



## Thought Starter: Getting CX into the Board Room – a Top Ten List

It's no secret that customers have lost confidence in many brands – those 'corporate machines' that exist simply to pump widgets out the door. The perception of those brands is often defined by a traditional way of thinking that drives competency vertically, wherein those in charge of their niche – be it operations, marketing, insights, or customer service (for example) fear losing control and thus keep competencies within a functional silo. In turn, work is often compartmentalized, creating a disjointed set of metrics and standards against which each individual group performs, without a centralized view of customer experience metrics.

These disparate goals and lack of true focus on the customer make it nearly impossible for leadership to comprehend the brand's situation with customers, as they only see tiny pieces of the puzzle in isolation, and never take in the whole picture. This creates a conundrum for CX program leaders by squashing any ability to inspire organizational change and create harmony with customers. To break through this corporate mediocrity, there has been a seismic shift in the way top brands are prioritizing and executing their CX initiatives – a shift that will ultimately make or break a brand's ability to compete in today's faster and smarter consumer ecosystem.

Today, marketing, operations, and insights leaders have come to realize that best-in-class CX programs must be executed across silos, not within them, as the only way to have sustainable rapport with customers. And, CX leaders have come to understand the significance of incorporating brand KPIs to ensure that CX programs are aligned with organizational strategy.

This underscores the importance of executing channel-agnostic CX programs (in your stores, online and in call centers) that not only measure service and operational standards, but that also quantify the extent to which the actual experience delivers on the brand promise, and this can only be done by facilitating organizational alignment with your CX program. There are ten key things you should think about in your quest to embed the customer's voice throughout your organization.

### Top ten ways to foster organizational alignment with CX:

#### 1 Take a stance on your customer experience strategy

- Have a **clear customer-focused vision** that you can communicate with your organization. The easiest way to define this vision is to create a **"playbook"** for the organization that includes guiding principles and values. Only once these principles are in place, they will drive the behavior of your organization. Every member of your team should know these principles by heart and they should be **embedded** into all areas of training and development.
- **Know your customer** – employ segmentation work to type customers, understand the CX nuances by customer type, and communicate the findings to the organization.

#### 2 Interview before you design anything related to CX

- Having buy-in from all **four** corners of the C-Suite – **Marketing & Sales, Operations, HR, and Finance** – can make or break a successful CX strategy. Conducting in-depth interviews among executives before the first survey question is written can give a CX program the executive prowess it needs to be top of mind in strategic discussions at the top.
- No less important are in-depth **interviews** with two additional audiences – **front line employees and customers**.

### 3 Don't stop talking once the survey is in field

- **Complacency is the enemy of greatness**, so remember that no CX program should remain stagnant. **CX programs should be viewed as living entities** that require periodic review and amendment to constantly drive improvement throughout the organization.
- Continue to **communicate** with stakeholders of the CX program on a consistent and measured basis to **keep CX in the boardroom**.

### 4 Don't ask unless you plan to act

- A CX **'Score'** is just a meaningless number unless it helps to improve business performance. Putting **action planning** mechanisms in place can give your **CX program the boost** it needs to drive real improvements.
- While the **'Score'** allows the **corporation to monitor business performance**, diagnostics allow front line personnel to fully understand the action needed for remedy.

### 5 Set goals

- **Locations are not equal**. We are strong advocates of using a **fair-score-carding technique**; as a critical component of a **best-in-class CX program**. This analysis takes into consideration **key store metrics** (i.e., store format), **geography** (i.e., degree of urbanization) and **demographic factors** (i.e., population density, affluence) to more realistically calculate location specific goals.

### 6 Have skin in the game

- If managers and executives are **not** compensated on CSAT then little will change. Tying compensation to CSAT scores and improvement will make CSAT **real and actionable**.

### 7 Be clear

- Whatever the CX metric, **the field organization needs to understand it!** One organization had a **score of 68%** of **'delighted'** customers. Unfortunately, the field personnel did not understand what this number meant and **interpreted it as a "C"** on their 'report' card.
- If front line staff do not understand "the score," there is the potential to demotivate and demoralize. **Know what your organization is capable of understanding**.

### 8 Create context with other KPIs

- **Happy customers stay. However, when dissatisfied customers leave**, what's left, are many more satisfied customers. CX scores need to be continually monitored in concert with customer counts and churn.

### 9 Educate your people

- While Hot Alerts are a great mechanism to resolve customer issues, many organizations expect that their managers will know exactly what to say without being trained. **Does your organization have rules to keep a customer?** Are certain customers worth more than others? Train your staff to best leverage this customer retention tool.

### 10 Recognize that technology alone will only bring you half-way

- **Technology**, by itself, can provide the information needed to monitor your business, but **cannot prioritize** the direction that your organization should take.
- Partner with a CX **'research expert'** to ensure that the **'voice of the customer'** is being interpreted correctly, action steps prioritized and that your program is returning ROI to the organization. CX research experts will guide leadership on **where you need to be now**, and as your CX program evolves in the future.

The array of numbers, KPIs and initiatives that a manager needs to manage on a day to day basis can be daunting. In designing an enterprise feedback management program, it is critically important that the business recognizes the complexity of this and develops a program which aids managers in driving a vision.

In developing your enterprise feedback management system think broad and deep. Create real change by embedding your system to drive the overall business vision. This is what will provide executives with what they are looking for: a program that improves customer experience, drives strategy and increases sales.

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GAME CHANGERS

