IMPROVE YOUR CX RIGHT NOW

5 Things To Do Today

Today, customer experience (CX) is about so much more than straight-up service, polite cashiers, hold times, or the number of business days it takes for a product to arrive in the mail. CX involves feelings, emotions, and encompasses your customers' entire journey - from the moment they step foot in a store or visit a website until the moment they purchase from you again, tweet a positive shout out, or, on the flip side, reach out with an issue. In today's digital world, companies have to master the complete CX journey in order to gain long-term customer loyalty and satisfaction. Why? CX is quickly becoming one of the biggest influences on consumer purchasing behavior. The price of goods and services matter less and less; now, it's all about the experience you deliver!
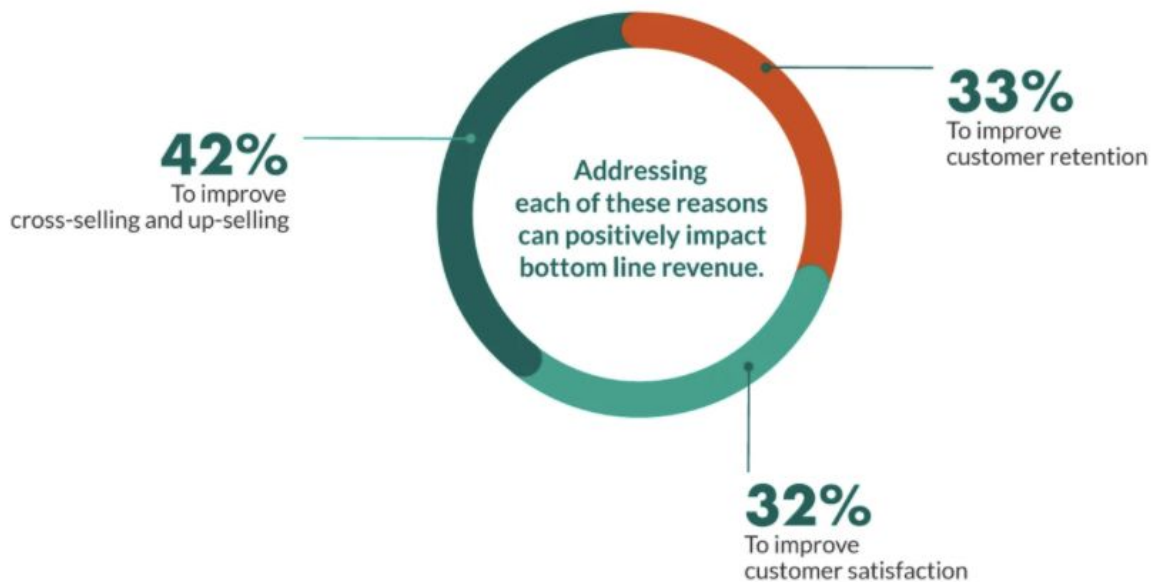
Chances are you're not focused enough on your customer experience.

THE CHALLENGE

To start improving CX, you need to have a good understanding of where things stand right now. How do customers feel when they come in contact with your brand? Is it easy for them to connect, ask questions, and get information in their preferred way? Customers expect a lot, which means the level of service your business provides must rise accordingly. Chances are you're not focused enough on your customer experience. Or, maybe you are, but you need to re-strategize and come up with ways to make it even better.

TOP 3 REASONS WHY BUINESSES PROACTIVELY MANAGE AND INVEST IN CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

33%
To improve customer retention

42%
To improve cross-selling and up-selling

Addressing each of these reasons can positively impact bottom line revenue.

32%
To improve customer satisfaction

Before you do anything, stop and think;
invest some time and energy into figuring out
who you want to be when your CX grows up.

Here are 5 ways to up your CX game, starting right now:

1 Make a plan.

Everyone says they have a CX strategy and they're a "customer-first" company. But, the truth is, very few teams have ever stopped long enough to ponder what to give their customers, what customers really want from them, and how to make it all happen successfully. So, before you do anything, stop and think; invest some time and energy into figuring out who you want to be when your CX grows up. Direction is always more important than speed! Make sure the steps you're taking in your CX transformation are the right steps for your specific brand and your specific customers. That's why creating a thoughtful plan is a must.

Define your strategic vision.
You want your CX mission to ladder up to your organization's overarching purpose and be compelling to both your customers and your employees.

Analyze what's already working and what needs improving.
Speak with customer-facing professionals in your business to obtain real-world insights and leverage that intel in your plan.

Plot out your plan and get leadership buy-in.
Create a list of action items and a timeline. Be specific and ensure all decision makers are on board. From the C-suite to management, everyone needs to understand the plan and the why behind it all.

Partner with the right tech players.
Identify the right technology for your organization's unique needs. Your technology can truly make or break your CX success.

Get employees involved.
The key is communicating with your entire organization. Everyone needs to be in alignment in order to help with the transformation.

Keep up the momentum.
Set up sustainment activities to ensure your teams are working towards the same outcome. Include rewards and celebrations to keep people motivated.

81% of customers attempt to take care of matters before reaching out to a live representative.

-Gartner

2 Leverage machine learning.

Let's be real. Your self-service kind of stinks. Customers don't want to talk to you any more than you want to spend on having a person talk to them. So, why not put a smart, easy-to-deal-with bot in the front row?

Customers demand immediate, personalized service, and contact centers are at the core of making that happen. A well-built bot can provide 24/7 service by answering easy and routine inquiries, thus allowing agents to focus on the more complex issues instead. According to recent Gartner research, 81% of all customers across industries attempt to take care of matters themselves before reaching out to a live representative. And that's precisely what a smart bot can do for you!

Gone are the days of long, automated, frustrating prompts asking customers to 'Press 1'. Machine learning-powered bots can analyze smart conversations; conversational-based routing and sentiment analysis will transfer customers to a live agent if and when it's time and enable analysis of both the customer and the agent side of conversations. Taking it one step further, you can route customers to certain departments or agents based on their tone of voice. Agents can be prepared to tailor their conversation a certain way by knowing what sentiment was detected upon the transfer. You have a limited amount of agents, so leveraging machine learning helps customers retrieve information for themselves quickly and effectively.

It's time to ditch the script. Give employees the information they need to talk to your customers like friends...

3 Treat 'em like people.

People want to be greeted by their name, not their phone number. Do your customers feel like you truly know and understand them? What do they actually need? Where in their lifecycle with you are they? Or, are they just an account number or a missed payment to you? Knowing the answers to these questions is invaluable in creating the best CX possible. Your contact center technology can deliver this level of insight and more.

Give bots and agents the right tools to treat each customer as the individual they are. The right technology can arm your agents and bots with specific details like: who they are speaking (or chatting or emailing) with, where they are located, previous touch points they've had, and even recommendations on what that specific customer might need or like based on their history. Delivering targeted, personalized recommendations and knowing who a customer is the minute they call or chat is really impactful.

It's time to ditch the script. Give employees the information they need to talk to your customers like friends... to not repeatedly ask the same questions over and over... to know what product your customer ordered without even having to ask. When the employee experience is better, the customer experience is better, too.

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4 Use what you learn.

The best systems gather information about your CX, both on-the-sly and outright obviously. Once you have all this intel, be sure you're making the most of it to answer questions such as:

- What are you learning from sentiment analysis?
- Are your customers pleased or annoyed?
- Are agents making customers laugh or scream?
- What sort of things are hidden in recordings that need to be brought to light?
- Are you working in VoC (voice of the customer) to your strategy?
- What kinds of valuable feedback are you gathering in customer surveys?
- Can you spot patterns or trends?

Your technology should analyze data and offer intelligent recommendations, showing you exactly what your customers think and how they feel after every interaction in order to improve and respond appropriately. The biggest mistake you could make is to let that data goldmine go to waste. You can gather it all day and night, but if you don't use that insight to improve your CX, then what's the use?

5 Empower & develop your team.

In order to empower and develop your team, having built-in unified communications, coaching, and training features are a must. Most managers spend less than 10% of each week developing their teams. It's time to coach beyond the scorecard. Imagine if agents received real-time feedback, recommended training modules, and various badges and incentives for providing exceptional customer care.

It's nothing short of critical for businesses to bring all of their communication channels and services together into a single platform that enables better connection, both internally amongst employees and externally with customers. If your teams have all the information they need on customers, products, internal experts, and everything you offer in one platform, they are much more efficient. When employees can easily get in touch with the right people, the entire organization becomes more productive as a whole.
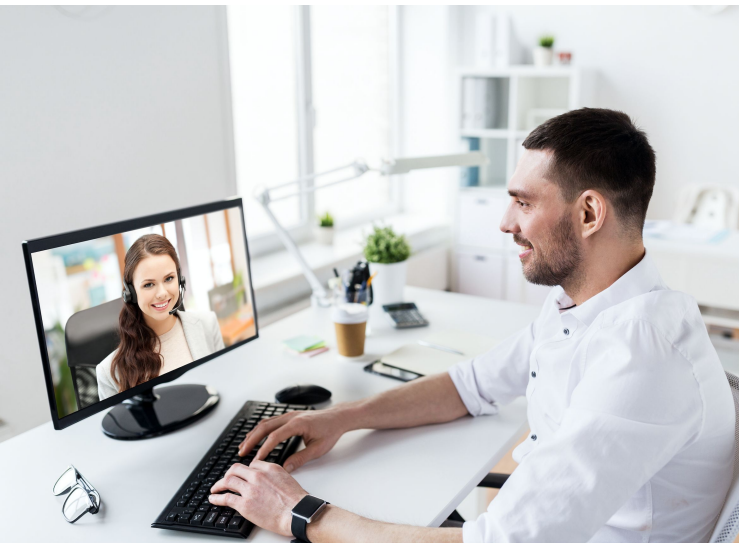
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Customers are willing to pay a price premium of 13-18% for luxury and indulgence services, simply by receiving a great customer experience.

IN THE END

How do customers perceive your brand? How do they think you treat them? Are they telling their friends about you and your products?

The brand that offers consumers the most ways to connect and delivers relevant information at each stage of the customer journey is likely to win the most business. Can your front line communicate seamlessly with customers as well as internally across teams? Take a good, hard look at where you are today and what changes you need to make because the impact on revenue is real. PWC research shows that customers are willing to pay a price premium of 13-18% for luxury and indulgence services, simply by receiving a great customer experience. The more expensive the item, the more they are willing to pay.

Customers want it all, right now.

Your competitors aren't stopping, so neither can you.

THINGS TO NOTE

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Edify connects businesses with customers and employees with each other. The company's Business Communications as a Service (BCaaS) platform, Huddle, is the only one uniting contact center (CC), unified communications (UC), and real-time communications platform (API) functionality in a single, cloud-native software solution that lets users move seamlessly among channels within one conversation. Edify removes all the risk of using its cloud-based platform with five free users forever, global availability, real-time redundancy, usage-based pricing, and a 100% SLA uptime guarantee.

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