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DEFINING BRANDS

Are you customer- obsessed?

Defining customer experiences
for future stores, by Kevin Gill.

Distinctive customer experiences drive growth.

To really stand out brands need to prove that they know and understand their customers by creating an experience for them that consistently meets their expectations at every touchpoint. The challenge is that these expectations are changing all the time. Keeping pace with them can only happen if brands are truly customer-obsessed.

What a brand does defines who it is in the eyes of its customers. The customer experience is a manifestation of this. Every single interaction between brand and customer must work seamlessly and harmoniously to show clearly: this is why you should shop with us.

According to [Deloitte's](#) research, brands that deliver these kinds of differentiated experiences are more successful than those that don't, delivering a CAGR of 18.9% in the five-year period to 2016. Optimising the customer experience is now the defining challenge for brands. Forrester predicts that more than one-third of businesses will restructure to shift to customer-obsessed operations by the end of this year.

The big question for many of them will be how? How can brands and retailers become customer obsessed and build distinctive experiences? We've harnessed the best of lean and design thinking to create Start's Four Lean CX Lessons, to help brands become customer-centric and design better customer experiences as a result.

This is the short read

Got more time?

Get the FULL REPORT, [Do Less Deliver More; How True Customer Centricity Defines Better Customer Experiences](#), here and get your own copy of Start's Experience Design Delivery Framework to start planning your own innovation process.

Lean, meet **design thinking.**

We were introduced to Lean and how its principles translate to help deliver brilliant customer experiences in our last piece, Start Being Lean. Here we show how Lean and Design Thinking meet to deliver better customer experience design.

Although they may have divergent roots, crucially, Lean and Design Thinking share an end-game: to create more value for customers. And both require cultural transformation to do it.

Lean's systematic approach to continuous improvement and Design Thinking's unerring focus on the customer is a perfect combination of tools and approach to facilitate this culture-change.

Our four lean **CX lessons outline:**

- How to keep pace with today's more complex and dynamic consumers;
- How no customer moment is too small to make a connection with customers;
- Why Lean's principle of continuous improvement is the mantra for modern brands;
- How constant collaboration can drive customer-centricity and define better customer experiences.

01.

Design for the many not 'the one'.

The days of stereotyping a single, 'target' customer, are over. Simplistic socio-demographics are being replaced by a more sophisticated picture of typical and non-typical shoppers, based on their motivations, goals, behaviours and frustrations.

Lean CX tools and techniques, such as Voice of the Customer and Persona Creation, make this possible. Combined with advanced analytics, brands can build detailed understanding of a range of consumer behaviour.

Download our [Experience Design Delivery Framework Template](#) to see how these tools work as part of the innovation process.

02.

Define each customer moment.

Each micro-moment of a customer journey is rich with opportunity; a chance for customer and brand to meet and connect in a meaningful way. The challenge is to make sure these touchpoints, no matter how small, meet the needs and expectations of profiled customers.

Optimised with the right content these momentary interactions can help an experience make sense for customers. It's also a chance to think about the power of emotion. Touchpoints can be designed to elicit certain emotions – joy, pride, confidence – to motivate consumers.

Experience mapping is an important part of Start's Experience Design Delivery Framework; a technique used by leaners and customer experience designers to find these opportunities.

03.

Continuously Improve Customers' Journeys.

Nurturing a culture of continuous improvement is at the heart of lean theory. It's crucial for today's brands if they are to keep pace with consumers' constantly changing needs and expectations. What is delightful now, within an experience, will tomorrow be an expected part of what you offer.

Continuous testing, research and feedback are the lifeblood of successful customer experience design. Amazon takes four out of the top spots in Webloyalty's Digital Retail Innovations Report 2017 because it's constantly evolving and improving the customer journey with innovations like Amazon Dash and Echo.

04.

Collaborate constantly to build loyalty.

The best customer experiences are truly collaborative – it's how they started life and how they continue to live and breathe. A customer experience can power active collaboration.

It's about looking for opportunities in the customer journey to have a two-way conversation and inspiring people to have their say in how products and services are developed. The result of successful collaboration is trust and loyalty between customer and brand.

Start being **customer-centric.**

Great experiences are built around knowing, understanding and involving your customers. It's the only way to differentiate and stay relevant. Playing a meaningful role in people's lives – through your customer experience - will mean they will love your brand more.

Start's Experience Design Delivery Framework has helped us deliver defining experiences for Barclays, Sephora and Tesco. Get your free [Delivery Framework here](#) and start thinking how your brand can be more customer obsessed.

Enjoyed the short version and want to know more?

Download the longer read here.

Watch out for the next in Start's series on defining customer experiences for future stores:

Finders, Keepers. Find the value in your customer experience and keep your customers coming back.

Keep in touch.

Kevin Gill

UK MCEO
(+44) 0000 000 0000
kevin.gill@startdesign.com

.start London

Unit 4.01 Tea Building
56 Shoreditch High Street
London E1 6JJ
T: +44 (0) 20 7269 0101E:
info-uk@startdesign.com

.start Manchester

3 Cobourg Street,
Manchester
M1 3GY
T: +44 (0)161 228 3066
E: info-me@startdesign.com

.start Dubai

Suite 1002,
Arenco Tower,
Media City,
PO Box 28710, Dubai, U.A.E
T: +971 (0) 44508494
E: info-uk@startdesign.com