

Crafting Customer Experience Strategy

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Crafting Customer Experience Strategy: Lessons from Asia

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Emerald Publishing Limited
Howard House, Wagon Lane, Bingley BD16 1WA, UK

First edition 2021

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-83909-711-9 (Print)

ISBN: 978-1-83909-710-2 (Online)

ISBN: 978-1-83909-712-6 (Epub)



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Foreword

In the last decade or so, the focus on customer experience (CX) management has increased exponentially. The ongoing changes in the business outlook across the globe, with the added impact of COVID-19, have made it even more pertinent to design and deliver exceptional CXs. Historically, while organisations and leaders bought in to the importance and need for investing in CX, there remained gaps in actual implementation and whole-hearted execution. The siloed mind-set and existing organisation structures continued to keep CX in a corner or house in customer support. Even when an organisation invested in capturing the ‘voice of the customer’ it was hardly shared organisation wide, let alone integration with other metrics from operations and finance. But as the customer got into the driving seat, competition increased and the need to focus on executing a perfectly crafted CX strategy has increased manifold.

Organisations today are starting to understand the impact of the CX on the top line as well as the bottom line. The understanding of the CX has started to move beyond customer care and marketing to operations, human resource management and board rooms. In organisations which are at the top of the CX maturity ladder, each employee works to break the silos within the organisation to deliver the best experience to its customers. The organisations are trying to understand the in and out of the customers by working closely on the customer journey, customer emotions and the CX at all the touchpoints. The customer journey elaborates on the pre-purchase, purchase and post-purchase engagement of a customer with the brand. An adequate understanding of the customer journey helps a brand to design an excellent brand experience aligned with the brand promise. At the same time, reports indicate that many brands are unable to live up to the customers’ expectations as they cannot understand the customer journey properly. The advent of digital and social media has further increased the complexity of the customer journey, making it more and more interactive and multi-channel.

A *Forbes* report indicates that today 89% organisations compete based on CX. It has become a new weapon in the hands of marketers to fight the competition. The report also showcases that 80% of the organisation believe that they deliver a ‘super’ CX, but only 8% of their customers agree. It means there is a massive gap in what the organisations are providing versus what the customers are getting. This gap is also increasing due to the increased number of alternatives the customers have to reach a brand. Traditionally when customers had a problem, they could visit the brand outlet, email or speak to customer care. But now, when the

customers are dissatisfied with your brand, they might tell you and an unsatisfactory or delayed response will soon have a post on social media to say to others, which negatively impacts the business and arouses negative emotions in prospective customers' minds.

Asian economies differ significantly from the developed markets in socio-economic and cultural variables. The variance leads to the difference in their customer's behaviour, expectation and experiences. The majority of the CX research contributions specially in the form of a book have come from the developed world mostly the United States and Europe, which left out many aspects that may be relevant for the Asian markets. This necessitates a dialogue where researchers and practitioners operating in these economies to share their experiences and coalesce on a research agenda related to the customer experience. The book on the theme *Crafting Customer Experience Strategy: Lessons from Asia* purports to provide a platform where these experiences, insights and thoughts have been assimilated to approach a unified understanding of what (re)defines customer experience management.

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Acknowledgement

This book would not have been possible without the support and encouragement of our families, friends and colleagues who encouraged us throughout the book's compilation and editing. We are incredibly thankful to our families for their unconditional love and support and for all the time they gave for us to work freely on this book. We are grateful to Emerald's editorial board for providing feedback on the submissions and following up with us for the timely submission of the manuscript.

We are extremely thankful to all the book chapter contributors, most of whom we have known for years as colleagues and friends. This book project gave us all an opportunity to reconnect, work together and appreciate each other as people, specially in the times of the pandemic. The field of customer experience management is inherently so cross-functional this book needed each contributing author's professional expertise without which it wouldn't have been what we aspired it to be. It has been a pleasure to work with all the authors. We are also very thankful to all organisations and industry professionals who have contributed cases and interviews to make the book relevant in an Asian context.

We are also thankful to our workplace, the Institute of Management Technology (IMT), Ghaziabad, India, for continuous motivation, encouragement and a friendly environment for us to focus on the book publication. We are also thankful to our director, Prof. Subhajit Bhattacharya, and dean research, Prof. P.K. Biswas, for their unstinted support and guidance.

Finally, we are thankful to all fellow researchers and authors in the customer experience space who have been happily sharing the knowledge and expertise with us and the world of business at large.

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November 2020