

Crafting Customer Experience Strategy

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Crafting Customer Experience Strategy: Lessons from Asia

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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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