

Progressive companies should turn CX into a competitive advantage

By  Chantel Troskie

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Today's high-touch customers view their interactions with a brand, from social media and sales engagements to service and support encounters, as a single continuous conversation. As a result, decision-makers need to understand that to use Customer Experience (CX) for competitive advantage, their customer-facing staff must be ready to switch hats on the fly and do so flawlessly.



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Fortunately, companies have new technology options to overcome many CX pitfalls and create a unique brand distinction.

[Forrester's 2017 Customer Experience Index](#) found that organisations that provide effective, well-integrated CX across the entire customer journey achieved compound annual growth rates of 17%, versus the 3% growth rates recorded by their peers who provided less-effective customer experiences.

Deloitte's eXperience index (DXi) and [barometer benchmark study](#) for South Africa's financial services sector 2017 revealed that people are willing to buy more products if they have a good experience.



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Eliminate information silos for a tailored experience

Companies should leverage next-gen tools to deliver exceptional CX. This starts by evolving from cloud 1.0 infrastructures, where a combination of best-of-breed services runs various business units. These standalone cloud platforms might have initially provided quick on-ramps to modern capabilities, but now, many companies are paying a price for that expediency.

In contrast, cloud 2.0 is focused on achieving a holistic view of customers — thanks to simplified, well-integrated services that support each phase of the customer journey, allowing for tailored experiences.

Integrate emerging technology to improve CX strategies

Companies are under pressure to deliver great experiences, especially since the cost of switching brands is fairly low and it is easy for customers to amplify their poor experiences through social channels.



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The results of the [South African Customer Satisfaction Index \(SAcsi\)](#) for short-term insurance companies 2017 highlight that insurers are constantly being challenged to invest in business initiatives that will deliver real returns and as such they choose to invest into making their customers' lives easier by delivering customer experiences that meet and exceed expectations.

This is an approach that the Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA) is taking. To support its strategic drive to enhance service delivery to taxpayers, [Release - KRA CRMS.pdf KRA deployed a new Customer Relationship Management Solution \(CRMS\)](#) that provides it with a single platform to better understand customer needs and respond to their demands more quickly and efficiently.

The future of CX

But what does the future of CX hold? CX solutions will evolve to provide scalable and flexible digital as well as mobile customer self-service and commerce solutions across existing and new engagement channels to meet the needs of customers who prefer to solve their own problems.

Artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning, the Internet of Things (IoT), behavioural analytics, and other innovations are helping progressive companies capitalise on internal and third-party data to deliver highly personalised communications, promotional offers, and service engagements. For example, AI will allow businesses to reward and recognise loyal consumers by 'learning' their digital footprints. This will allow customers to get special attention and a meticulous service without them even having to sign-up for such services.

Companies should evaluate cloud services according to how complete, integrated, and extendable the CX platform is for supporting the entire customer journey. As new disruptive technologies come to the market, whether that's the mainstreaming of IoT or drones for business; companies will be under constant pressure to integrate these new capabilities to improve their CX strategies. With the right cloud solution, companies can continually evolve to meet tomorrow's CX challenges.

ABOUT CHANTEL TROSKIE

Troskie is passionate about guiding businesses on technology that will help them better understand as well as engage with their customers.
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