



ACHIEVING EXCELLENCY IN CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE THROUGH THE APPLICATION OF LEAN DIGITAL CX DESIGN

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THE GOAL OF CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE (CX) DESIGN IN BOTH BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS (B2B) AND BUSINESS-TO-CONSUMER (B2C) APPLICATIONS IS TO MAKE IT AS EASY AS POSSIBLE FOR CUSTOMERS AND CLIENTS TO GET WHAT THEY WANT WHEN THEY WANT IT – WHICH IS THE KEY TO DEVELOPING LOYAL REPEAT CUSTOMERS.

To provide this standout experience for customers, an organization must unite around the goal of discovering and meeting their true needs – a customer-centric transformation that can power a vast amount of innovation.

“It’s been proven that the easier it is for a customer to get what they want or do what they’re trying to do, the sooner they start to form a habit around your product or service, which means repeat buying or repeat interactions,” says Manuel Silva, Senior Manager at Four Principles. *“And we know that companies that make it easier for their customers see those customers staying around for years longer.”*

But to achieve that, companies need to know what’s not working – what is getting in the way when a customer leaves without making a purchase or completing an action. And they need ways to capture that feedback through reviews, complaints, surveys, and other data and then use it to iteratively improve the customer experience.

This sounds straightforward, but it’s surprising how often it doesn’t happen. According to a 2019 Customer Experience Trend [Report](#) by Acquia, only 10% of B2C & B2B customers strongly agree that most companies meet their expectations for what they consider a good customer experience; 90% say companies/brands are falling short. At the same time, 82% of marketers said they believe they are meeting customer expectations as regard to customer experience. There is clearly a disconnect here.

By accessing the right expertise, companies can be more successful in analyzing the current state of their CX, closing gaps, and improving the customer journey in both B2B and B2C environments. *“In today’s fast-changing and dynamic environment, where customer expectations change very quickly, companies need to utilize digital footprints for rapid and continuous improvement of the CX,”* says Ernest Nedic, Director Kaizen Lab, at Four Principles. *“At Four Principles, we marry traditional and digital transformation expertise to focus on constant creation of value from the customer perspective.”*

LEAN + DIGITAL CX DESIGN = ENHANCED CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

To maximize customer satisfaction, companies need to understand and visualize the customer's end-to-end journey. Lean principles and practices drive improvements in CX in several ways.

- First by understanding the 'voice of the customer', expectations and desires, and by error proofing, which makes it impossible for the customer to make a mistake, so they get exactly what they want every time.
- The second is through visual management. Customers, whether a consumer or a B2B partner, need to know what to do the first time without having to ask.
- The third is by reducing the necessary steps involved in completing a purchase or transaction, because every new step introduces friction into the process that can drive them away.

An example of a B2C company that has succeeded by following these practices is Uber, which uses visual management and error-proofing in their GPS mapping and pre-set payments and streamlined steps with one-tap ride-hailing. [[Source](#)].

In the B2B space, the Finnish elevator company KONE used input from builders, building owners and front-line employees such as maintenance operators to redesign CX. In this case, the CX goal was excellent customer service and KONE designed a pilot project, based in France, to test a model of the customer journey. [[Source](#)].

Based on co-created research and feedback, they redesigned the customer experience based on nine key touch-points, including development of a mobile app that puts service information at the fingertips of the customer.

Lean principles and practices have demonstrated enormous success in streamlining processes, reducing waste, and improving outcomes. In this work, Lean practitioners use tools such as value stream and process maps to re-construct the sequence of value adding events and the touchpoints where the customer is involved. To these we can add the customer journey map, which is a step-by-step visualization of what the customer or B2B client goes through during the process of interacting with a product or service – including their emotions and thought processes, as well as the physical steps. Along the way, the customer journey map identifies the points in the process at which the customer experiences emotions such as confusion, frustration, elation, and satisfaction.

Four Principles specializes in customer journey mapping and analysis, paying close attention to the voice of the customer, accessed through traditional and digital means to identify key areas where we can improve their experience.

Customer journey maps take many forms and can be simple or extremely complex. They can be designed as timelines, directional maps, flowcharts, and [more](#). They are typically broken into phases of the customer experience and detail touch-points and interactions, points of delight or opportunities to please, and service barriers and pain points. Through such processes, Lean drives customer experience (CX) design to the physical realm and make changes visible and sustainable for companies.

“Through our Lean management expertise and proven framework, Four Principles takes a hands-on, iterative approach, helping companies develop customer journey maps that make the customer experience visible across all touch-points,” says Patrick Wiebusch, Co-Founder and Managing Partner at Four Principles. *“We also specialize in infrastructure set-up and utilization from a customer-centric point of view. Companies gain the competitive edge by seeing the world through their customers’ and clients’ eyes.”*

CREATING VALUE THROUGH TRANSFORMING CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Value is defined by customers - each individual customer - and doesn't mean the same thing to everyone. This is why companies must listen to and understand customers in order to map their journeys and identify key pain points. Leaders have come to understand how important this is, According to [Gartner data](#), 81 percent of executives believe they'll compete on customer experience alone in the not-too-distant future. At the same time, only 22 percent have claimed to have developed an experience that exceeds customer expectations.

Lean Digital CX Design makes it possible to measure where companies are delivering – and not delivering – and employ continuous improvement to reduce pain and effort. Lean CX iterates to follow where the B2B or B2C customer says a company delivered value, not where the company thinks it delivered value.

Organizations learn to put the customer at the center of business planning, and how to break down barriers to prioritize an optimal digital customer experience – of equal value in both consumer and B2B commerce. This requires integrating teams working on CX and connected commerce, while avoiding overlap, a particular challenge in matrixed organizations.

Companies can achieve this by utilizing as many channels as possible to research customer impressions, experience, opinions, and barriers to CX with a goal of understanding how they are performing against customer expectations.

CUSTOMER JOURNEY ANALYTICS ARE KEY TO LEAN DIGITAL CX DESIGN

Soliciting feedback and researching real-world customer experience is the key to answering two key questions: 'What do consumers and B2B customers want and how easy is it for them to get it?' Digital footprints are essential in providing these answers. Customer-journey analytics distill the various paths-to-purchase from the billions of digital traces that consumers and B2B customers leave behind as they interact with a company, product or service. Customer journey design and implementation uses the data gathered from these multiple interactions to streamline and optimize the user experience. And the data gathered from these multiple interactions across channels can be used to better understand the customer's needs, preferences and habits and to personalize and optimize their experience. Four Principles utilizes CX concepts such as reduction of complexity, mood-boards across touch-points, and value streams for customer experience design and implementation.

Journey analytics, working hand in hand with journey mapping, show companies what really happens to customers at each step of the way, allowing them to uncover problems and friction points that get in the way. Journey analytics are dynamic, providing real-time, up-to-date information even as customers' journeys are changing. Companies can use this data to better understand their customers' behavior in the present time frame and improve performance.

Good customer-journey analytics tools use machine-learning algorithms to identify customer segments in the journeys and correlate them with other data like conversion rate and lifetime value. This aids in identifying the most valuable customer segments and prioritizing resources to focus on improving their customer experience.

Spain's Banco Santander utilizes a [comprehensive CX strategy](#) that includes an extensive voice of the customer program to bolster the organization's customer-centric orientation and achieve process optimization. Through feedback channels such as satisfaction surveys and branch networks, financial advisors obtain new information that the bank uses to create customized value propositions for different business segments and track and analyze metrics for all linkages.

Management seeks to discover the best practices within each country's operations and share them with the bank's operations in the other countries. The result is easier navigation by customer companies and reduced costs and complexity on the bank's side.

USING DATA-DRIVEN PERSONALIZATION TO PRIORITIZE CONVENIENCE

Personalization is key to making customers and suppliers feel understood and appreciated, which translates to a good CX experience. Companies who want to improve customer and supplier loyalty must invest in making personalization a key part of their CX design. But too many companies fail to make good use of customer feedback when what is needed is to systematically measure the customer's voice and integrate it into a culture of continuous improvement.

Companies can assess where they are in this area by asking four key questions:

1. Are we collecting the data we need?
2. Are we collecting data in a way that breeds consumer trust?
3. Can we access and utilize this data when and where we need it?
4. Can we deploy this data in a seamless manner?

Personalization is key to convenience for B2B clients as well as for consumers. The more an organization personalizes the customer experience, the more convenient and easy it is that customer or client to complete transactions or operations.

While this seems straightforward, surveys show that this is where many brands are falling short. In Acquia's 2019 Customer Experience [Survey](#), 60 percent of customers said yes to the statement "Brands do not do a good job using my personal preferences to predict my needs." And 76 answered yes to the statement, "If a brand understands me at a personal level, I'm more likely to be loyal to them."

This combination of personalization and convenience translates directly to loyalty, as in the case of delivery services such as Postmates, Instacart and UberEats. App-based ordering and payment allow seamless integration of the user experience while data integration recording a user's previous deliveries and purchase experiences make it easy for a customer to track past user experiences and to set up repeat functions.

Responsiveness to customer needs, criticism, and demands is considered a key indicator of successful Lean Digital CX design. American Airlines demonstrates this value by achieving excellence in social listening on all platforms. According to Brandwatch's report, The Best Brands for CX, American Airlines rated number 2 in CX for their real-time communication and social engagement. With the creation of a command center, known as a Social Hub, American Airlines' communication team is able to respond quickly to issues as soon as they arise. Messages and posts are flagged and sent to every part of the business, from maintenance to purchasing to operations, to ensure that customer insights result in action items for immediate implementation. [\[Source\]](#)

Integration is key to the success of global B2B marketplace Alibaba.com, which connects consumers with suppliers worldwide in a complex end-to-end trading platform. From its beginnings as a simple ecommerce listing service, Alibaba has evolved into an international marketplace that offers payment, logistics and other services while handling the buying and selling for small businesses across the world. [Source].

Alibaba used what it learned early on in consumer retail to redesign the B2B customer experience by digitizing all points in the customer journey. Alibaba uses data and technology to help businesses find the right suppliers and optimize their supply chains, creating greater levels of customization and accountability.

LEAN DIGITAL CX HELPS COMPANIES INTERACT WITH CUSTOMERS IN REAL TIME

Journey mapping and analytics yield actionable insights that companies can translate into cost savings and operational efficiencies while at the same time achieving sustainable gains in customer and B2B client satisfaction. Changes can be monitored and adapted over time to ensure repeatability and continual and sustainable value creation.

“Putting the B2B customer at the center of business planning is essential to customer journey design and implementation in both the physical and digital realms,” says James Ryan, Principal at Four Principles. *“We help businesses create a multi-year roadmap to create an optimal CX experience in all dimensions.”*

Four Principles works with clients to analyze the enterprise value stream from end to end, designing and implementing an integrated CX across all touch-points and all platforms. This means ensuring that the process is engaging, snag-free and reliable at every point that the customer interacts with the product, service, company or suppliers.

According to Patricia O’Connell and Thomas Stewart, authors of ***Woo, Wow, and Win: Service Design, Strategy and the Art of Customer Delight***, CX should be “efficient, effective, scalable, and if not error-proof, error resistant.” Top-notch CX design and implementation should not require heroic effort, but should follow naturally from applying iterative learnings and best practices. In other words, great service should be the natural outcome of well-designed processes.

“Heightened customer expectations and the speed of innovation have created a need to adapt faster than ever before,” says Wiebusch. *“At Four Principles, we reimagine the entire CX experience by addressing customers’ major pain points, deploying digital technologies, and streamlining processes, and reducing risk, through Lean management.”*

GET IN TOUCH

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