

# TRANSCENDING TRANSACTIONS: MAKE EMOTIONAL CONNECTIONS WITH YOUR CUSTOMERS

An Ipsos Point of View



GAME CHANGERS



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Personal development speaker and author Dan Millman holds that, as people, we ‘discover our character through decisions under pressure.’ The same rings true for organizations. Since the COVID-19 outbreak, businesses that have responded with empathy and thoughtfulness will stand to benefit in the long run. In an [Ipsos R&D report](#), Jean-Francois Damais, notes: “Nurturing relationships in times of crisis is critical. There is no doubt that customers will remember brands that support them during these challenging times, leading to stronger and more meaningful relationships.”

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# THE SIX FACTORS THAT TRANSCEND TRANSACTIONAL CX

Distilled into six factors of customer experience—or CX Forces—this framework is used by organizations to transcend the transactional and functional and create experiences that drive long-term positive memories and true competitive advantage. The CX Forces are relevant across every industry and customer touchpoint.

**1. Fair treatment:** Making the customer feel as though there is a fair exchange in the relationship that you share with them. When the balance of fairness tips and brands are perceived to profiteer or gain, trust is diminished, and previously strong relationships can break down.

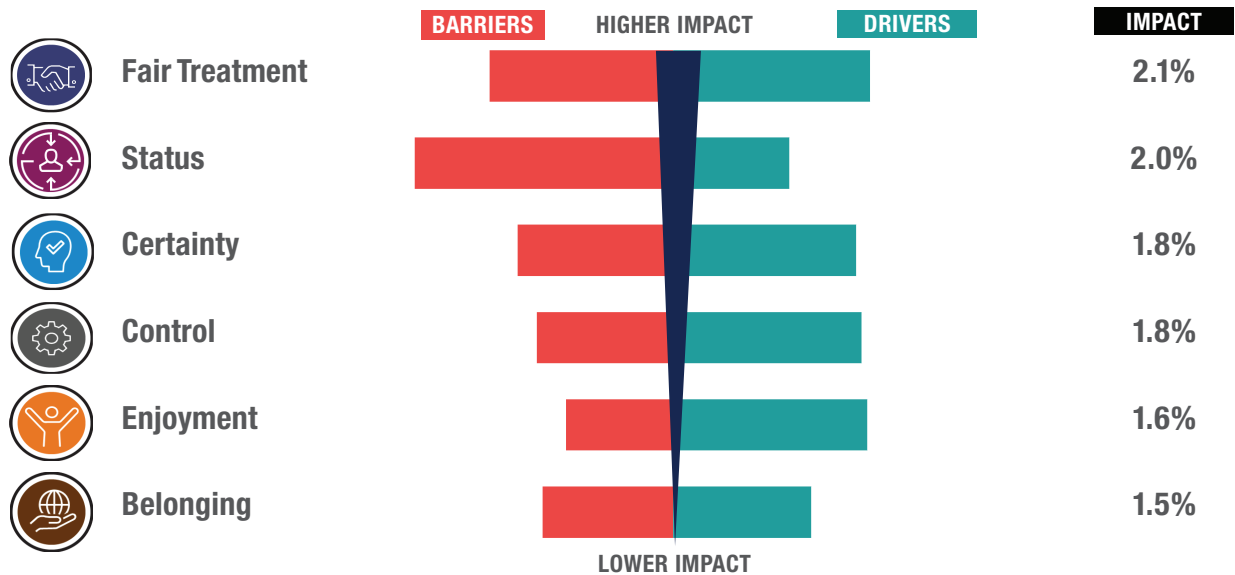
*Example:* Auto Insurer [Allstate](#) implemented a program that reimbursed customers approximately 15% of their monthly

premium from April to June (amounting to \$1B), which is fair since customers who drive less should pay less.

**2. Certainty:** Make customers feel that things are clear, transparent and working as expected. Actions and options need to stand out. Customers want to be informed more than normal, and brands can build their connection with customers by maintaining presence and [being a trusted source of information during these times](#).

*Example:* Visitors who reached out via Facebook or Instagram to an Atlanta Honda dealership learned they have the option to conduct a virtual test drive via the dealership’s website in lieu of a traditional in-store test drive, according to a story in *Automotive News*.

**Figure 1** The Forces of CX can be positive brand drivers when delivered well and barriers when they are underdelivered. For the brand in the example shown below, Fair Treatment has the largest net impact, but with nearly equal weights as a driver and a barrier. However, Status is the single largest barrier to this brand, indicating the importance of delivery on this dimension.



The impact refers to the % increase in the KPI based on a simulated x% increase in the mean score of a particular force

**3. Control:** Help customers feel in control of the situation and in the driving seat. Meaningful choices are key, and customers want to know the options available. Particularly in a time of crisis when many decisions are out of our control, brands can drive emotional connection by empowering customers to make their own decisions.

*Example:* When COVID-19 prevented tennis fans from attending the 2020 U.S. Open, the organizers gave ticket holders the option of receiving a refund OR “rolling it forward” to the 2021 event. Those who had multi-day ticket plans also received a free commemorative gift.

**4. Status:** Make customers feel valued, respected and worthy of special treatment. When organizations acknowledge and demonstrate the contribution we deliver to their business, it helps further strengthen the relationship.

*Example:* One way to reduce the risk of virus transmission is to reduce the density of people within stores. In response to this, all [Whole Foods Markets](#) and many other retailers dedicated special shopping hours to service high-risk customers.

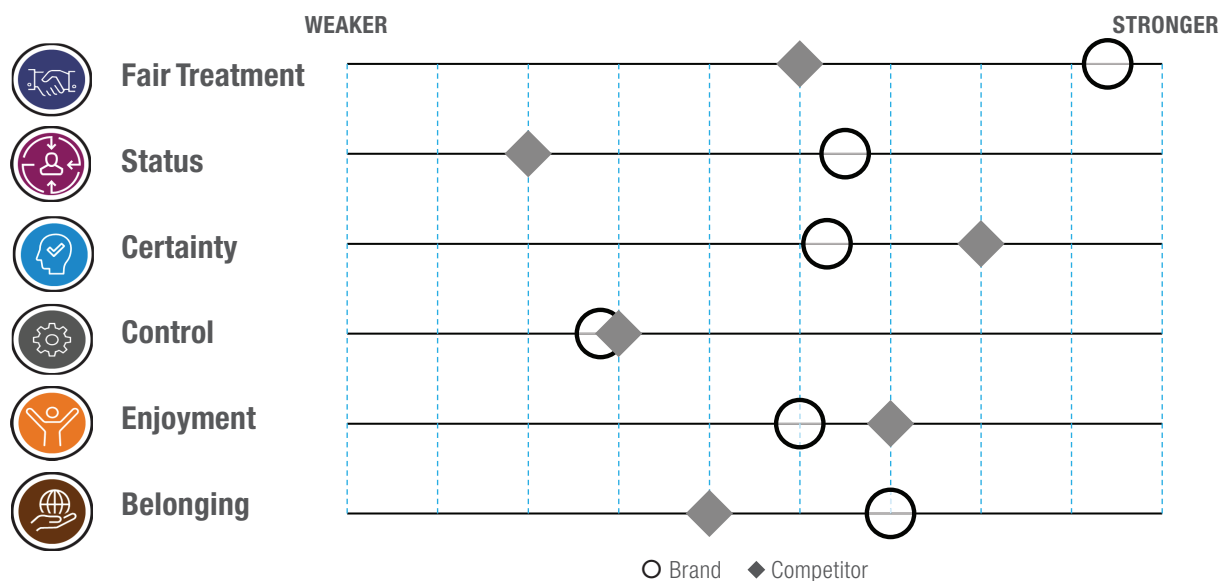
**5. Belonging:** Companies that have a clear purpose are great at demonstrating belonging. Belonging is about showing customers you care about the greater good and there is an alignment between actions and values.

*Example:* To combat the shortage growing across the U.S., [Anheuser-Busch](#) and other brewers and distillers produced hand sanitizer at their facilities. Since the launch Anheuser-Busch’s program in April, the flagship breweries and their craft partners delivered more than 500,000 bottles of hand sanitizer to 20 states and Washington D.C.

**6. Enjoyment:** Help customers achieve their goals and remove any hassle. Making their lives easier yields a sense of freedom. Enjoyment can be enabling customers to focus on themselves, as well as adapting the experience to continue offering a service customers value.

*Example:* Many of us missed attending the movies, so [Walmart](#) converted 160 store parking lots to drive-in movie theaters, which allowed family and friends the opportunity to enjoy a variety of films safely from their own vehicles.

**Figure 2** Additionally, the Forces of CX can be analyzed in a competitive context for greater insight. Building on the featured example, we see that the brand is actually delivering quite well on both Fair Treatment and Status versus competition. Given the relative importance of these two Forces, these are clear strengths that the brand can leverage in its customer interactions and communications. And, while they may underperform on Enjoyment, this component is of somewhat lesser importance.



**Put the CX Forces into action:** Use the human-centric framework as a core part of customer experience design and...

1. See where you stack up and identify the barriers and drivers of performance for each Force.
2. Map the performance and importance of customer touchpoints aligning them with the Forces framework.
3. Seek out gaps in your customer journey that could be optimized for a better customer experience.

**Delivering a return on CX Investment:** Employ the CX Forces model to realize the benefits of improved retention, advocacy, share of spend and operational efficiency, which are all key indicators of return on CX investment (ROCXI).

## Contact

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