

The Forces of Customer Experience

The Science of strong relationships

The importance of Customer Experience (CX) as a driver of financial performance is widely acknowledged. Customers' decisions about brands directly impact the bottom line. Customer retention, advocacy and share of spend are crucial customer outcomes that organisations need to drive to generate revenue growth.

The Forces of CX Framework identifies 6 key dimensions which have been validated through R&D to be strong predictors of emotional attachment and relationship strength.

Focusing on them will **allow brands to review customer experience design, management and measurement to address what truly matters, and drive the desired business outcomes.**





For more information

www.ipsos.com/en/Forces-customer-experience



Emotional attachment leads to higher Customer Lifetime Value

	NPS®	Satisfaction	Retention
 Emotionally attached	67	71	76
 Functionally satisfied	31	43	52
 Unfulfilled	-23	19	23

Source: Ipsos R&D



The purpose of this document is to dive into each Force, in turn, and explain how these Forces come to life in Customer Experience.

You will find:

A clear description of each Force

How, ideally, you want your B2B customers to feel

Examples of how these Forces show up in B2B customer experience

Best practice guidance as to how to deliver each Force

The impact that the Force has on your B2B Customer Experience



The Forces of CX framework can be implemented as a tool across your CX ecosystem to design, measure and manage; to build stronger relationships with your B2B customers.

- Map your B2B customer journey and identify your customers' emotional needs, across channels and touchpoints, using the Forces of CX
- Incorporate the Forces of CX into your Voice of Customer programmes
- Use the Forces of CX as an analytical framework, to mine verbatim data using Text Analytics to find out how your customers are feeling
- Design your offer using the Forces of CX to ensure that you are building experiences that lead to emotional attachment.

For more information on how to implement and use the CX Forces, please contact:

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The Forces of CX

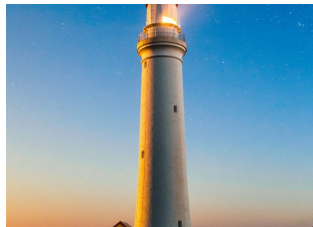
CERTAINTY

Certainty is about making your B2B customers feel a sense of:

- CLARITY
- TRANSPARENCY
- RELIABILITY



You are a partner in the success of your client's business. The information you provide and services you deliver impact their business. Certainty is an absolute hygiene factor to ensure your clients feel that you can be a trusted partner at every step of the way.



Tensions



How you don't want your B2B customers to feel

I feel unclear about what's happening

I feel uninformed and I don't know what to expect

I feel frustrated

I don't know what to do next




How your B2B customers feel when they experience Certainty

I feel informed at each stage of the journey

I feel confident in front of my senior leaders

They always deliver what they promise

I feel confident they will deliver a good quality experience



Examples of **Certainty** demonstrated in CX

Clarity

A software company provides clear and detailed documentation, ensuring business customers easily understand the terms and conditions in the contract.

Regular updates

A food manufacturing company provides retail customers with regular updates through an AI chat bot on the status of their orders, so they know when stock is arriving.

Simple explanations

A business bank provides in-house accountants with easy-to-understand explanations of their financial statements.

Training support

A medical equipment company provides in-house training to teams on new equipment and offers 24-hour customer care support for urgent queries.

Best practice

- Increase your customers' trust by being clear, consistent and transparent
- Instill a sense of security in the service you provide
- Ensure reliability and increase confidence in your customers ability to report up to their stakeholders
- Help them improve their decision making through your reliable service and communications

Impact

Certainty leads to B2B customers feeling a sense of trust. You are part of their business and an extension of their brand. This strengthens relationships and reduces churn.

Where B2B customers feel uncertain, this leads to feeling annoyed, frustrated and anxious. B2B customers will be more open to looking around at competitor offers.

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The Forces of CX **CONTROL**

CONTROL is about making your B2B customers feel a sense of:

- **EMPOWERMENT**
- **FLEXIBILITY**
- **POTENTIAL TO CUSTOMISE THEIR EXPERIENCE**



B2B often involves complicated processes, with multiple stakeholders and complex supply chains. Provide your business customers with tools and choices to enable them to manage the relationship and services to meet their needs.

Offer options to allow customers to choose the best channel for their needs. For example, some may be happier with automated AI-powered chat bots while others may prefer an in-person conversation.



Tensions



How you don't want your B2B customers to feel

I feel restricted when I use this service

This experience is inflexible, I can't adapt to suit my needs

I feel reliant and dependent on them for everything

I feel constrained in what I can do with them




How your B2B customers feel when they experience Control

The experience makes me feel empowered

I feel in control

I can sort things out independently

I can adapt the service to suit my needs



Examples of **Control** demonstrated in CX

Customisation

A technology company offers a variety of customisable features, allowing customers to tailor their products to their specific needs.

Real time information

A manufacturing company allows customers to track their orders in real time.

Online support

A financial services company provides customers with online banking and mobile banking options, giving them control over their finances.

Self-serve scheduling

A shipping company allows clients to book their own docking times through an AI powered bot.

Best practice

- Allow B2B customers to configure products/services to suit their needs.
- Personalise account management to ensure customer-centricity
- Offer a variety of support options to suit different needs
- Great UX to ensure that clients can self serve.

Impact

Providing that sense of Control makes B2B customers feel confident, independent, focussed, in charge and empowered. They feel more satisfied as the service is tailored to their specific needs.

This leads to an increase in satisfaction and creates stability in the relationship.

This can result in a greater attachment to the brand.

When B2B customers do not feel in control in a customer experience, this leads to feelings of dependency, insecurity and powerlessness.

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FAIR TREATMENT

FAIR TREATMENT is about making your B2B customers feel a sense of:

- **THEY ARE GETTING A GOOD DEAL**
- **EQUITABLE TREATMENT**
- **IMPARTIALITY**



It is essential in business relationships that your customers feel they are being treated fairly. Being unfairly treated can lead to strong reactions that can result in B2B customers complaining, leaving and telling others about the experience.

Ensure you are providing customers with an experience that reflects contractual obligations and their reasonable expectations.



Tensions



How you don't want your B2B customers to feel

I feel discriminated

This brand is taking advantage of us

They do not value me as a customer

I am resentful of them



How your B2B customers feel when they are treated fairly

This brand makes me feel I have the best deal

I feel like a valued customer

I feel respected by them

They are willing to support me in difficult times



Examples of Fair Treatment demonstrated in CX

Guarantees

A software company offers a satisfaction guarantee, committing to their brand promise.

Complaint resolution

A manufacturing company promptly resolves any customer complaints.


Clear communication on fees

A financial services company provides customers with clear and concise explanations of their fees.

Understanding

A financial services company provides customers with a grace period for late payments, demonstrating understanding and flexibility.

Best practice

- 
- Price your services fairly
 - Be clear on commercial terms
 - Help your customers to plan
 - Be responsive in customer service
 - Deal with complaints and issues quickly and effectively
 - Be authentic in all your communications

Impact

Where B2B customers feel they have been treated fairly, they will likely feel trusting, grateful, relieved, content and committed to the partnership with you. This can lead to a deeper relationship, feelings of loyalty towards the brand, and advocacy.

Where B2B customers feel they have not been treated fairly, they can feel angry, resentful, tricked, let down. Unfair treatment increases negative customer outcomes such as complaints, bad mouthing or churn.

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The Forces of CX **BELONGING**

BELONGING is about making your B2B customers feel a sense of:

- COMMUNITY
- SHARED VALUES
- INCLUSION



Feeling connected emotionally to account managers and part of a community is just as important to B2B customers as B2C. As relationships are typically longer and often deeper, arguably Belonging is even more important.

With the increasing focus on social responsibility, B2B customers are focusing on brands that are aligned with their own core values and reflecting their principles.



Tensions



How you don't want your B2B customers to feel

I feel isolated and disconnected

I feel excluded by this brand

I am disconnected from their values

They don't care about others or their impact on the world



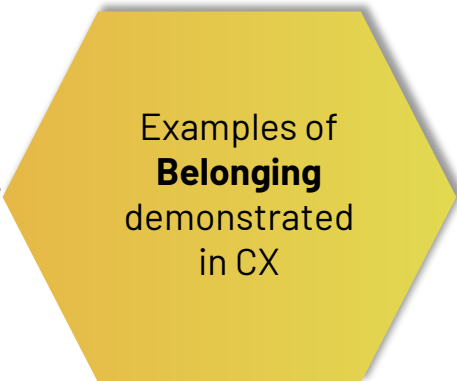
How your B2B customers experience Belonging

This brand makes me feel 'one of us'

I feel important and included

They feel part of my team

Through this experience I contribute towards a better society



Examples of **Belonging** demonstrated in CX

Build a community

A technology company creates a customer community where customers can connect with each other and share ideas.

Networking events

A manufacturing company hosts regular customer events, providing opportunities for customers to network and learn about new products.

Loyalty programmes

A financial services company offers a loyalty program that rewards customers for their business.

ESG values

A logistics company supports local charities in sponsoring a percentage of disadvantaged children in education and providing work experience.



Best practice



- Foster and build a community for your customers to connect and share ideas.
- Engage through industry events to share information
- Choose relevant and appropriate charities for your business and communicate with partners to bring in their support.
- Create loyalty programmes for your customers to reward them for their business.
- Ensure your experiences are inclusive and meet DEI criteria.

Impact

When customers experience a sense of Belonging, they feel that they are working with a company that really understands them. They feel a sense of solidarity with the brand, and it becomes more than service or experience to them. It becomes part of their brand. This increases engagement, enhances collaboration and builds more solid relationships.

When customers don't feel a sense of Belonging, they feel excluded, not understood and that the brand is remote and impersonal. They will look elsewhere for a more supportive supplier aligned to their values.

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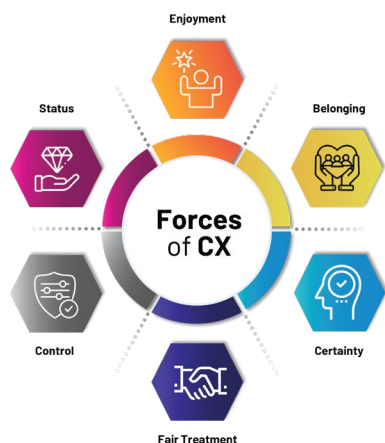
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The Forces of CX **STATUS**

STATUS is about making your B2B customers feel a sense of:

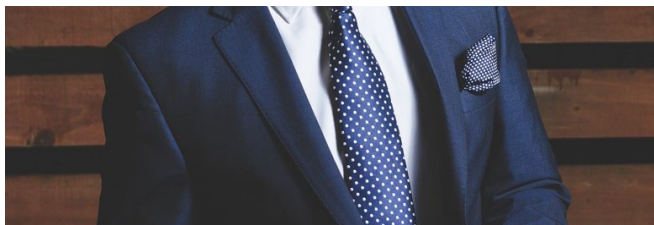
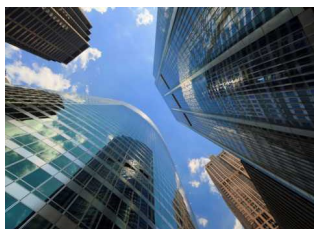
- **RECOGNITION**
- **IMPORTANCE**
- **PRESTIGE**



B2B relationships are built on reliability and trust, but customer also want to feel special. They want the value of their ongoing business to be recognised.

Brands are increasingly aware of the amount of data held on them and, with the advent of Gen AI, expectations around personalisation are increasing.

Your role is not only to provide a service but to help your customers to look great at work and help them on the next step in their career.



Tensions

How you don't want your B2B customers to feel

We feel under-valued in this relationship

They don't seem to recognise the impact their approach has on us

My needs and expectations are disregarded and not taken seriously

I don't feel they will go the extra mile for me


How your B2B customers feel when they experience Status

This brand really values my business

I feel respected and important

They help me shine at work and stand out

They appreciate my time and perspective



Examples of **Status** demonstrated in CX

Premium services

A financial services company offers premium banking services to high-net-worth individuals.

VIP treatment

A manufacturing company provides VIP treatment to its top customers.

Personalised account management

Generative AI is used by account managers to curate data and support clients in designing strategic plans.

Rewards for top customers

A wine company offers the best retailers special prizes such as trips to Formula One and holidays for the best sales of their products.

Best practice

- Showing your clients, you know exactly who they are.
- Acknowledge your clients' achievements
- Demonstrate appreciation of customer loyalty.
- Personalise your account management services. Utilise Gen AI to help tune into customers' needs.
- Provide dedicated account managers and special VIP programmes for the best customers.
- Give priority to the most loyal customers.

Impact

When B2B customers feel a sense of Status and that they are important to your business, their feelings of agency and recognition are boosted. This increases customer satisfaction, improves retention and generates higher revenue.

When B2B customers do not feel a sense of Status, they feel like just a number; unimportant and disposable. They feel unattached and may move to another place that will provide them with a greater sense of recognition, respect and value.

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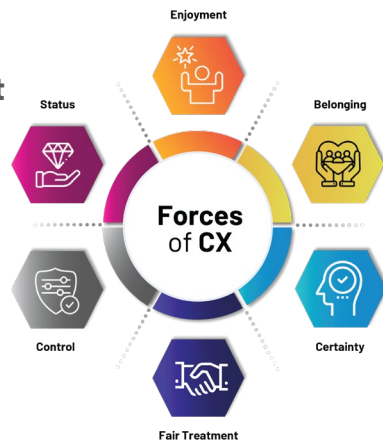
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The Forces of CX ENJOYMENT

ENJOYMENT is about making your B2B customers feel a sense of:

- EASE
- PLEASURE
- DELIGHT



In B2B experiences, Enjoyment comes to life when customer feel relaxed, at ease and look forward to their interactions with you.

Many touchpoints are delivered through human interactions, and it is important that account managers and frontline teams are building positive and enjoyable relationships.

Enjoyment can be enhanced through excellent digital and Gen AI-powered experiences. Great UX can make customers feel a company is easy to deal with and tuned into their needs.



Tensions

✗ How you don't want your B2B customers to feel

I feel frustrated and unengaged by this experience

This company causes me difficulties in my working life

I am always disappointed with interactions

It is uninspiring working with them

✓ How your B2B customers feel when they experience Enjoyment

I really look forward to the account meetings

They always seem happy to hear from me

I feel close to them, they know who I am personally and are engaging

They are always enthusiastic and happy to help



Examples of **Enjoyment** demonstrated in CX

Easy-to-use

A technology company provides customers with easy-to-use products that enhance their productivity.

Enjoyable working relationships

Great professional services firms excel at building strong working relationships with their clients, not just on projects but between engagements.

Uplifting frontline

Upbeat and friendly frontline staff and account managers are positive, and solution focused. They are great at what they do and enjoyable to be around.

Mindful spaces

Physical spaces are thoughtfully designed to ensure that meetings are creative and pleasurable.

Best practice

- Ensure all experiences across touchpoints are user-friendly and intuitive
- Exceed expectations in meetings and interactions whether human or digital, by injecting your brand personality
- Train frontline teams and Gen AI bots to emotionally connect with clients.
- Provide added value services such as training in an easy, enjoyable way.
- Intentionally design interactions and spaces to make it a pleasant experience working with you.

Impact

When B2B customers experience a sense of Enjoyment, they may feel happy, free, relaxed, excited, inspired or amused. This releases 'feel good' chemicals such as endorphins, serotonin, dopamine and oxytocin. These support the brain in memorising and recalling events quickly and therefore will improve loyalty and advocacy towards the brand.

When customers don't feel a sense of Enjoyment, they are frustrated, bored, lonely, uninspired, angry or annoyed. A lack of Enjoyment will lead to them looking to competitors and other experiences to give them the Enjoyment they are searching for.

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