of November across all brands to discourage 'rushed purchasing decisions'. The brand cites the detrimental impact of unsustainable consumerist behavior on the environment as their primary motivation for this decision, stating that they no longer feel comfortable participating.

Demonstrating their proactive stance, Deciem not only prioritizes social issues but also grants their employees a day off and facilitates transportation to the polls on election day. It also recently hired a director of sustainability and is planning to apply to become a B Corp.

As we mentioned earlier, Deciem exemplifies the transition from a competition-centric mindset to a more audience-focused approach. By prioritizing meaningful connections with its audience, the company wholeheartedly embraces the concept of providing a human-first experience.

Human Experience transcends customer experience, embracing individuals' values and fostering authentic connections.

Creating a human experience in interactions

Customer experience focuses on recognizing the impact of an organization's actions, like call center wait times and product usability. In contrast, human experience gives paramount importance to an individual's beliefs, values, emotions, and aspirations. According to a study, only 26% of large companies perceive themselves as good at measuring the emotional reactions of their customers. This can be because emotions, unlike numerical metrics such as NPS or FCR, are subjective and more difficult to quantify.

Marketers, as the guardians of the brand, have a pressing responsibility to lead the charge in creating more immersive human experiences. With the unprecedented power of modern technology and data, organizations can facilitate this shift on a grand scale. However, it is imperative for these organizations to embrace a set of guiding principles that will shape and guide their approach.

● Embrace human-centricity

Brands should strive to understand and connect with individuals, whether they are customers, employees, or partners. By immersing themselves in the human experience, marketers can craft compelling stories, create meaningful experiences, and engage the senses to evoke profound emotions.

● Anticipate human needs

Interestingly, the advancements in predictive analytics and AI enable brands to leverage insights and become more relatable and attuned to individuals during critical moments. Augmented intelligence empowers us to demonstrate greater empathy and understanding on a larger scale than ever before.

● Operate with a human touch

To achieve this, organizations must be responsive and adaptable, addressing individuals' needs promptly, even if it means taking the time to foster connections. Brands cannot embody humanity if they fail to be fully present and engaged.

● Be genuine

Delivering a truly human experience can be difficult in the digital realm of technology, bots, and screens. It requires the whole organization, from the frontline to behind-the-scenes, to fully embrace this change and prioritize genuine connections.

- **Be a value-driven business**

Incorporate customer and employee experience strategies, infused with a touch of a human-centric approach, will make your business transcend its traditional boundaries and evolve into a reputable name driven by value. This transformation paves the way for long-term success, as the essence of human experience becomes your powerful ally in the pursuit of excellence.

- **Engage customers in decision making**

As people yearn to have a say in decisions that affect them, businesses must adapt to this rising demand for active participation from their customers. The traditional notion of an "average customer" is evolving as individuals seek to engage with organizations, necessitating a shift towards partnership-based models for businesses to remain competitive.

For humans. By humans. From humans.

Having great human experience means creating interactions so people feel seen, heard, and valued. Enhancing marketing effectiveness stems from perceiving your customers, workforce, and partners through a human perspective.

In this age of heightened self-awareness, we recognize that the future of business goes beyond meeting basic "customer needs". With our focus on a multifaceted human experience, ChatPandas have undergone a transformative shift from addressing mere "customer needs" to embracing "human insights" as our foundation for success.

It's crucial to move beyond the confines of "customer experience" and recognize that it only represents a fraction of an individual's complex human journey.

Afterall, in this world of impersonal interactions and digitalization, who wouldn't appreciate being treated with a touch more humanity?