

Experience Management

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Today's brands and business leaders excitedly talk about the "big picture," emphasize end-to-end experiences, and share their preference for long-term relationships over one-off transactions.

When it comes time to actually elevate brand experiences and holistic customer journeys, many nonetheless find themselves in a bind.

Some have only been capturing select data from certain phases of the experience, often via antiquated survey feedback. Others may technically have valuable data, but they store it in siloed platforms that other stakeholders cannot even access, let alone act upon. Ultimately, these organizations lack context and motivation for identifying and optimizing how the different pieces of the experience come together to impact customer satisfaction, employee engagement, brand reputation, and business performance.

How can companies avoid this pitfall? How can they deliver experiences that not only attract and retain customers but improve brand positioning and provide defense against competitive threats? The answer is adopting an experience management framework, which sees the "connected experience" not only as an idea but as a necessity for capturing vital intelligence and then taking meaningful action.

This Special Report provides an in-depth look at experience management, and why it is the solution to long-lingering customer experience and overall business challenges.

Mistakes That Undermine The Impact of Business Intelligence

A successful experience management framework hinges on the idea that actionable, high-quality intelligence can elevate all facets of the organization. It can empower organizations to establish brand visions, develop products, and provide support experiences that consistently wow customers.

By virtue of their direct interactions with customers, all companies *theoretically* have access to this intelligence. They have the ability to learn how to align every element of the brand experience, and every phase of the customer journey, with the demands of today's buyers.

Due to the following mistakes, many companies are unable to leverage this intelligence in practice. In turn, they are unable to cultivate experiences that yield sustainable success.

Squandering the Analytics Opportunity

Some organizations categorically fail to capture the right data. Whether due to a lack of analytics technology, an overreliance on limited survey research, or poor strategic planning, they fail to access the voice of the customer across their numerous engagement touch points.

It would be highly inaccurate, however, to say that *all brands are bad* at capturing data. Many take full advantage of the omnichannel revolution, capturing vital intelligence from all customers in all contact channels. Unfortunately, collecting data is only one phase of the intelligence process. The next, more vital, phase involves unifying and interpreting the data. This is where an even greater share of organizations falls short.





“For organizations looking to understand these experiences, it’s important to take a holistic approach to data capture and analysis. If you keep these data points in siloes, you’re going to miss the bigger picture ... Most organizations today might already be collecting all [relevant] data – contact center interactions, surveys, social mentions, etc. – but they don’t centralize it in a single location. Instead of keeping this data siloed in different platforms or systems, implementing a centralized listening or analytics system that ingests all feedback and interaction touchpoints makes it possible to more accurately measure and uncover insights related to brand sentiment, crisis management and more.” - **Scott Kendrick, CallMiner**

By failing to adopt a singular view of their intelligence, these organizations cannot successfully analyze the data they are collecting. As a result, they cannot identify the biggest drivers of customer sentiment – and the surest opportunities for improvement.

More importantly, they cannot *democratize* the intelligence to drive improvement in all corners of the organization. Different teams throughout the customer experience function, let alone those outside the contact center, will have no visibility into what customers are demanding or how they can work collaboratively to deliver the most engaging, productive journey possible.

Forgetting the Importance of “Why”

Customer data is rarely just about “the contact center experience.” It encompasses the different facets of the journey – be it a difficult website, a confusing policy, an incorrect invoice, or a faulty product – that create the need for support. It offers a window into *why* customers feel and behave the way they do.

Too often, organizations ignore these root causes and focus only on the quality of the support experience. They celebrate the success of resolution rates and average handle times but neglect to consider the failures that necessitated conversations in the first place.

This failure to consider the “why” adversely impacts customer satisfaction levels. It prevents the contact center from proactively solving problems, thus requiring additional effort from customers who have to e-mail, text, or call to receive help. Effort, as today’s businesses know all too well, is the enemy of customer loyalty.



“One thing that has a major impact on brand reputation is customer effort. The easier (or harder) it is for a customer to engage with your organization from research to purchase to after sale support, the more likely they are going to be loyal to your brand and perceive your brand positively. By understanding where customers experience the most effort in their journeys and taking action to reduce effort, the more positive your brand reputation will be.” - **Scott Kendrick, CallMiner**

Not simply a bottleneck on contact center performance, ignorance to root causes inhibits success across the entire organization. The drivers behind contact center issues very often sit with other departments, such as a marketing team guilty of a misleading promotion or an engineering team responsible for an unreliable product. Without visibility into where they went wrong, these teams will have little motivation to make vital improvements.

Focusing Exclusively on the Negative

Repeat business is often mistaken for legitimate customer loyalty. Silence is often mistaken for ample satisfaction. The rationale is simple: brands are conditioned to take “no news as good news” and therefore focus exclusively on explanations for *bad outcomes*.

In truth, it is equally important to identify the root causes behind success. What makes a customer actively loyal? What turns them into an advocate? From there, the company can cultivate the right behaviors, craft the right messaging, and develop the best products.



“It’s important to measure for both the positive and the negative. This includes identifying the things that delight your customers, from product features and capabilities to corporate policies and positioning. Alternatively, this could include identifying the things that your competitors do better in comparison to you that your customers are looking for in your products.” - **Scott Kendrick, CallMiner**

By focusing only on negative results, brands considerably limit their potential for excellence. They may not be actively driving customers away, but they are not creating a line of defense in the event a better, more cost-effective, more exciting competitor comes along. More importantly, they are not creating a hook to *win* customers who are either new to the market or currently working with a competitive organization.

They also stifle the innovation process, as they create a culture of sustaining the status quo rather than continuously improving and adding value.

Three Dimensions of Experience Management



Experience management involves looking beyond customer interactions. It is a call to consider how all facets of the end-to-end experience come together to drive customer satisfaction, brand cachet, and business success.

An effective experience management framework evaluates – and leverages – the following three dimensions of intelligence.

Customer Intelligence

As a business' success hinges on its ability to deliver for and connect with customers, keen insight into customer preferences, behaviors, intentions, and sentiments is essential.

When analyzing customer data, it is important to look beyond individual transactions and conversations. Truly effective intelligence not only evaluates the end-to-end journey but provides a real-time, actionable look at the health of specific customer relationships. It reveals who is at risk of churning, who might be willing to buy more, who is likely to advocate for the brand, and whose preferences and behaviors are evolving.

With access to this insight, stakeholders will be able to better personalize individual customer interactions while optimizing the overall journey for all customers. The latter may include removing inefficiencies from different phases of the journey, redesigning self-service experiences, and training agents for likely escalations or volume surges.

Product Intelligence

Many facets of the customer journey, from the efficacy of marketing messages, to the need for customer support, to the likelihood of renewals and upgrades, are driven by the quality of the product – and the experience purchasing and using it.

As a result, an experience management framework places a considerable emphasis on product intelligence. Savvy brands review which features are most and least popular, which pricing and marketing trends are taking off in the greater market, and which quality issues are thwarting success. Product intelligence analysis also pays attention to pre-sale (customer education, purchasing experiences, order fulfillment) and post-sale (warranty issues, return processes, service costs) experiences to gain a 360-degree perspective of what it means to buy one of the brand's products.

With access to this intelligence, companies are in position to spur more effective product innovation and more resonant marketing. They are also able to advise sales teams on factors most likely to drive conversions, while preparing customer and technical support teams for the types of issues they are most likely to encounter.



“Many customers are looking for returns or replacements because they simply aren’t happy with the product or service. If you can understand why, you can take those insights and feed them back to product teams, so they can make better decisions about how to prioritize product updates or even introduce net-new products. This helps you stay ahead of customer demands and expectations.” - **Scott Kendrick, CallMiner**

Brand Intelligence

More than 90% of consumers say that single experiences with digital channels or live agents impact their perception of the entire brand. Over 97% of companies acknowledge that brand reputation plays a role in attracting customers, with 58% calling it an *essential* factor.

Collectively, the statistics reveal two things: experiences have a considerable impact on brand reputation, and brand reputation in turn has a considerable impact on customers’ willingness to engage.

Given the undeniable importance of reputation, astute companies prioritize brand intelligence within their experience management frameworks. By paying careful attention to how they – and their competitors – are being perceived within the market, they can rework marketing messages, identify new opportunities, pre-empt emerging competitive threats, and prepare for the contact volume associated with brand crises (or victories).

Brand intelligence is becoming particularly important in today’s climate, due to the rise of identity marketing and growing accessibility of social media commentary.

BRANDING

- IDENTITY
- LOGO
- DESIGN
- STRATEGY
- MARKETING



With companies increasingly willing to take stances on polarizing political issues, they have a greater need to understand how their views align with their target audience – and what costs they may endure if there is a misalignment.

The increasing possibility of a service mishap or employee controversy going viral on social media, moreover, means brands have to not only monitor for potential blowback but assess whether the controversy will have a business impact.



“By collecting and analyzing a range of customer data points, from contact center conversations to social media mentions, you can more effectively identify early warning signs that you may have a brand crisis brewing and how to get ahead of it. Take for example, the music and audio platform that recently faced mounting public pressure to remove a controversial podcast host. While the ‘noise’ was real, with the right conversation intelligence and analytics solution in place, it’s possible they could have determined whether that crisis was actually causing customers to churn. How many customers cited this issue when they canceled their monthly subscription? This deep understanding helps organizations better identify and respond to crises.”

- Scott Kendrick, CallMiner

Turning Intelligence Into Better Experiences

Committing to an experience management framework means nothing if a business does not leverage its customer, product, and brand intelligence to drive better customer journeys, employee behaviors, and operational performance.

By adhering to the following recommendations, brands can harness the dual power of innovative technology and customer-centric strategy to elevate their experiences.

Capture Analytics From The Entire Journey

The days of relying on static survey responses from a small sample of customers in one or two channels are over. Thanks to artificial intelligence-driven analytics solutions, organizations can capture actionable intelligence from every phase of the journey.

It is important to distinguish what “every phase of the journey” means in this context. Whereas thought leaders once trumpeted the importance of “listening to every interaction in every channel,” the experience management framework requires businesses to go even deeper. Beyond assessing 100% of direct customer interactions, standout companies will analyze all relevant customer behaviors, sentiments, and marketplace activity.

Leading solutions are capable of empowering this view, helping companies glean insights from how customers react to outbound marketing messages, how they navigate company websites and mobile applications, and what they say about the brand and its competitors on social media. Successful brands also monitor how competitors are serving and communicating with their own customers to best identify potential marketplace gaps, threats, and opportunities.

Unify and Democratize Actionable Intelligence

Capturing all data is for naught if brands cannot identify the actionable insights and then seamlessly communicate the relevant intelligence to all stakeholders.

Indeed, the experience management framework requires a mechanism for unifying, structuring, and analyzing all insights in a singular platform. Harnessing the computing power of AI, these platforms can quickly uncover the pain points, trends, behaviors, and sentiments that can inform strategy both inside the contact center and throughout the entire business.

The entire business will be able to act, notably, because the best platforms and strategies emphasize data democratization. Instead of situating the data within a single team and single platform, the right solution will communicate uniquely relevant information to the exact stakeholders who need it.



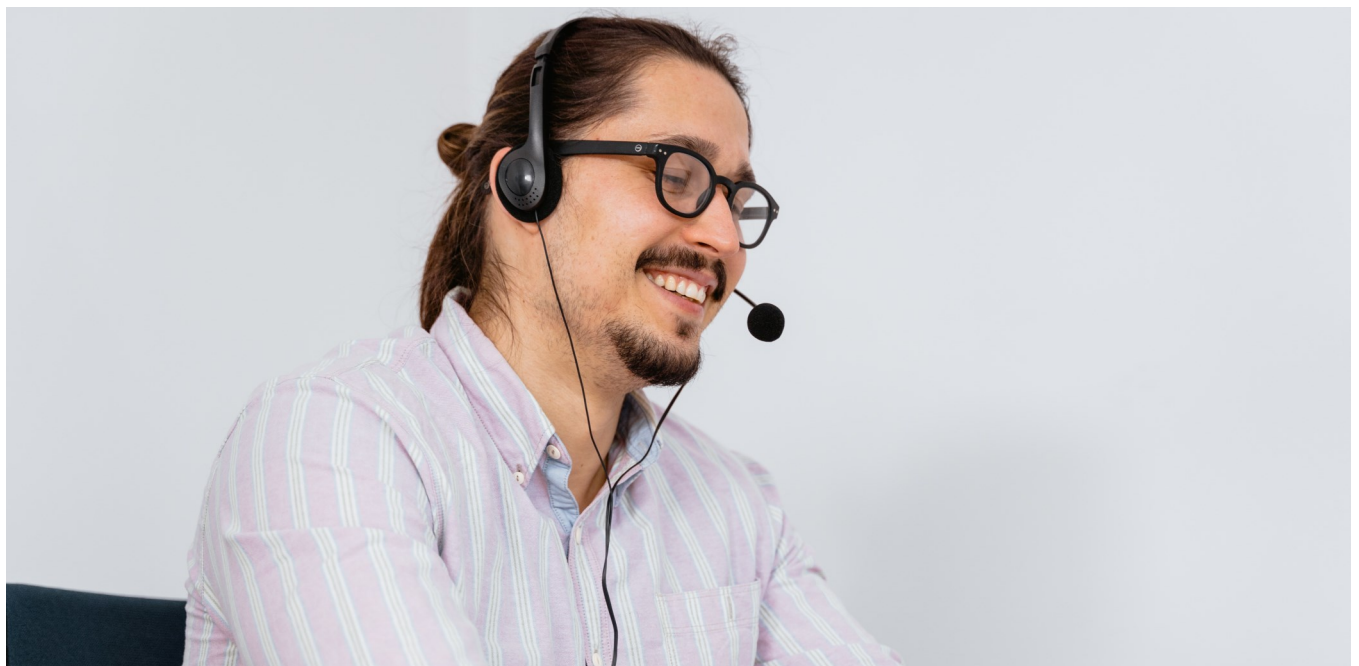
“When you can broadly distribute insights across your enterprise – some people call it pervasive business intelligence or data democratization – you can get the right insights to the right departments and close the feedback loop. For example, if insights are uncovered around how customers are reacting to a particular marketing campaign or messaging, that can be routed back to marketing leaders to make changes as appropriate.” - **Scott Kendrick, CallMiner**

A pricing mistake in a weekly circular, for example, will affect teams differently. Sales will have to prepare for an influx of people trying to take advantage of the “amazing deal” and decide if it wants to honor the price. Service will have to field questions from customers wondering if the deal is accurate – and complaints if the brand chooses not to honor the unintentional discount. Marketing will have to determine how to issue a correction about the issue, while dealing with potential posts – and backlash – about the issue on deal websites and social networks.

Prioritize Sentiment in the Era of Personalization

By jointly analyzing customer, product, and brand intelligence, companies do not simply gain a clearer window into what is happening within their experiences. They also learn how customers *feel* about every facet of their journey.

The best brands focus intently on this sentiment data, using it to simultaneously identify the pain points that are most urgent and the solutions that are most likely to spur favorable customer behaviors. They can also identify potential churn or complaint risks, since today’s customers are more likely than ever to gravitate toward brands that prioritize a personal connection – and condemn brands that do not.





“Brand sentiment and fidelity are often precursors for why a customer decides to give loyalty to a company or why they might decide to take their business elsewhere. Organizations often struggle with creating brand consistency and understanding cross-functionally, which more often than not, trickles down to how the customer perceives the brand.” - **Scott Kendrick, CallMiner**

Measurement difficulties have historically prevented companies from incorporating sentiment into their scorecards and sentiments, but modern analytics technology makes it easy to not only identify sentiment throughout the journey but trace the exact keywords, events, or behaviors that make a customer more or less happy and, in turn, more or less loyal.



“Organizations can track sentiment associated with specific topics. Based on a sample of customers churned, you can identify common behaviors across interaction channels and build models to track and flag indicators of churn. Of course, this is important for individual churn and customer saves, but you can also identify more systemic issues, to tackle churn at scale. You can identify the root cause of customer churn and can quantify and prioritize the issues you want to fix.” - **Scott Kendrick, CallMiner**

Identify and Manage Against the Most Valuable Outcomes

In theory, the ability to measure all facets of the end-to-end journey – including customer *sentiment* within that journey – is an immensely positive development. It ensures businesses can eliminate the guesswork from experience design while empowering individual teams to make the most relevant and resonant contributions possible.

In practice, the abundance of data does introduce a new risk: the possibility of losing perspective.

The best brands actively avoid this risk by prioritizing their focus on the most essential business, operational, employee experience, or customer experience outcomes.

Although they maintain full awareness of specific customer complaints, aggressive competitor marketing campaigns, or viral social moments, they prioritize their effort and action on those that directly contribute to results.

Not simply useful for helping companies determine which crises are worth addressing, the results-driven perspective also ensures they identify silent changes that are having a big impact on business.

A medical practice’s decision to reduce weekend office hours may not generate the same viral social media attention as a public gaffe, but it could have a dramatically negative impact on customer happiness and long-term business. A practice that chased “buzz” over “outcomes” would miss this important finding, and therefore fail to take the necessary action to preserve customer loyalty and revenue.

About the Author



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Brian Cantor is the principal analyst and director for CCW Digital, the global online community and research hub for customer contact professionals. In his role, Brian leads the customer experience, contact center, technology and employee engagement research initiatives that drive CCW Digital's complete portfolio of content.

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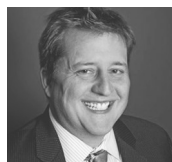


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