WHITEPAPER ON STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE (CX)

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Abstract

Customer-centric organizations want to develop competitive advantage by improving customer experience (CX). Customers don't just buy a product or a service, they perceive the entire process as an experience they recall when doing business with the company again. CX is the sum of all experiences the customer has before, after and while using a particular company's product or service. It's the customer's perception of the brand. This whitepaper discusses the strategies that customer-centric organizations should implement to improve the CX.
Keywords:- CRX, Customer Experience, Empathy

I. INTRODUCTION

A customer-centric organization is designed to keep customers happy by finding out what they want and dealing with their problems swiftly. In other words, customer centricity is the ability of an organization to understand the unique problems and expectations of their target customers, to understand the context of those needs, and to consistently deliver products/ services that meet those expectations.

In a research carried out in 2016, CEOs and chief marketing officers have positioned customer-oriented, technology-related investments at the top of their agendas. Therefore, customer centricity is also near the top of CIOs' strategic business priorities.

Digital initiatives are very important for an improved customer experience (CX) to be at the top of the list of intended business outcomes. Application leaders supporting (Customer Relationship Management) CRM and CX are under pressure to deliver a modern technology portfolio to support a customer-centric business strategy. In this whitepaper we will look at some of the strategies which will help organizations to improve CX. The strategies have been identified by looking at organizations like Starbucks, Nike, SAP, Zappos, AT&T, Rackspace, Singapore Changi Airport amongst others.

1. Listening on a continuous basis to the customers
Continuously the customers are actively and / or passively providing businesses information that should be used for improving CX. What can the business leaders absorb?

- What customers purchase— will help leaders to make offers through social media, email, etc
- What is significant to customers —will help leaders to tailor the products/ services as per

user requirements
- Where customers are located and where they usually go — will help leaders to match to geographical places, or even to whether a customer is using a mobile device or a fixed one
- Who customers are friends with — will help leaders to understand the purchases and interest of cohorts and thus help for deeper understanding of an individual

Till now organizations have used tools like surveys to listen to customers. With the advent of newer technologies organizations can continuously collect customer information in a better way. Also organizations can combine social media, web and app analytics-driven approach for collecting the data. Also another important tool leaders can use is the 'external community software ' which can bring customers together to generate new ideas, insights and additional customer data. Specific technologies like Jive, Salesforce, Telligent , Lithium, and more are now available. The first step is to listen if we wish to have a customer-centric culture.

2. Building Customer Empathy into Policies, Procedures and Processes
This must be there from beginning. According to Wikipedia - Empathy is the capacity to understand or feel what another person is experiencing from within their frame of reference, that is, the capacity to place oneself in another's position. To build empathy the Design Thinking tool called Customer Journey or Journey Map is extremely helpful, as it helps to understand the pain points of the customers. 63% of marketers currently use some sort of journey mapping, according to a report from Forrester. This trend is expected to continue.

A lack of coordination among internal departments can undermine the attempt to build customer empathy. Companies like Uber and Live Nation understood the pains of the customer journey and improved them by slashing up existing business models. The range of pain points addressed by the above examples include ride sharing and the rules set by the music and entertainment industry. These organizations succeeded because of the empathy they have felt for customers. For building empathy below aspects are important: Channel convenience for the customer ; Timely response to feedback ; Deep understanding of the customer's pain points ; Proactivity in customer engagement.

Consider a traveler who has lost her luggage containing the credit cards and is stranded in a hotel lobby, trying to get replacement cards. But when she calls the customer hotline, she won't have her credit card number — something many companies would ask her for through their IVR systems. However, an emphatic company will design the process to cut all the self-services and place a human agent as soon as possible on the telephone line, knowing the customer is upset.

Application leaders supporting CRM should remember that newer technologies such as AI, blockchain will not provide long-term business advantages unless customer empathy is a key design consideration. CRM business applications must be engineered to increase empathy toward the customer. Similarly, business policies and procedures must be designed with empathy in mind and the process owner must know how to translate that into a functional specification.

3. Creating Accountability
Creating a good plan is not sufficient, implementation aspect is equally important . There must be someone who is responsible for execution. In a recent survey it was found that responsibility for improving the CX is often spread among many departments, with customer service, operations, marketing, sales and the strategy and planning department most heavily involved. It is true that

while CX cuts across different aspects of a business, choosing a specific person for the whole business is the best way to keep things on track. Also, companies can select a person from current managers to shoulder this responsibility.

It will help if the person is asked to report directly to the CEO, board or operating committee. This will send an important signal that CX is important to the company. Further it will also help others buy in to the program. Going forward the CX owner should form a committee of people across departments. Finally, CX metrics should be made an integral part of KPI to drive behavioral change.

II. CONCLUSION

As a company, you have to take improving CX personally and obsess over the reasons why people feel the way they do about you – it will dramatically help you grow the number of customers and hence profit. The above three mentioned strategies will greatly help companies with improving CX.

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