

Facilitating Compelling Experiences

Digital Tools Create Compelling Experiences

Best-in-class companies focus on creating a compelling brand experience at every touch point. Providing consistent and relevant customer experiences across all communication channels increases brand loyalty and profit margins, while reducing costs.

Customer Experience is Digital

Today's consumer has evolved. They are smarter, technically savvy, and always connected. They're skeptical about traditional marketing tactics like television advertising, magazine ads, billboards, and direct mail. Instead, they're turning to peers for recommendations about products and seeking out more genuine experiences with the brands they like. Consumers are having online conversations about their brand experiences, good or bad. They're becoming more transparent with their needs, wants, and doubts – and much of this is happening online.

The web has empowered consumers, giving them new methods for finding, researching, and buying products. Customer experience has evolved into a digital experience. While marketers are challenged by the number of digital channels available for distribution and consumption, (the Internet and mobile apps), there are more opportunities to

deliver immersive, omnipresent, and more fulfilling brand experiences.

Consumer expectation runs high for tailored, adaptable, and even predictable digital experiences. This is called “contextualization” and it defines digital experiences that adapt to a consumer's context¹. Content is personalized, anticipating the needs and buying behavior of each consumer to offer location-based products or services at the most opportune moments to buy.

To deliver a contextual experience, organizations use tools that combine historical (buying behavior or pathways through a website), situational (geo-location), and demographic (profile-based) data. Relevant content is delivered to consumers based on preference, past behavior, and the device they're using. For example, an in-store experience meets the digital experience, as retailers deliver targeted advertising and use data from the nearest store to encourage a customer to make an online purchase for pick up later. Delivering highly relevant content, tailored for one select



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individual, gives organizations opportunities to build brand loyalty and long-term relationships with customers.

Brand Experience Drives Differentiation

In a competitive marketplace, delivering compelling customer experiences is one of the best ways for an organization to differentiate itself from its competitors. In the digital world, marketers use a range of platforms to set the stage for the customer experience. The marketing toolbox has grown to incorporate new devices (mobile), channels (social), and types of media (rich media) into its programs. The CMO of today needs to embrace disruptive technologies like the cloud and social networks to follow their customers, listen to what they're saying, engage in conversation, build brand through relationship, community, and experience, and refine the experience with digital technology. Digital technology has become a key enabler in the delivery of more relevant and richer brand experiences.

In a truly customer-centric organization, creating compelling experiences requires a holistic approach as cross-functional teams work to deliver a unified experience across multiple touch points. In our retailing example, attracting customers via television, magazines, or social media with a consistent and relevant brand experience can help increase brand retention. Teams and departments are aligned around customer segments to ensure that compelling experiences are delivered throughout the customer lifecycle.

A compelling customer experience is imperative with "the voice of the customer" programs,

and the CMO must lead this charge. As they strive to improve customer experience, marketers will focus on the technologies and programs that have the greatest impact and return on investment. This includes digital technologies like social networks and rich media support, along with a content marketing approach. A combination of rich media delivered on social channels engages the customer and can be more impactful than traditional campaign messaging. Effective content marketing strategies develop content that is relevant for target markets and deliver it on the appropriate channel or device. Delivering relevant, personalized, and contextual content throughout the customer lifecycle fosters a long-term, high value relationship with customers, and converts one-time customers into brand evangelists.

Customer Centricity Starts Inside the Firewall

As we move into the era of digital customer experience, C-level executives are identifying customer experience as a strategic priority. Seamless customer interaction doesn't happen by accident. Successful brands connect employee and channel engagement with the appropriate customer experience. CIOs are responsible for providing consistent customer support using innovative technologies like rich Internet applications, rich media, collaboration tools, social media, and information management.

Creating a consistent customer experience starts inside the firewall. As the CIO focuses on providing positive experiences for employees, the IT departments is moving beyond just supporting the technology to

embracing the vast benefits of a well architected technology platform to create the compelling experiences that lines of business are eagerly waiting for. Engaged employees are more satisfied, productive, and aligned with corporate objectives. Companies that engage all parts of their organization — from back-office staff to frontline employees— are more likely to deliver compelling brand experiences than companies that take a piecemeal approach.

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To deliver truly compelling experiences, organizations need to easily and cost-effectively provide relevant, consistent and dynamic content. Traditional Web Content Management (WCM) systems no longer fit the bill. A richer and broader range of capabilities is needed.

Integrated Web Experience Management (WEM) tools give organizations the ability to deliver content in engaging, contextualized, and personalized ways. WEM satisfies consumers with:

- Rich media that is immersive, targeted, personalized, and delivered on-demand.
- Social media that tailors experiences to suit each unique customer.
- Analytics and faceted search which offer up predictive suggestions and real-time customer insights.
- Enterprise integration that allows for the combination of structured and unstructured content to bring data to life for the end user, extending traditional document and content management to users, for example. ■

¹ Ron Rogowski, "Digital Customer Experience Trends to Watch, 2013" ©2013 Forrester Research, Inc. Cambridge MA.

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