



PRIVATE EDUCATION EVOLUTION

AN UNINTENDED
CONSEQUENCE OF
SOCIAL ENGINEERING?



FEATURE

THE DIGITAL WORKPLACE

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GIVEAWAY

LG Q-STYLUS SMARTPHONE



CX by design

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Customer Experience (CX) has become a global buzzword, since it was identified as a key opportunity for growth in any business.

Research proves that customers no longer base loyalty primarily on price or product, instead they stay loyal to companies because of the experience they have with them. In line with this trend, Gartner predicts that this year, more than 50% of businesses will redirect their investments to customer experience innovations.

However, the question for many business leaders remains – where do we start with an effective customer experience implementation process?

The challenge with Customer Experience today lies in its complexity; as well as the jargon that often accompanies it. Many people are often confused and overwhelmed by the terminology used to describe elements of the concept, such as data analytics, metrics, unified communications, algorithms and artificial intelligence. It wasn't until I was asked by a client to 'please explain, in simple terms, how I roll-out a CX Strategy in my business' that it finally became clear.

I remember thinking at the time, that he didn't want to be bombarded with the confusing jargon that typically surrounds a customer experience conversation. All he wanted was a simple explanation of where to start with the process and how to effectively implement it throughout his organisation.

This epiphany has been one of my greatest learnings I have taken from my travels around the world. Every leader knows that they must change their business to being customer focused, they are just not sure of the 'how to'. I have therefore spent time consolidating

what I have learned about CX into a simple customer experience process that any business can follow.

My initial advice to leaders is twofold; start by identifying what your 'current customer journey' looks like, what are the key touch points that influence a customer's decision and what are the pain points that are creating obstacles to a smooth and seamless experience. Secondly, ideate around what constitutes your 'ideal customer experience' and do a gap analysis between the current and ideal experience. Once you understand where the gaps are, you can take steps to implement improvements.

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Bear in mind that there is not a 'one size fits all' framework for implementing a customer experience strategy; just as every business is unique, so is every strategy. However, there are process guidelines one can follow that provide a systematic approach to rolling out a customer focused process in any organisation.

Firstly, the most critical component of designing a customer experience strategy is that it must be aligned with the brand promise and values of the business. Secondly, an exceptional customer experience cannot be delivered without equally as much focus on improving the employee experience.

The two are integral to the success of a customer focused change process.

Therefore, at each stage of a CX strategy roll-out, there are two key focus areas to bear in mind; the employee experience and how that supports the customer experience.

STEP 1 – DECIDE Executive & employee buy-in & commitment

Introducing a customer focused strategy requires an overhaul of all policies, processes and technology throughout the organisation, it is therefore imperative that every person in the company is onboard with the changes that will need to be made, from the Chairman to the tea server. Start the customer experience conversation in the boardroom and exco meetings and filter it down to every person in the organisation.

Once you have agreement from executives and employees alike, that refocusing the strategy to put the customer at the centre of the business is critical to the future success of the business, then allocate resources to support it and appoint a team to head the customer experience process.

STEP 2 - DISCOVER Situational analysis – where are we now?

If we don't know where we are now, we won't get to where we need to be in the future!

Do an in-depth analysis of the current customer journey, gather current customer feedback data, run customer surveys, focus groups and interviews.

The same is true for the employee experience, initiate employee surveys and feedback groups to ascertain the current employee climate. This process should include customer journey mapping workshops that involve employees from all divisions within the business. Bear in mind that employees



are often your best source of customer feedback and can provide invaluable information on what's working and what's not working in the current customer journey.

STEP 3 - DEFINE

Gap analysis – where are the opportunities for improvement?

Having gathered information and data on the current experience, take time to identify gaps that provide opportunities for improvement.

Consolidate the findings under the three key pillars; people, processes and technology. This stage can often be overwhelming, so start by making a list of all the current challenges that need improvement, knowing that they will all be addressed in time. Then extrapolate the three most pressing issues that can be rectified by a quick fix solution and three areas that need management intervention to fix and work on those until solutions have been found. Once that is done, go back to the list and address the next three most pressing issues.

STEP 4 - DEVELOP

Ideal experience design – what do we want to deliver in the future.

Once you've addressed the key pain points on the current customer journey, take time to ideate around what the ideal customer experience should look like in the future.

Begin with the end in mind! Consider how your business, products or services could add more value to your customer and map the future ideal customer journey, considering the resources you would need to support it in terms of people, processes, technology and funding.

STEP 5 - DESIGN

Change management process – how are we going to get there?

Cultivating a customer first culture requires focus on three key aspects:

● **People**

What do employees need to know and learn in order to deliver the ideal customer experience?

● **Processes**

What processes can be simplified or improved in order to eliminate pain points and deliver an exceptional experience to our customers in the future?

● **Technology**

How does our current technology support the delivery of the ideal experience? How does our current technology enable our employees to deliver on the ideal experience? What technology do we need to design, re-design or procure that will drive a seamless and frictionless experience for our employees and our customers in the future?

STEP 6 - DELIVER

Launch a CX campaign – how do we support the CX initiative?

Design and deliver an internal communications campaign for the whole business. This should continuously reinforce leadership and the company's commitment to delivering an exceptional customer experience in line with the brand promise.

Next, design and distribute an external communications campaign that tells your customers that you are committed to serving their needs and providing solutions that are designed for them. Design easy to complete surveys that constantly encourage customers to provide you with feedback on their experience.



STEP 7 - DEEP DIVE DATA & DELIVERABLES

How did we do, where to from here?

This process to date would have taken a few months, but it will all be in vain if management do not deep dive the data to establish if deliverables have been met.

Deep diving customer and employee feedback should be KPI's for key personnel, who are tasked with constantly monitoring feedback and creating closed loop systems that address pain points in real-time and implement immediate solutions.

The good news is that if you follow this process, you will be well on your way to creating what is commonly referred to as an 'inside-out' company, one that focuses on customer needs and builds an agile business that is able to deliver an exceptional experience.

Finally, remember that changing people, processes and technology to deliver a better customer experience takes time - be prepared, be patient and be persistent! When it comes to the complicated stuff like data analytics, artificial intelligence and algorithms call in the experts, there are many companies in South Africa offering world class solutions that can take care of all the complex and confusing tasks for your business. ■