

The Five Most Important Reasons to Focus on the Digital Customer Experience

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Thursday, 19 February 2015

The digital customer experience had redefined the way businesses and their customers interact. Whilst it has undoubtedly revolutionised the way many people approach their buying, there are still organisations which are yet to fully embrace the phenomenon and understand fully the multi-touchpoint sales funnels that customers now expect. There are many great reasons to focus on your customers' digital experience, but to make it simple I have distilled this down to five which I believe offer a definitive case on their own:

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1. The Digital Transformation

Every serious customer focussed organisation has either completed its transformation into a digital business or is in the process of doing so. Commodity driven consumer businesses were the first to realise that a digital option for sales is needed to keep abreast of the market and customer needs. It's hard to imagine any utility companies, banks, insurance providers or telecoms businesses not offering their services digitally and being able to engage the market successfully.

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It is not just with regards to sales either, all the parts of the customer experience cycle are expected to be available online for the convenience and immediacy of customers looking to engage with the services they are paying for. Of course some customers will still look towards using the telephone or even postal correspondence for some matters, but the digital channels make the most sense for the majority of transactions. Failing to really focus on the digital customer experience can be a real oversight when a business relies upon these channels to service a majority of customer traffic.

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2. Customers are getting "Smarter"

Whilst online commerce is nothing new, the way in which the market engages with it has transformed significantly over the last few years. Near-universal adoption of digital access has largely been cemented by the age of the smart device and the ubiquitous app. Having to access online commerce purely using a PC is a thing of the past, customers can adopt an "always on" approach and access services from virtually any location at any time. Products and services can be ordered whilst an individual is conducting their everyday life and this convenience has stretched customer expectations still further.

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Unlike a decade ago, simply having a web portal may not be enough to engage with "smart" customers. A well-tailored app makes it easier for customers to buy from or to contact your business and helps to cement loyalty to your brand. Even visitors at your physical store or facility can benefit from dedicated access through a smart device as they move around. It's vital to engage with these "smart" customers because if you don't, your competition will!

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3. New and improved ways of measuring customer feedback

Digital commerce is a real bonus for customer feedback! It is much easier to measure feedback and the detail is much greater than was ever possible with traditional interaction methods. Digital channels make it realistic to collect qualitative feedback with quantitative data (such as click paths, amounts of visitors "to give a true story behind the numbers).

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Equally digital channels make it much easier for an organisation to monitor and investigate why a client may not be reaching their goal. Shopping cart abandonment was traditionally difficult to measure and the reasons behind it even more so. The digital customer experience addresses this completely, so it makes sense to invest resources in a sales funnel that is popular with clients and gives the organisation the granular information it needs to react and match expectations.

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4. Tailoring your service to meet the exact needs of the customer

The digital customer experience has much more scope to fine tune the service for the needs of the individual. This ensures that your proposition can offer a much more bespoke solution to your customers, offering greater value-for-money and satisfaction. Analytics gained from the customer registration process and recorded buying and browsing habits make it possible to personalise the content or offers you target at the customer.

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For example, email adverts and content displayed on the customer's personal login in your sales channels can be targeted to their preferences or potential interest. This can equally apply to your services and information sources as well as products, guiding users to useful features or helping them to solve problems that either the customer or the system flag up.

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5. Online service has changed expectations

With the saturation of digital customer channels on offer the expectations of consumers has radically evolved over the last few years. Because on-demand services and personalised interactions are so wide spread, the market has an elevated expectation. This is particularly evident when it comes to customers being able to solve their own needs/problems. Successful online businesses will cater for this customer need by offering highly interactive

documentation and troubleshooting solutions, allowing users to often resolve their own issues/requirements without the need for personal help from the customer service team. Before the arrival of online content this would have been very difficult and probably resource-intensive to manage.

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As well as assisting customers, being able to offer these “self-service”™ solutions equally saves resources for the business. Customer Service team resources can be reassigned to more urgent matters and customer satisfaction can be increased by the convenience of being able to resolve many of their own needs through their access to the online channel. By providing relevant, accurate and personalised content, companies will be more favourably viewed and regarded by their customers.

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Making the most of the digital customer experience

The digital customer experience is far too valuable a resource to neglect. It should be at the forefront of the organisation’s sales and marketing strategy and used to mine the valuable insights which all businesses need to fully compete and thrive in the modern market.

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These five examples of the importance of the digital customer experience are by no means exhaustive, but they do give very good reasons for any savvy business to think about how it is using these channels and to ensure it’s at the top of the agenda when it comes to business growth plans.