

Four Strategies to Transform Your Customer Experience

The Convergence of Digital and Physical

In a study conducted by [Gartner for CMOs](#), 98% of respondents affirmed that the online and offline worlds are converging in business today. The merging of processes and transactions from physical and digital channels has made digital transformation the order of the day for IT and Marketing leaders. Digital transformation refers to the process of rethinking business in order to take advantage of digital technology and pursue new, customer-centric business models. It covers a broad area of organizational and technological changes, but one core component is improving the ways in which customers and businesses interact. As people grow accustomed to switching between channels, Marketing and IT leaders will need to work together to accommodate these expectations.

Studies indicate that the scale, speed and depth of the technological revolution will affect our whole society, and the symptoms of these changes can already be seen in business. The average lifespan of companies on the S&P (Standard & Poor's) 500, which was 67 years a century ago, [is now a mere 15 years](#). On top of that, [a report from the Global Center for Digital Business Transformation](#) showed that, during the next five years, four out of ten companies will disappear from the market because of lagging digital transformation. The conclusion is clear: businesses that fail to seize the new opportunities digital technology introduces risk fading away altogether.

Customer Experience: Your Best Competitive Advantage

Businesses need to change the way they communicate their message and experience to the public. People expect brands to offer a continuous experience for every service and product that reaches across every channel. [Numbers from the Global Web Index](#) show that 91% of Internet users use mobile devices to access the internet, and they expect these interactions to be fast and as effortless as a traditional web experience. This logic applies to a number of business verticals, such as retail, financial services, government and more. Thinking digitally is more than a trend or a one-time tactic: it's a long-term innovation strategy that promises to generate new business by offering a better experience of your brand to every customer.

We need to analyze customers' experiences from a digital perspective. What do customers need and what engagement opportunities exist at each digital touchpoint? In other words, how can your clients make the best use of your product or service through web, mobile, connected devices and physical channels?

By designing an exceptional customer experience for people to interact with, businesses can differentiate themselves from the other brands a customer has to choose from. A customer-centric strategy built on a foundation of solid digital technology, could be the difference between companies that achieve digital transformation and those that fall by the wayside. To help you begin the process of transforming your customer experience, we have detailed four strategies that aid Marketing and IT in working together to improve customer experiences for your business.

1. Know Your Target Audience

Developing personas is an important strategy to connect with your customers. Businesses need to investigate and analyze social and cultural habits, opinions and other aspects in order to divide their targets into groups sharing similar traits. Defining personas cannot be an activity based simply on caricatures or idealizations; businesses should gather customer data and use that to drive the process. Using personas is essential to understanding prospects and their context. By knowing user profiles well, businesses can design experiences that are personalized to their target audience.

Five Basic Steps for Creating Personas:

1. **Identify**

Identify the most important attributes that set one user segment apart from the others.

2. **Count**

Establish a minimum number of personas to cover the segments you've discovered.

3. **Describe**

It is important for the personas to come to life through interesting and diverse details, such as job title, goals, challenges and demographics.

4. **Check**

Validate target personas by aligning them with business objectives.

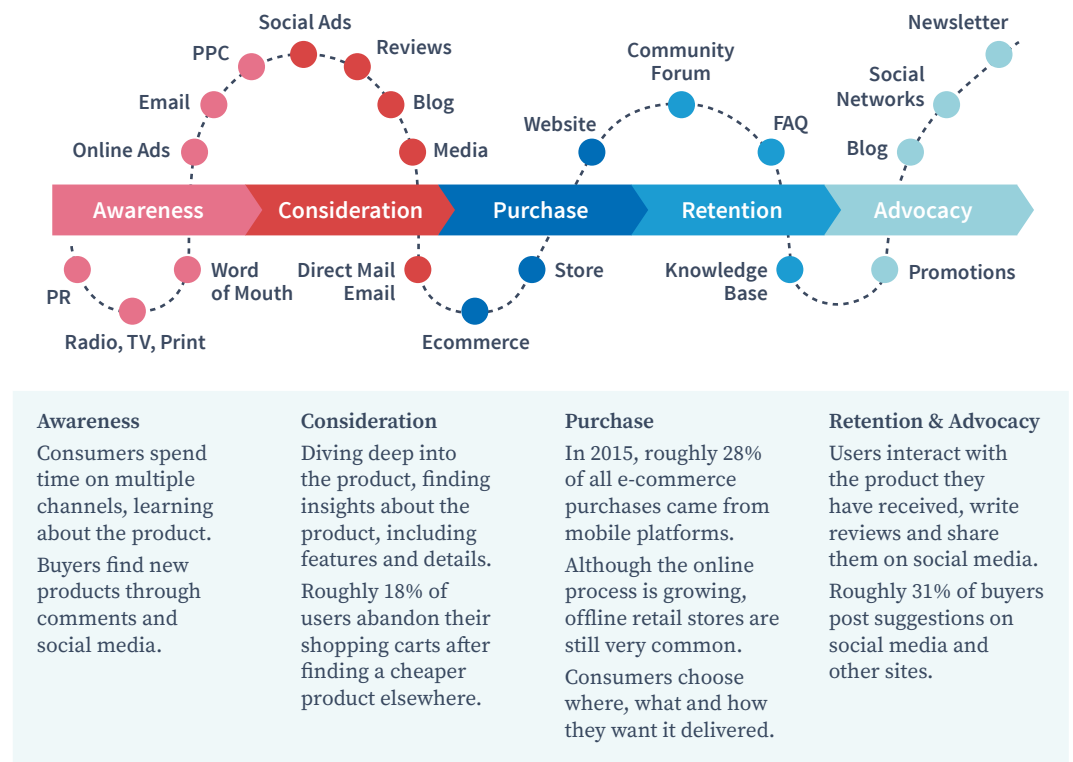
5. **Incorporate**

Personas should have good visibility and be referenced while designing strategies and initiatives throughout your company.

2. Optimize the Customer Journey

In a scenario of digital transformation, why is it so important to talk about the customer journey? Understanding someone's experience and the route they take up to the moment of purchase can define your digital strategy and uncover areas of improvement. The concept of micro-moments describes instances of time in which clients have a latent need for something. If you can identify these opportunities and offer your product to fill that need, conversion rates have a higher success rate. Additionally, you can look at the experience you're currently offering and test tweaks that improve both the overall experience and the bottom line. What forms have the best conversion rates? What banners or images have more appeal among customers? What are the three most common steps preceding the purchase? The experience, whatever the channel, should give consumers an easy, personalized interaction that respects their time. Understanding every step of your typical customer's journey, keeping them in the center of the process during any digital experience, and providing them with a self-service environment – these are essential components of implementing a winning digital strategy during the “Age of the Customer”.

Connecting With the Customer's Shopping Journey



Source: Raconteur

3. Maintain Consistent Experiences

Allowing customers to access your brand on any channel while maintaining consistent and unique experiences is a key challenge for businesses, but an opportunity to really stand out to customers. Companies that need to manage multiple channels for their customers face pressure to integrate processes so experiences are seamless. For example, if a customer creates a wishlist on her web browser, she expects to be able to access that same list on her smartphone once she logs into her account. Multichannel services require businesses to forecast changing expectations and implement the necessary changes throughout the customer experience, in addition to integrating with internal operating processes so that customer data is accurately captured.

[According to an article on Harvard Business Review](#), the digital experience is like looking at a mosaic. All of your digital touchpoints need to be consistent. When customers have a negative experience on one channel, it creates a disjointed image of your entire brand. Companies can no longer control where or how their customers will interact with them; they need to be ready on every channel. A good experience across channels shows customers a single image of the brand as they jump from mobile app to store website and any other touchpoint. Each customer-company interaction must contribute to a unified and personalized experience that defines your company. Achieving this requires much more than optimizing your content for different screen sizes; companies must provide universal access in the context of micro and macro interactions, leveraging your brand's digital experiences with consistency so your customers recognize your company wherever they go.

Multichannel Clients Are Better for Business


One Channel

77%
SATISFACTION

77%
BUY AGAIN


Two Channels

79%
SATISFACTION

81%
BUY AGAIN


Three or More Channels

81%
SATISFACTION

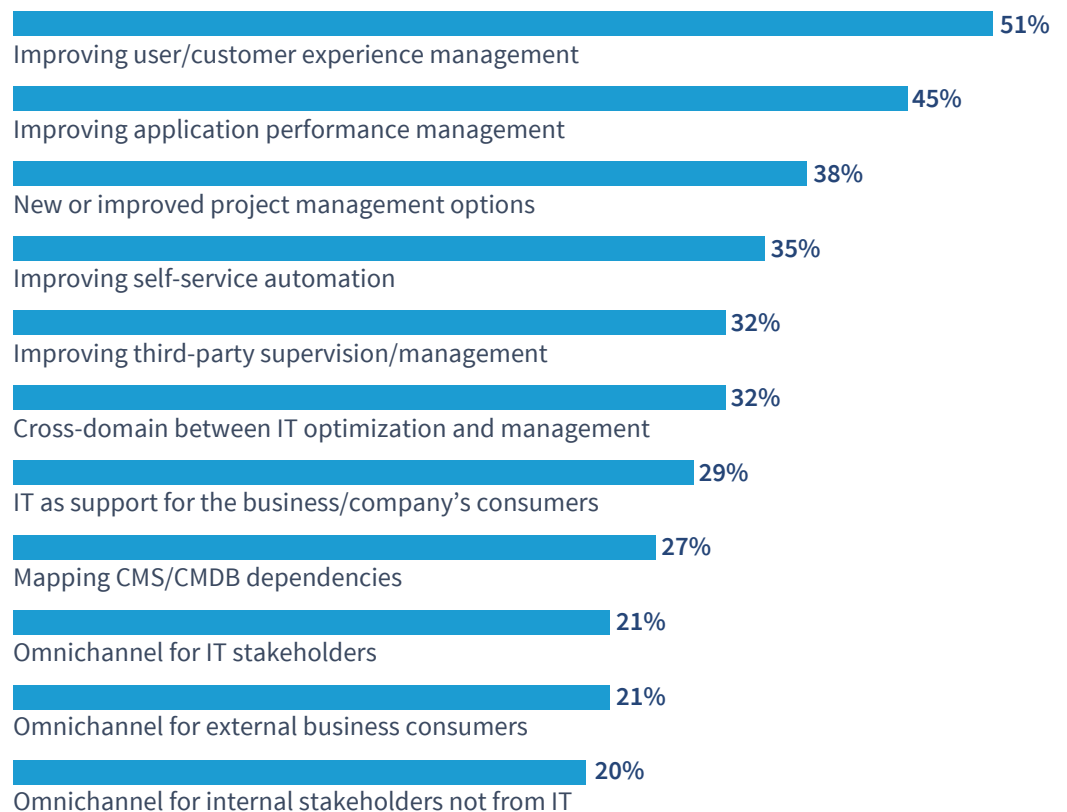
83%
BUY AGAIN

Source: foresee.com/assets/fxi2014.pdf

4. Collaborate Internally to Serve Customers Better

A recent study from the Enterprise Management Associates (EMA) demonstrates that both businesses and IT recognize the major impact new digital technology has had on business. Improving the management of customer experience and improving application performance management are the most important functional priorities to improving digital experiences today. Great experiences make customers into loyal advocates for your brand. Every part of your digital strategy will require complete synergy between the IT and Business departments. Application performance management is extremely important in an omnichannel world, where various internal systems built in different ways need to be interconnected to make continuous digital experiences possible for clients across every channel and every interaction. Monitoring and early detection of performance problems can mitigate risks with regard to customer perception about the reliability of your product or service.

Which of the following functional abilities are or will be the most important to your organization's digital transformation over the next 12 months?



Source: EMA graph

How Digital Experience Platforms Can Help

Digital transformation is directly connected to creating new business models and completely rethinking interactions with customers, as well as developing new products, new services and new experiences that could not have existed in the past. Digital Experience Platforms allow companies to overcome the following challenges:

- Monitoring every interaction customers have with your brand.
- Providing a single view of the entire customer lifecycle.
- Creating and managing experiences at the most important digital touchpoints.
- Integrating the diverse systems into a single platform.

Next Steps

See how Liferay DXP provides a foundation for digital transformation and helps you create better experiences for your customers. liferay.com/products

Speak with a Liferay specialist to see a demo of our software. liferay.com/request-a-demo



Liferay makes software that helps companies create digital experiences on web, mobile and connected devices. Our platform is open source, which makes it more reliable, innovative and secure. We try to leave a positive mark on the world through business and technology. Hundreds of organizations in financial services, healthcare, government, insurance, retail, manufacturing and multiple other industries use Liferay. Visit us at liferay.com.

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