Account Experience

How to Monetize Accounts, Grow Revenue and Deliver Exceptional Experiences in the B2B Economy

Dorrell | Frazier | Luck

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CustomerGauge

Account Experience: How to Monetize Accounts, Grow Revenue and Deliver Exceptional Experiences in the B2B Economy
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Foreword

I was a man on a mission.

In 2007, my co-founder Camilla Scholten and I started what would become CustomerGauge. Our purpose? To create a system that helped companies improve their customer retention.

Years previously, we began to see how churn was affecting businesses of all shapes and sizes—and were bewildered by the wasted resources companies were using to acquire new customers, only to lose them by not looking after retention (the classic "leaky bucket" analogy). Churn was becoming a company killer, and we wanted to solve it.

That year, with the help of our very first employee, Roy, we began developing CustomerGauge from our kitchen table—a system that could automate retention activities, grounded in Fred Reichheld's industry standard metric, the Net Promoter Score®. With this platform, we were able to provide visibility and insights into the customer experience for our clients.

Early on, we started to conduct our own Net Promoter surveys to ensure we maintained exceptional CX and our target net retention rate. What quickly excited us, soon humbled us.

The Classic "Happy Ears" Problem

In the first initial surveys, all signs pointed to success. Our clients seemed thrilled with the experiences we were providing and were thoroughly engaged. We had:

- An above average response rate at more than 30%
- We were closing the loop on about 80% of cases
- And our Net Promoter Score was in the 60's

We thought our program was a shining beacon of excellence that we could share with our clients. **But…then we lost an account. And then another**.

This was a tough pill to swallow. How was this possible, when we had such a great Net Promoter program? When our customers were so engaged?

So, three years ago we took a step back and started to assess our program strategy. Upon closer inspection, it turned out that our high score and response rate were a result of responses from our smallest, yet most engaged accounts.

We had been distracted with the flow of feedback, and ignored gathering responses from our high-value, more demanding, enterprise accounts. Looking at our entire client base, our total coverage was, honestly, quite poor.

Our perception had been skewed by a high score that was not representative of the majority of our account revenue. The risk for churn from our enterprise accounts suddenly became very real. **This was our wake up call**.

As a management team, we decided to take action. We stack-ranked our accounts by total revenue and discovered something even more shocking—our top 20 accounts had little to no responses and very low engagement. The survey responses we were receiving turned out to be predominantly low-level contacts, with little or no influence on any buying decisions.

As we started to dig into this revenue-centric approach to Net Promoter®, we wondered if we were the only B2B company experiencing these issues.

Turns out, we weren't. In 2016, we ran our first NPS® benchmark industry surveys and discovered we were, in fact, not alone. Companies ranging from SMBs to global enterprises with household names were experiencing the exact same problems—many of them while utilizing the Net Promoter Score.

Our mission was then clear—enhance the Net Promoter System® by prioritizing account revenue and growth. We termed this new methodology **Monetized Net Promoter®**.

Since then we have been running a conference series called "Monetize!" which has attracted thousands of attendees all over the world. The results our clients have experienced by implementing this new methodology with our accompanying software has changed the value proposition of Net Promoter in B2B businesses. As a result, we continued onboarding new enterprise clients at a steady clip.

Part of any effective Net Promoter program is not just listening to feedback, but acting on that feedback. Soon our customers' voices were clear…they needed learning capabilities, churn prediction, and more robust account-based views. When 80% of your promoters are asking for the same thing, you listen.

So we started developing technical functionality around account activities like responses, comments, website visits, support tickets, etc. Integrations with ERP systems were added, along with additional monetization capabilities for clients to slice and dice accounts based on revenue, size, and more.

From there, we developed a hierarchy feature that enabled companies to survey decision-makers at every level of the organization, and avoid making the same mistakes we made. We then built machine-learning algorithms that helped predict churn and showed opportunities for up-sells. Finally, we created a certification series to better educate the market on how to employ CX best practice methodologies.

Avoiding the Software that Dr. Frankenstein Built

Soon after launching these features to the market, something quickly became clear: Traditional B2B companies were being underserved by the current CX software marketplace.

We began hearing more and more "horror stories" from B2B prospects about their current CX environments—from programs made up of small survey tools and Excel sheets to completely manual systems using marketing automation software. Our team coined the phrase "Frankenstein's Solution" to identify these cases—a nod to the famous, ghastly monster of literature and the new CX battleground.

In one case, there was almost a sense of disbelief from a contact that they wouldn't have to manually export, run two day's worth of analysis, and then create PowerPoints for senior management to get their results anymore. We had it all in one platform, in real-time. It was revelation for them.

And us. CustomerGauge had gone far beyond simply Net Promoter software. And had a mid-life crisis of sorts in the process. So we began asking: What market are we in? How can we better position ourselves so companies in need can find us?

We knew the bulk of **Customer Experience** tools on the market tackled B2C use cases, with little to no account- or revenue-based analytics/functionality. Additionally, we were also geared towards global B2B enterprises. On the other hand, newly developed Customer Success tools were focused on product usage, specifically functionality around product onboarding, product usage, product adoption, etc. This was also not an ideal fit. While we care about product feedback and usage, account monetization and retention is in our DNA.

We had to create something entirely new to assist this B2B gap in the market. And, we're happy to say, you're holding that new rulebook in your hands now.

We call it **Account Experience™**. And it's going to change the B2B CX landscape as you know it.

Adam Dorrell
CEO & Co-Founder, CustomerGauge

1

The State of Customer Experience & the Rise of Account Experience

As frequently happens, what begins as a buzzword inevitably becomes part of an industry's vernacular. Such was the case with the 2010 "cloud" obsession—a simple, but somewhat seemingly technical term. When Dropbox, a star of the cloud era, came onto the scene, they struggled with how to turn what was a simple startup concept to us today into something consumers back then could easily understand.

"We're definitely allergic to a lot of the technical terms. Anything with the word sync in it, or cloud, or drive–it sounds too much like a utility, and you just wouldn't expect a great company to have a word like drive in it. It doesn't sound right."

- Drew Houston, Dropbox Co-Founder[1]

Their solution? Focus on the benefits: Simplify your life.

Where Dropbox found their buzzword label too technical, other industries have struggled with quite the opposite. In the past and even today, marketers have worked tirelessly to distinguish themselves from their mislabel of "fluff, pomp and circumstance," into one of the primary revenue funnels of an organization. Inbound marketing, account-based marketing, etc., have paved new fields that turn hard-hitting marketing strategies into revenue-generating assets.

1 Carr, Austin. "Why Dropbox Avoids Industry Buzzwords Like 'The Cloud.'" *Fast Company*, Fast Company, 30 July 2012, www.fastcompany.com/1749693/why-dropbox-avoids-industry-buzzwords-cloud.

In marketing, customer experience (CX) found its own footing. The CX movement itself was an off-shoot of the research-based marketing boom of post-WWII.

However, it wouldn't be until the early 2000's before the "customer experience movement" would shift beyond its post-purchase research intent and into the realm of customer value management[2]. During this time, companies no longer saw acquisitions as the end point of profitability, but the beginning of new opportunities.

One of the defining moments was in 2003, when Fred Reichheld introduced what would quickly bring the CX market into the mainstream: the Net Promoter Score (NPS).

As the American Marketing Association[2] notes: "While others have demonstrated the link between customer experience and business outcomes, none did so as eloquently as NPS."

Today, new software and tools are available to help companies manage the customer lifecycle. And while technology has made it easier to connect with customers than ever before, measuring and monetizing experiences within these growing channels has become that much more complex.

Now this complexity finds the CX movement at another crossroads. **Where B2C and B2B companies could previously rely on the same CX rulebook, the complexities of these industries call for new guidelines specific to their business environments.**

As consumers became more accustomed to the personalization and convenience that B2C offers, more has been demanded of B2B companies to match this type of experience. The trouble? Understanding how to apply B2C concepts of personalization and convenience to the multi-contact experience of a B2B client base.

At the same time, how B2B enterprises market, sell and service clients has transitioned as well. The rise of account-based marketing (ABM) and account-based sales (ABS) have turned these traditional growth funnels on their heads,

2 American Marketing Association. "A Brief History of Customer Experience." https://www.ama.org/publications/MarketingNews/Pages/a-brief-history-of-customer-experience.aspx.

simply by focusing on target accounts first. And now, with a greater demand on modernizing CX practices and an increased focus on account growth, B2B enterprises are also looking to apply the same account-based success model of their marketing and sales funnels to the emerging "customer experience growth funnel."

Plainly put: the CX movement is not meeting the specific needs of the B2B economy. B2C CX management tools fall short in addressing the clear complexities of the multi-contact experiences in a B2B world. New guidelines need to be written to address this market, and move beyond the restraints of a simple buzzword.

In this chapter, we'll discuss how customer experience evolved from soft benefits, left often to feel-good PR campaigns, to hard metrics that live side-by-side next to vital performance KPIs.

We then examine the challenges of defining and improving B2C, "single contact experiences" vs. B2B, "multi-contact experiences," and how a new market has surfaced to address the challenges of the account-focused enterprise.

The Evolution of CX from a Soft to Hard Metric

Following the economic boom of post-WWII[2], the customer experience movement found its legs as part of the emerging market research industry, reserved for improving post-purchase experiences.

Then, in the late 90's, two authors, Joseph Pine and James Gilmore, introduced the economic concept of the "experience economy," in their 1998 Harvard Business Review article, Welcome to the Experience Economy. These two economists stated that consumers are now more willing to invest in better experiences like they do services and products than ever before:

"From now on, leading-edge companies—whether they sell to consumers or businesses—will find that the next competitive battleground lies in staging experiences."

– HBR, Welcome to the Experience Economy

It wouldn't be until the early 2000's when customer experience insights were taken out of the hands of analyst and into the hands of key operational decision-makers, to fully realize the vision Gilmore and Pine first documented.

With growing access to the internet and mounting competition, businesses could no longer rely on acquisitions as the primary form of growth. New research[3] found that retention played just as vital a role in a company's long-term growth as acquisitions.

This retention revolution led to the inception of the modern CX metrics of today: Customer Satisfaction Score (CSAT), Customer Effort Score (CES) and customer lifetime value (CLV). CX was no longer about just understanding the customer experience, but measuring satisfaction, effort and loyalty among customers to maximize CLV.

This focus on CLV helped legitimize CX initiatives within organizations, demanding the creation of whole departments and the implementation of new tools dedicated to improving experiences for customers and boosting retention. Where market research looked to passively understand experiences after the fact, customer experience was now looking to both understand AND improve experiences—with immediacy.

This transition to a more proactive model changed consumer expectations today as well. In a recent survey conducted by PwC[4], 73% of consumers stated that a positive customer experience was a key driver for their continued brand loyalty.

Moreover, this same research found that consumers who do have a positive customer experience tend to spend 16% more on products and services. Research like PwC's shows that not only can customer experience predict customer retention, but the possible likelihood for future purchases.

Much of the advances in the customer experience space, however, have been developed primarily in the B2C marketplace. Because of this, many of the CX management software tools and best practices revolve around an individual consumer, without consideration to the multi-contact and touch point complexity of the B2B "Decision-Making Unit" customer experience.

But just how different can managing B2C vs. B2B customer experiences be?

3 Reichheld, Frederick F. "The One Number You Need to Grow." Harvard Business Review, Harvard Business Review, Dec. 2003, hbr.org/2003/12/the-one-number-you-need-to-grow.

4 Long, Brittnee. "Consumers Would Pay up to 16% More for Better Customer Experience, Say Companies Have Lost the Human Touch, According to PwC Survey." *PwC*, PwC, 28 Mar. 2018, www.pwc.com/us/en/press-releases/2018/experience-is-everything-heres-how-to-get-it-right.html.

The Forked Road: B2C vs. B2B Customer Experience

B2B leaders understand the importance a great customer experience has on their bottom line and competitive differentiation. In fact, according to a survey and report conducted by Accenture[5], 90% of B2B leaders "already believe that customer experience is crucial to their companies' business priorities." However, 72%[6] of these B2B leaders don't believe they have an influence on the direction of their organization's CX.

And these aren't just leaders in your typical Customer Experience and Customer Success departments. Top line CEOs are also becoming cognizant of the impact that an effective CX strategy can have on their bottom line. In their report, The CEO View of CX[7], researchers at Walker found that B2B companies who were more successful at CX within their organizations forecasted 20% or greater growth than B2B companies that lacked an effective CX strategy.

In spite of these powerful findings, many B2B leaders and CX champions struggle to obtain the insights they need to enact a successful CX program. **So, what sets B2B vs. B2C experiences apart? And why are B2B organizations struggling to improve these experiences?**

Generally speaking, B2B customers are demanding similar tactics when it comes to their customer experience as B2C. In fact, in the previously mentioned Accenture report[5], the top three business priorities that B2B leaders pinpointed are primarily CX focused: personalization, convenience and visibility.

In this report, 50%[5] of leaders acknowledged that providing an omni-channel customer experience was vital to their strategy towards personalization and convenience. And, considering this same research[5] found that in 2017, 33% of customers churned due to a lack of personalization, it seems this focus is well-founded.

5 Walker, Brian. "On the Verge: B2B Digital Commerce Is at an Inflection Point." *Accenture*, Accenture Interactive, 2018, www.accenture.com/t20180522T025432Z__w__/us-en/_acnmedia/PDF-78/Accenture-Verge-B2B-Digital-Commerce.pdf.

6 Angelos, Jason, et al. "Better 2 Best: A New Focus on B2B CX Spurs Growth." *Accenture*, Accenture Interactive, 2017, www.accenture.com/t20171221T063327Z__w__/us-en/_acnmedia/PDF-53/Accenture-Strategy-B2B-CX-Anthem-POV.pdf.

7 "The CEO View of CX: What Customer Experience Professionals Must Do To Be Relevant to the C-Suite." *Walker*, 2016, www.walkerinfo.com/docs/WALKER-CEO-View-CX.pdf.

However, many B2B organizations struggle to understand how to incorporate behavioral data, satisfaction and CRM data into a clear view of their customer base due to a sheer lack of visibility into the customer journey. This lack of visibility extends to one of the issues that 40% of B2B leaders face[5]: no 360-degree view of the customer.

73% of consumers stated that a positive customer experience was a key driver for their continued brand loyalty.

Another added layer of friction: the vast ecosystems of B2B sales partners that live within some enterprise journeys. Setting expectations and procedures for CX practices across sales partners can be difficult. Moreover, your own B2B organization, if not meeting efficient customer-centric standards, may be dismissed from potential partnerships.

The B2B Customer Journey Difference

There are a number of considerations to take when approaching the B2B customer journey. Here, we list a few:

- **B2B customer journeys are more complex due to the multiple journeys per persona**

  Due to the multiple personas within a B2B customer journey, there is added complexity when dealing with a B2B relationship. For instance, a CEO does not have the same journey as an end user. Therefore, in B2B you typically have to consider multiple personas (i.e., Decision Making Unit), all while also defining your 'overall' customer journey. This also means that experiences call for greater customization, meaning the human element and automation are necessary to get the job done.

  Further, the complexity of these journeys mean that companies may struggle to map different pathways and find solutions for addressing customers at each channel. This could explain why some companies struggle to modernize their journeys at the rate of their

B2C counterparts, as many CX tools fail to provide the necessary hierarchy and detailed view of this kind of complex journey.

- **B2B customer journeys are more relationship-rich**

  Outside of the Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) or subscription context, vendor to client relationships are often established on a long-term basis within B2B. B2C relationships are often transactional in nature. B2B relationships can be contractual or on a monthly basis (subscription), and require on-going support.

  In addition, some companies may even have customers work with them side-by-side to develop new products and solutions. Because of this, relationship managers, which we'll discuss further down in this chapter, are vital to ensure retention and on-going account management.

- **Churn has greater consequence**

  Can you afford to lose a million dollar account? All customers are valuable, but not all hold the same value: This statement holds a lot of weight when it comes to B2B experiences, where customers could be worth well into the millions. Often, it's this very fear that causes companies to consider investing in customer experience. Within a B2C context, companies find it easier to compensate churn with acquisition.

While some similarities lie in the management of CX programs across B2B and B2C, the differences exist in core elements of the program:

- **Feedback management, not metrics, need to change**
  Some challengers may claim that metrics like NPS don't work as well in B2B environments. Arguments maintain B2B contacts might be more biased in scoring or that sample sizes aren't sufficient within NPS B2B surveys. However, this simply isn't true. What remains important in a B2B feedback program is WHO is surveyed and measuring the overall

level of engagement (as important as the actual score and feedback). In a B2B feedback program, who you survey should always be determined by those contacts who impact future buying decisions. We discuss more about surveying in Chapter 4, Account Sentiment.

- **Closing the loop in more complex relationships changes the firefighting playbook**
  Within a B2B closed loop program, there are two ways to close the loop: with respondents and accounts. Generally for transactional surveys, closing the loop with respondents is the most efficient. For accounts, there are multiple contacts to factor in. We'll dive into account experience best practices for closing the loop with both respondents and accounts in Chapter 4.
- **Monetization takes on a larger meaning**
  Prioritization, driver analysis, predictive churn, etc.—monetization is a core part of an account-based experience program. In B2C companies, monetization often lends itself to referral programs/loyalty programs. Review programs also play a unique role in B2C monetization—i.e., encouraging reviews can lead to more business. However, monetize features are not integrated into B2C CX tools, which means much of these monetize practices happen outside a standard system. These disparate systems require additional integrations to provide this type of monetization.

  In a B2B environment, monetization is in every facet of the B2B customer experience. In Chapter 4 & 5 of this book, we look at how monetization comes into play within account feedback management and intelligence.

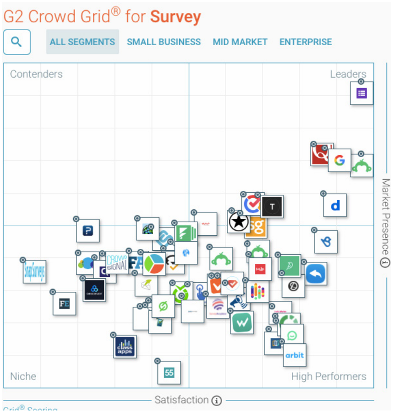
Within a B2B environment, the concept of experience takes on a new meaning: Whereas a B2C organization handles and manages the experiences of mostly single contacts, B2B must grapple with the consideration of both individual and collective experiences. This brings us to our next point…

Why B2C CX Tools Won't Cut It Anymore For B2B

When it comes to tailored CX solutions, the B2B market has been grossly underserved. Many of the tools that have been developed for experience management focus largely on B2C consumer brands. And while these CX tools can help serve basic functions within a Voice of the Customer (VoC) program, they miss the mark when it comes to managing multi-contact relationships, channel complexity, and monetization for retention growth.

The B2B customer journey changes the concept of "customer" in the traditional sense, as these organizations must consider and juggle multiple relationships.

Many B2B companies have run out of options—they onboard a simple survey or B2C CX tool and end up in a massive data exercise to simply extract meaningful insights (if they're lucky). These Frankenstein-like, disparate solutions are costly to maintain, difficult to operate and nearly impossible to scale.



Survey Platforms

Enterprise Feedback Management

The CX market now stands at a branching milestone, where the need to differentiate contact-native vs. account-native experiences must be addressed. In this section, we introduce a new approach to the B2B customer experience—the account experience. But first, we'll look at why B2B CX programs fail, and then how this failure can be addressed with account-native methodologies.

Why B2B CX Programs Fail

Because B2B CX is not widely serviced in the marketplace, few best practices have been provided to guide companies in their CX program rollouts. This lack of guidance can be attributed to why some B2B companies struggle to manage large-scale CX programs. Generally, there are two areas that program failure can be attributed to, and often, one impacts the other: internal misalignment and a lack of technical and operational support.

Internal Misalignment

Lacking an internal strategy and a guiding coalition of cross-departmental support can stall almost any CX program.

The points described below are a few of the internal issues that B2B companies struggle with in a CX program rollout:

- **A change in mindset—shifting service-centric to customer-centric**
  According to Gartner, 89% of companies expect to compete mostly on the basis of customer experience, a number that was only 36% in 2012. It's clear, therefore, that customer-centricity is on the rise. However, many companies are, by nature, product or service-centric, as they started with an idea of building a newer, better product or service than the market currently offers. In their early life, their focus was to sell this product or service, then improve it to gain a foothold with existing customers or to widen the market reach. This evolution has likely turned the company into an organization centered around products and focused on creating new products or services.

  Customer-centric companies see customer success as their end goal and reward employees accordingly. Sales people are not paid by their ability to sell, but by their ability to understand customer needs and to find a solution to fill it. Where product-centric companies pay out the sales bonus after a sale, customer-centric companies pay out sales bonuses once the solution has been established, an agreed set of benefits have been reached and the customer is happy. We'll talk more about how satisfaction metrics, more specifically, Monetized Net Promoter, comes into play in the pursuit of customer-centricity.

- **No organizational buy-in/sense of ownership**
  We've all had it happen: You call up a vendor looking for assistance, and you're shuffled between six different people in three different departments looking for an answer to a question that should be…simple. Why? Because some organizations, especially large B2B enterprises, struggle with ownership and visibility. We call these situations "hand-offs," and they are inefficient and negatively impact CX.

  Without the organizational buy-in of key stakeholders within a company, B2B or B2C CX programs are destined to fail. From C-Suite to management to frontline account managers, unless ownership is felt at every level of an organization, an experience program will fail. Program champions should address the needs and expectations of relevant parties within their company and work to breakdown the silos.

  Lacking sense of ownership towards a CX program can have further trickle-down effects:

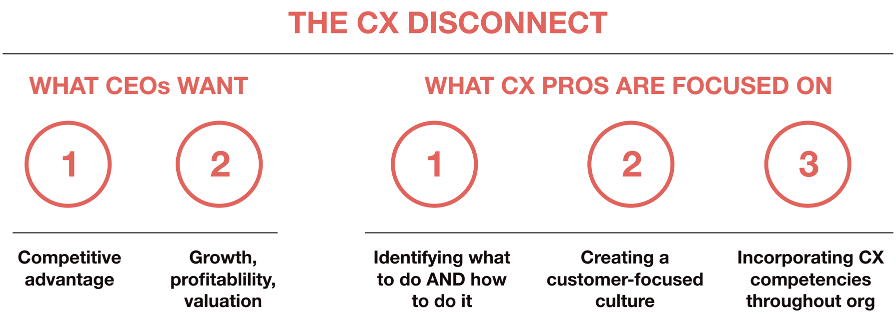
  - Most changes within an organization require a sense of urgency. If cross-department ownership of the customer experience is not felt, this will often stall initiatives and progress.

– Vital data that contributes to an action-based CX program can be even more guarded. When a CX program is owned by a single department, it will quickly lose the funding and support for the necessary innovations needed to impact the bottom line. For example, if finance or sales is not brought to the table for a CX discussion, then information such as revenue data could be more difficult to integrate with satisfaction data.

And these are just a few examples!

In the previously mentioned report from Walker[7], 97% of B2B CX professional said that their CX program had "some degree of" impact on their company's bottom line. However, only 22% indicated that their organization leveraged CX data very effectively. This correlates with a number of strategic failures organizations have faced due to ownership of a CX program living in one single department.

- **Business outcomes don't align with C-Suite**
  A large portion of B2B CX initiatives experience friction because of the disconnect between the C-Suite and CX professionals. The Walker study found that this "CX disconnect" had a massive impact on the perception of a CX program's success. As shown in the illustration below, CEOs are primarily concerned with how CX creates a competitive advantage and long-term profitability. CX professionals, on the other hand, are looking at operational aspects of action, culture and best practices. When they are unable to get necessary actions, CX professionals will default to a "research only mode."



Credit: Walker

A good account experience model and tool should address both the economic and operational needs of a B2B CX program to account for these different stakeholders.

Lack of Technical and Operational Support

Technology has revolutionized the customer experience and given consumers the power to connect and interact with companies more than ever before. This is true for both B2B and B2C companies. But, whereas B2C companies can focus on single contacts, B2B must not only consider complex customer journeys, but the complex journeys of multiple contacts, depending on the size of the company.

Managing CX program analysis via spreadsheets is like jumping a decade back in time. Such a practice is no longer an option for the modern B2B organization. In a world of instant feedback, if you're not working in real-time, you're behind. Nor can a B2C-oriented CX tool that focuses on single contact experiences truly assist a B2B organization.

In this section, we look at some of the technical and operational support issues that can impact program success:

- **Limited view of accounts leads to poor understanding of touch points**
  We mentioned previously that as many as 40% of B2B leaders were missing a clear view of their customers and their touch points. This lack of insight into the customer journey can impact how companies prioritize action, channel targeting, and follow-up. Many CX tools stick to a simplified view tailored to the B2C journey. This approach is insufficient for the complexities of an evolving B2B journey ecosystem, which must account for both experiences within the core business and with direct partners.
- **Follow-up action delayed due to in sufficient tools and operational processes**
  Closing the loop in a B2B organization is starkly different than most of the single-contact experiences of B2C models. However, a vast majority of the CX tools available on the market use single-point-of-contact workflows to close the loop. This might work in transactional survey situations within a B2B transaction (more on that in Chapter 4).

However, the multi-layered stakeholder model of a B2B environment calls for more. New roles, such as Customer Success Managers (CSM) and Account Managers, have emerged in CX programs to take on a larger role than that of a typical customer support department in B2B organizations as well.

One of the ways they do this is through quarterly business reviews (QBRs) or general business reviews. Plainly put, CSMs, and roles like this, are an important line of defense that B2B organizations use to mitigate churn and track potential monetization opportunities—which brings us to our next point…

- **Little monetization capabilities in B2C tools**
  Most CX and NPS programs run within a heritage framework: Companies send out a survey, relationship or transactional, and then follow-up through closed loop tactics. More mature CX programs look to go beyond the operational cost savings of just closing the loop. The best account experience tools should enable B2B companies to incorporate monetization into every facet of a CX program.

  Having revenue side-by-side with satisfaction metrics turns CX programs into a true revenue funnel. We'll look at how the coupling of account experience and Monetized Net Promoter make this a reality for B2B enterprises and how to tear down the internal silos.

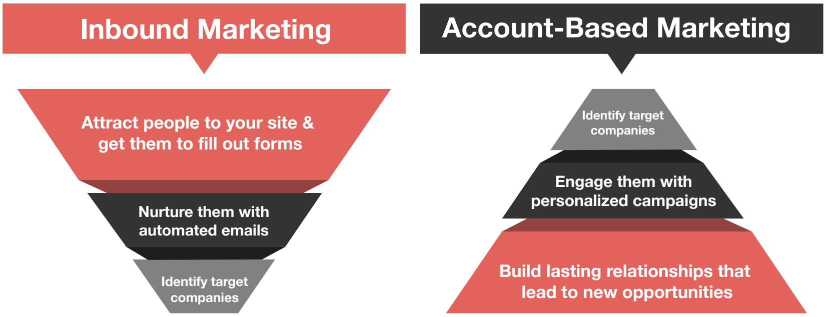
In the next section, we'll look at how account-based marketing, or as some call it, "account-based anything," solved its own industry challenges—and what translating an account-based approach to CX might do for B2B organizations.

Account Experience and Its Place in the New Account-Based World

With a better understanding of the challenges facing B2B companies in a CX rollout, what can be done to address the issues facing the market? Truth be told, B2B marketers faced a similar dilemma in the early 2000's. Prior to this time, marketing's demand generation tactics involved casting a wide net in the hopes of catching the right fish, i.e., standard inbound marketing.

To reduce the time, resources, and cost of lead-to-deal conversions, marketers needed a better way to deliver quality leads to sales. **The industry's solution? Take the inbound marketing funnel and flip it on its head**.

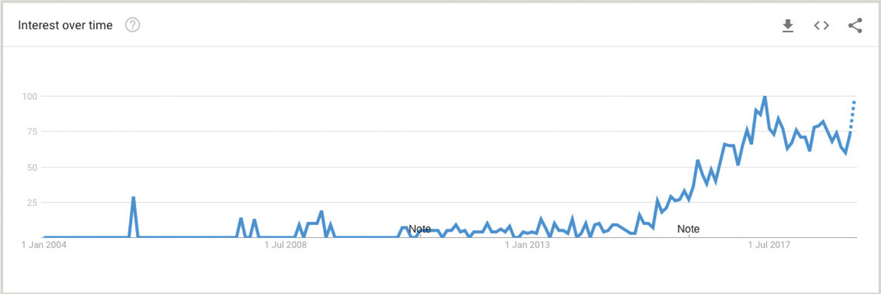
Instead of casting that net and waiting for targeted companies to come to them, marketers began seeking out these targeted accounts first, and promoted personalized campaigns to them.



Source: FlipMyFunnel

ABM is a great example of how a discipline that first focused on B2C required further development to be truly successful in B2B. ABM enriches leads by adding multiple points of contacts to the leads/opportunities.

Today, interest in account-based marketing has skyrocketed, as shown in the Google Trends data gathered since 2004. According to Optimizely[8]: "85% of marketers who measure ROI describe account-based marketing as delivering higher returns than any other marketing approach."



Source: Google Trends

But this account-based approach to B2B organizations isn't just reserved for marketing. Given the unique relationship between marketing and sales, the

8 *Account Based Marketing*. Optimizely, www.optimizely.com/optimization-glossary/account-based-marketing/.

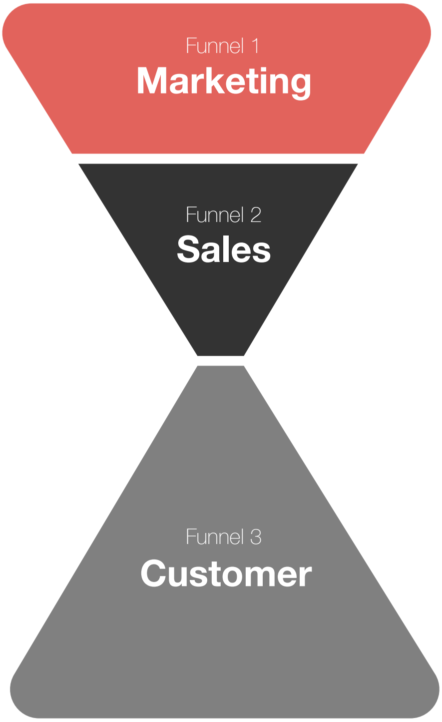
term "account-based sales," also looks into the targeted sales side. This tactic is often used by enterprise salespeople to help better scale the acquisitions process[9].

However, some organizations have taken the account-based methodology even further. Tom Scearce of the company Topo[10] argues that both these terms are limiting, and that B2B companies should take a more cross-departmental approach to accounts with something he terms: the account-based everything framework.

In his article, The Account-Based Everything Framework[10], Scearce describes this method as "…the coordination of personalized marketing, sales development, sales, and customer success efforts to drive engagement with, and conversion of, a targeted set of accounts." Within this article, Scearce

The hourglass illustration is a more accurate representation of the third growth funnel, or customer funnel. All the work that happens within sales and marketing pour into your customer funnel.

On the flip side, growth within your customer funnel can feed into additional sales and marketing opportunities.



9 Frost, Aja. "The Comprehensive Guide to Account-Based Sales for 2019." *HubSpot Blog*, HubSpot, 2019, blog.hubspot.com/sales/account-based-sales.

10 Scearce, Tom. "The Account-Based Everything Framework." *TOPO Blog*, TOPO, 5 Oct. 2016, blog.topohq.com/account-based-everything-framework/.

briefly mentions the concept of account-based customer success (CS).

Similar to Scearce, VP of Customer Success at HubSpot, Eva Klein, also identified three growth engines within businesses[11]: marketing, sales and the customer. Like Scearce, Klein frames these three funnels within the account-based mindset and as primary drivers of growth.

However, account-based customer success isn't all-encompassing enough to address the underserved B2B CX market outside the subscription economy.

Why? Because customer success, as it stands, only covers only a small portion of the CX market: product-centric, specifically SaaS technology organizations that are focused on usage. In other words, it's a small piece of the CX marketplace pie, and doesn't account for the B2B economy specifically.

So what does?

11 Klein, Eva. "Customer Success: The Third Growth Engine of Business." *Medium*, ThinkGrowth.org, 8 Aug. 2017, thinkgrowth.org/customer-success-the-third-growth-engine-of-business-8c8e0e2c78b8.

2

Introducing the Account Experience

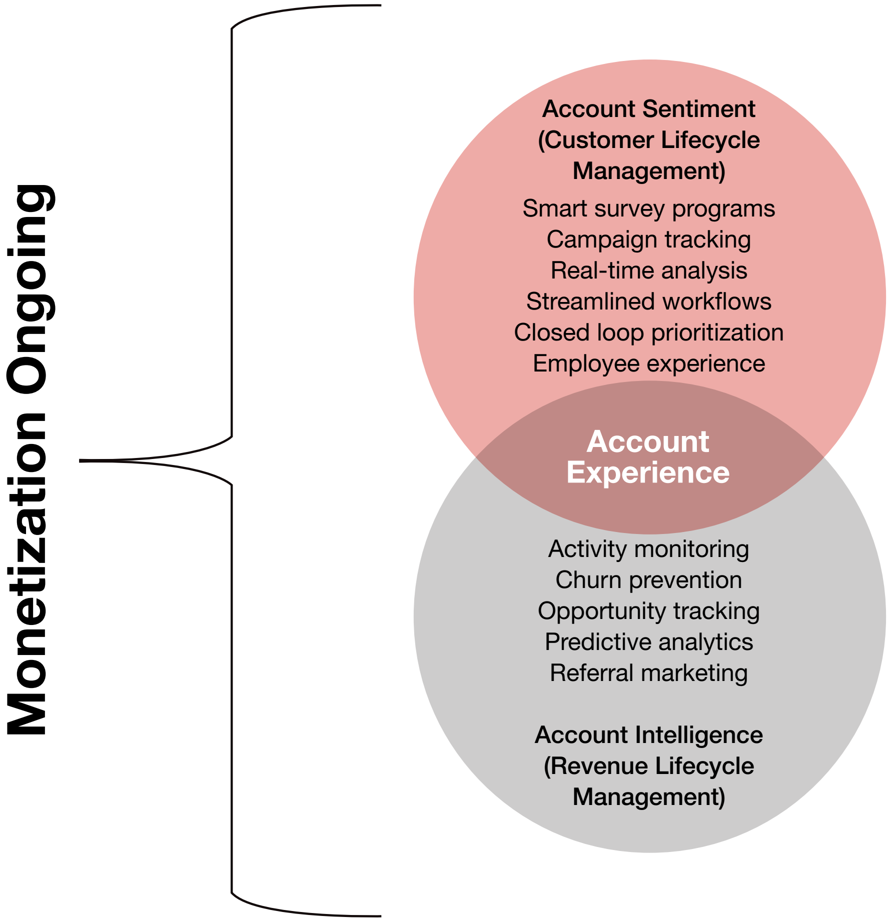
Account experience (AX) is the intersection between experience feedback management, monetization and account-based methodologies. AX technologies and best practices address not only the needs of the SaaS technology industries, but all industries, making it a true cross-departmental solution.

As illustrated below, the AX model and functionalities are grounded in two primary business management practices:

- **Customer Lifecycle Management**

  Customer Lifecycle Management includes those activities after an initial purchase within the customer lifecycle, such as managing feedback for both respondents and accounts, as well as prioritizing follow-up and closed loop practices, prioritized in some cases by revenue.
- **Revenue Lifecycle Management**

  Revenue Lifecycle Management include processes undertaken to strategically identify areas for growth within an existing customer base—i.e., up and cross-sells, referral marketing, reviews and predictive churn analytics.



We'll discuss more about the features mentioned above as we travel further down the book. To better understand an AX program, it's best to see it in action:

Account Experience Brings ROI and the Customer into Focus

One of the largest B2B enterprise software companies in the world, Micro Focus has long been a proponent of NPS and applied best practices to their program. By proactively listening and closing the loop, Micro Focus is able to retain and grow their high-value accounts.

In an interview with NPSBenchmarks.com, the company's head of CX, Dr. James Borderick, shared how Micro Focus achieved their high Net Promoter Score of 48 and created a streamlined experience program:

- **Senior buy-in**

  Micro Focus' customer experience and NPS program was first introduced by Meg Whitman, CEO of HPE. Meg brought Net Promoter with her from her time as President and CEO of eBay. Therefore, CX and NPS were already a ubiquitous metric throughout Hewlett Packard Enterprise, which later became Micro Focus. Measuring and following up on feedback became a key way in which Micro Focus tracked customer loyalty.

- **Know the drivers of customer satisfaction**

  In addition to asking a basic NPS survey question (i.e., on a scale from 0 to 10, how likely would you be to recommend Micro Focus to your colleagues?), Micro Focus also adds 2 verbatim questions to the surveys– "Why?" and "What would you improve?". These type of driver-based questions are important for pinpointing root cause and associating revenue with account improvements.

Micro Focus also uses three different methods to track and respond to feedback in their program:

- *Customer interviews*: Micro Focus has an appointed Customer Experience Lead who conducts a series of in-person and/or phone interviews with their high-value accounts. Based on the feedback collected, Micro Focus executes an improvement plan at the client's discretion to improve the overall relationship between the brand and the account.

- *1:1 account feedback:* These happen both in-person and remotely (e.g., design partner programs, Customer Advisory Boards etc.). Micro Focus has various customer success and advocacy groups for customer follow-up as the accounts they deal with require additional attention outside a typical B2C CX program.

- *Competitive loyalty study:* Micro Focus also applies double-blind benchmarking surveys in their program. At its core, double-blind benchmarking falls into the traditional market research. Researchers, typically from a third-party firm, ask respondents which B2B software companies they love. They then use this information as baseline for comparison.

- **Link experience data with revenue**

  Micro Focus has successfully proven within the company that CX and NPS are drivers of revenue. As such, the company is able to prove how much 1 NPS point is worth to the business in terms of revenue.

"I find that linking NPS and revenue makes people sit up straight, and moves the conversation from "just a metric," to strategic responses and actions."

– Dr. James Borderick, Head of CX, Micro Focus

There are a number of key takeaways we can gather from this success story:

- C-Suite buy-in was instrumental in the longevity of Micro Focus' NPS and experience program, and helped them evolve their program from a simple survey tool to a true growth funnel
- To better serve and close the loop with accounts, Micro Focus created additional relationship management methods outside traditional closed loop practices for their multi-stakeholder accounts

- To better understand the ROI of their program and what improvements and opportunities to focus on in their accounts, Micro Focus links revenue data with their experience data

This AX success story also brought to light some additional best practices every account experience program should achieve: monetization.

In this chapter, we introduce the account experience category fully. We'll start by looking at how Monetized Net Promoter has transitioned into the new account experience model, then we'll look at how AX addresses the gaps within the CX and CS market, before walking through the fundamentals of an account experience program and toolset.

The Net Promoter System & Monetized Net Promoter

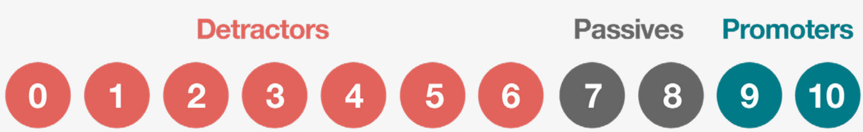
When Fred Reichheld adapted the Net Promoter Score into what would become the Net Promoter System in his book, The Ultimate Question 2.0, he did so because the needs of businesses had grown beyond the confines of the score.

Recapping the Net Promoter Score

The Net Promoter Score is a client loyalty metric originally formulated by Fred Reichheld, Bain & Company and Satmetrix in 2003. The Net Promoter Score asks a single question:

"On a scale from 0 to 10: How likely are you to recommend (this company, this product, this experience, this representative) to your friends, family or business associates?"

It segments customers into three types based on a 0 to 10 scale: detractors (0-6), passives (7-8) and promoters (9-10).



Detractors (0-6): Least satisfied customers. May not purchase again and could spread negative word of mouth if something isn't done to improve their experience.

Passives (7-8): Are typically satisfied, but not to the extent that they become loyal. Susceptible to competitors' offers, but will spread neither negative nor positive word of mouth.

Promoters (9-10): Loyal and enthusiastic customers. They will spread good word of mouth about your company and can be brand advocates.

After seeing how companies had begun shaping the Net Promoter Score beyond its original intent, Reichheld quickly realized that the concept of NPS itself was growing:

"Indeed, one of the fundamental lessons that these practitioners had learned is that the power of NPS extends far beyond the theme implied in the original book title. The score provided a starting point, but it is the system that has helped leaders create cultures that inspire employees to become more customer focused."

– Fred Reichheld, The Ultimate Question 2.0

In this same book, Reichheld and co-writer Rob Markey also began tapping into the concept of NPS as a driver of profitable growth. From the beginning, Reichheld was clear on a simple fact: Companies who relied on bad profits at the expense of customer experience were doomed in the long run, and that true profitable growth happens when companies invest in customer relationships.

According to Bain, by converting just 2-8% of those detractors into promoters, Dell would have increased their revenue $167 million annually.

The real value of NPS came when the perception of customer experience became less fluff and more of an economic indicator in the eyes of the C-Suite.

To demonstrate the economic impact of investing in customer relationships, Reichheld used an example from Bain & Company's work with Dell. Bain helped Dell to identify the economic power of promoters within their own customer base.

As part of the study, Bain revealed that Dell had 15% detractors who accounted for $68 million dollars of lost revenue. According to Bain, by converting just 2-8% of those detractors into promoters, Dell would have increased their revenue $167 million annually.

This was groundbreaking. Bain's findings revealed that improving and investing in these relationships (where possible), and focusing on NPS, would increase Dell's bottom line significantly.

As part of this research, Bain provided a range of analysis to Dell, such as calculating the customer lifetime value. In addition, they also looked at several profit-driving behavior factors for promoters, passives and detractors. However, despite these advancements introduced by Bain, today, most companies still struggle to move beyond measuring and acting on NPS and CX.

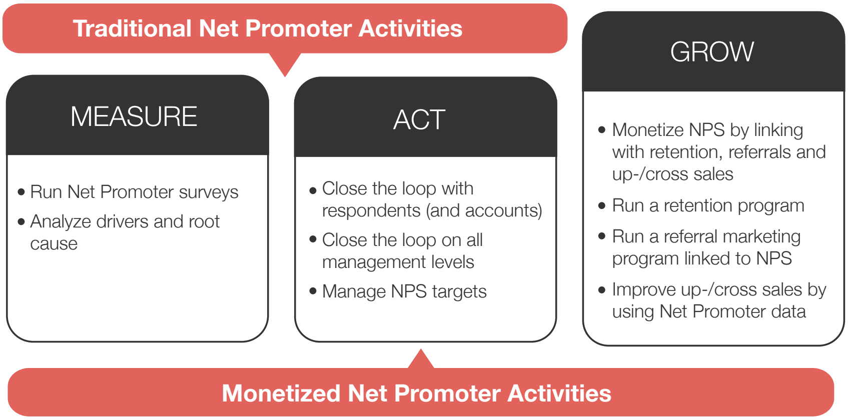
Moreover, many lack the resources and ability to associate revenue properly with their NPS/CX programs in a meaningful way. And even more, few are using their programs to generate new growth opportunities.

In 2017, CustomerGauge introduced the concept of NPS and CX monetization with Monetized Net Promoter[12].

Not only does this model take into account the great work of Fred Reichheld and his team, it also provides guidance on how companies can reach the kind of CX maturity growth Reichheld did with Dell all those years ago and beyond. No team of dedicated analysts required.

This shift divided NPS marketing into two sectors: Traditional and Monetized Net Promoter.

12 Frazier, Sarah. "The Definitive Guide to Monetize Net Promoter." CustomerGauge, 2017, content. customergauge.com/definitive_guide_to_monetized_net_promoter.



Traditional Net Promoter practices were created to only address the process of measuring customer feedback and closed loop processes, with the exception of growth outside of mobilizing promoters.

The Monetized Net Promoter System does this and more—adding revenue figures to the process of measuring and acting on feedback to provide strategic insights into a company's strengths and weaknesses, and a direct line to map growth in real-time. Fred Reichheld recognized the need to transition his original Net Promoter Score model to the demands of the market.

In the same vein, while Monetized Net Promoter has helped companies tie both revenue and satisfaction metrics together, B2B businesses are now demanding more of the CX marketplace to help address account monetization capabilities outside of NPS.

Account experience moves beyond NPS to leverage other CX and vital growth metrics within the scope of B2B customer experiences and Revenue Lifecycle Management. In other words, account experience is the next natural evolution in the monetize narrative. After all, for account experience to be truly successful, monetization must live at its core.

In the next section, we'll dive deeper into why AX falls outside the traditional B2C CX and customer success technology stacks, and is deserving of a separate distinction and focus in the marketplace.

Why Account Experience is Not CX or CS

So far, we've touched on a number of reasons why the current CX marketplace and available solutions underserve B2B companies, and the differences in the very nature of managing a B2B vs. a B2C CX program.

Based on the elements identified earlier in the book, we can surmise the following key elements set a CX and AX solution apart:

CX vs. AX	
Customer Experience	**Account Experience**
Contact-native	Account-native
Good at optimizing operational CX processes, but difficult to tie to hard financial outcomes	Monetization and revenue integration live in all aspects of an AX program, from account growth to predictability to prioritization of follow-up and organizational change
Contact hierarchy with possible multiple location capabilities	Hierarchy at every level and segmentation of an organization
Can be too focused on marketing analytics and research, (i.e., non-action)	System based around gathering actionable intelligence to improve and monetize accounts

Where account experience looks to divide the CX market in half between B2B and B2C, customer success takes a small market segment within the CX marketplace, focusing on SaaS, tech and the subscription-based economy.

On the surface, AX vs. CS may seem closer in relation feature-wise. Both look to incorporate ROI in a deeper level of a CX program, both promote account management best practices, and both understand the importance a relationship manager serves in retention gains and account growth. Where the two differ, they do so on a fundamental level, from the treatment of accounts via segmentation to industry capabilities.

CS vs. AX	
Customer Success	**Account Experience**
Product-native and subscription-native	Account-native
Primarily focused on small to medium-sized SaaS organizations; little to no service industry capabilities	Primarily focused on B2B experiences for large or enterprise-level experiences
Owned by a single department, which can stagnate long-term improvements	Cross-departmental insights for unbiased reporting and insights
Monetization towards account growth	Monetization lives in all facets of an AX program from account growth to predictability and prioritization
Limited in industry application (primarily SaaS or subscription models) with both B2C and B2B models	Cross-industry application for B2B companies

One of the biggest limitations of CS technologies is their singular departmental usage. Customer success technologies traditionally live in one department: customer success. And this isn't anything new! There are plenty of department-specific software tools out there necessary to the function of a particular department. Unfortunately, this kind of tactic doesn't bode well when it comes to managing CX on a large scale within an organization.

Having your experience management tool sit in one department creates natural silos within a company and can often stagnate change management initiatives identified in account feedback.

So, while customer success methodologies may call for permeation of best practices to be pushed to the whole organization…the reality is quite different given the nature of CS technology itself.

Don't get us wrong, customer success is a great development in the world of CX and is the perfect tool for some companies. However, at the moment, it's based primarily on usage metrics, and restricted to the SaaS market. It does not address the complex relationships in high touch enterprise accounts.

Employee Experience— A Foundation for Good AX

An account experience program necessitates a coalition of champions and customer relationship experts. These individuals shape the success of an AX program and the bottom line benefits. Therefore, there is a unique focus within the AX model that emphasizes employee experience.

Account sentiment offers methodologies around measuring and acting on account and respondent feedback and the same toolset should be used to assess and act on employee feedback as well. We'll talk more about the employee experience in Chapter 4 in greater detail.

With a better summary of where account experience falls in the marketplace and how the B2B economy can carve out their own experience revolution, next we'll flesh out the account experience model itself and how organizations can kickstart an AX program.

The Account Experience Model

The account experience model provides value to enterprises across B2B organizations that are looking to do two things:

- Better manage the customer lifecycle to reduce churn, increase retention and improve business processes and value for customers
- Boost ROI through Revenue Lifecycle Management to grow accounts and existing customer revenue streams

Customer Lifecycle Management (CLM)[13] is the process of tying metrics to aspects of the customer lifecycle, which is the ongoing relationship a customer / account has with a brand, including all touch points and channel interactions.

13 Amaresan, Swetha. "Everything You Need to Know about Customer Lifecycle Management." *HubSpot Blog*, HubSpot, blog.hubspot.com/service/customer-lifecycle-management.

In an account experience model, account sentiment plays the role of Customer Lifecycle Management within the B2B context after the initial sale. Just like CLM, account sentiment looks at those parts of an AX program focused on measuring and managing the health of an account using feedback tools, root cause analysis and closed loop best practices. Account sentiment is the ongoing maintenance and check-ups necessary to reduce churn with relevant stakeholders.

B2B companies can use monetization when determining which accounts to survey, and juxtapose revenue next to touch points for prioritizing organizational improvements. In addition, account sentiment also includes employee experience elements to ensure the longevity of the AX program and improve the sentiment of the workforce.

Revenue Lifecycle Management (RLM) are processes undertaken to strategically grow revenue from existing clients. In the account experience model, RLM is referred to as account intelligence. Account intelligence focuses on account growth management activities, including retention and churn management, opportunity creation and tracking, as well as predictive analytics.

Customer Lifecycle Management	Revenue Lifecycle Management
• Customer journey mapping • Account health check • Account analysis • Account/respondent follow-up	• Opportunity tracking • Up-sell and cross-sell • Referral marketing • Predictive planning

Forbes Insights' research paper *Mastering Revenue Lifecycle Management*[14], reported that enterprises that were investing in and excelling at RLM saw bottom line results increase, while those who ignored the benefits of RLM felt a negative impact to their revenue:

"Businesses are finding that a lack of focus regarding their RLM process can have a negative impact on profitability, market capitalization and shareholder value. Yet opportunities present themselves at each touch point in the lifecycle—onboarding, adoption, up-sell/cross-sell, retention and renewals. Those enterprises that are ahead

14 "Mastering Revenue Lifecycle Management: Customer Engagement Leads to Competitive Advantage." *Forbes,* Forbes Insights , 2015, images.forbes.com/forbesinsights/StudyPDFs/ServiceSource-MasteringRevenueLifecycleManagement-REPORT.pdf.

of the curve—that make data-driven decisions and partner continuously with their customers to help unleash the value inherent in insights derived from the RLM process—are poised to see substantial returns on investment."

Now that you understand the fundamentals of account experience, let's begin looking at how to bring your program into fruition.

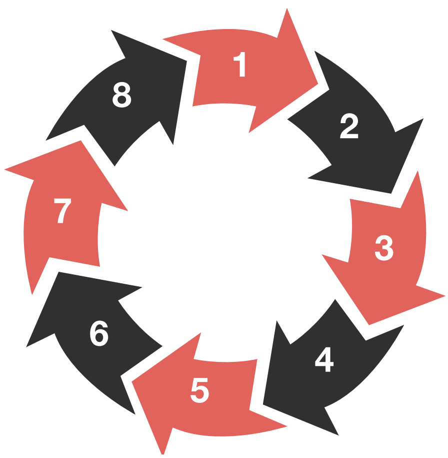
Getting Started with an Account Experience Program

As mentioned, an account experience program doesn't live in a single department. The insights and metrics used within an AX program reverberate into almost every outlet of an organization. However, there are a number of important elements and parties an account experience program should support and involve.

To compile the insights in this section, we looked to the experts over at Gartner on their best practice steps for building a business case to get approval for a CX technical investment. The illustration[15] below is a recreation of Gartner's parameters.

Build a Business Case to Gain Approval for a CX Technology Investment

1. Organize Stakeholders
2. Select the Metrics
3. Baseline Existing Performance
4. Describe the Capabilities of the Solution
5. Negotiate the Targeted Improvements
6. Convert the Targeted Improvements to Financial Results
7. Develop the TCO
8. Calculate the ROI



Source: Gartner, Realizing the Benefits of Superior Customer Experience: A Gartner Trend Insight Report

15 Thompson, Ed. "Realizing the Benefits of Superior Customer Experience: A Gartner Trend Insight Report." *Gartner IT Glossary*, Gartner, Inc., 11 May 2018, www.gartner.com/doc/3874972?plc=ddc#a-375319151.

Using some of the guidance from Gartner's model, we developed the following list to help build the resources necessary to get an AX program off the ground and running—as well as ensure the program's longevity and success.

1. **Identify a cross-departmental need for change that an AX program and toolset can solve**

   The best way to get your resources is to make a business case based on a particular pain point. Perhaps your B2B organization has struggled to support your CX program due to a lack of guidance or sufficient tools. Maybe this is the first time you've considered aligning an account-based approach to experience management.

   Whatever the case, to begin the process of onboarding an AX program, you need to start building a strong case for its fruition prior to approaching or inviting others to participate.

2. **Gather a coalition of champions and get sponsorship from the C-Suite**

   Understanding how an account experience program serves each area of your business is vital for not only long-term buy-in, but on-going improvement and growth. Once a need for change is identified, work should be done to gather a championing coalition around the account experience program.

   During this time, the C-Suite should be engaged to connect higher level company initiatives with program outcomes. In fact, CustomerGauge's 2016 NPS Benchmarks Report found that 23%[16] of companies said C-Suite buy-in was the primary factor behind the success of their program.

3. **Build a program charter**

   With your coalition now in place, it's important to designate the goals and mission of your account experience program. Specifically, a program charter should define:

   - The reason for undertaking the project
   - The project details
   - Stakeholders required to be involved
   - Budget, timeline, and resources required
   - The initial risk assessment

16 "The 2016 NPS Benchmarks Report." CustomerGauge, 2016, https://content.customergauge.com/2016_nps_benchmarks_survey_report_1utm_mediumhubspotutm_sourcemailutm_campaignnpsb20part201.

4. **Create or designate the roles & responsibilities of a relationship manager within the organization**

   Every account experience program should have some form of relationship manager to provide the human face of your company to your multi-layered stakeholder clients. Relationship managers combine product expertise, business specialization and account growth tactics all rolled into one. We'll discuss more how this fundamental role plays a part in your AX program later in the book.

5. **Implement an automated AX tool to manage the digital transformation of your AX program**

   The time for managing B2B experience programs via spreadsheets or disparate CX software tools is over. To support the success of your AX program and ensure that the relevant insights, workflows and action points are provided to the right people at the right time, you need to onboard the right tools.

6. **Incorporate any non-digital transformative best practices needed to support the AX program operationally**

   Tools can do a lot. However, unless best practices and operational procedures follow, little in the way of change or growth will be seen. Creating a cultural AX buy-in campaign is one way to get your organization excited about the transition. Some companies use branded swag around kick-off sessions to raise awareness around the program. It's important to align all three levels of an organization around the new program, establish change agents within the organization to drive this new program and make change easier.

This section will walk through these steps in greater detail, while also developing on the principles of a successful account experience program.

AX—A Multi-Departmental Solution to B2B Success

We mentioned in the introduction the importance of ownership and responsibility within a B2B account experience program. Given that a successful account experience program should serve as a cross-departmental tool, how does ownership come into play?

First, let's look at a worst-case scenario approach to any type of program management:

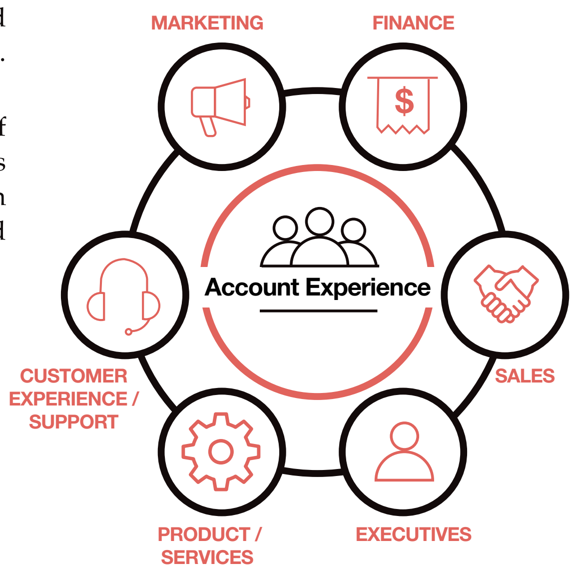
A group of people were sitting in a park at lunchtime with a rainstorm approaching. Someone got up and said: "We're going to have to move. Here's the plan. Each of us stands up and marches in the direction of the apple tree. Please stay at least two feet away from other group members and do not run. Do not leave any personal belongings on the ground here and be sure to stop at the base of the tree. When we are all there, we'll sit down in the same spots as we did here, so we can continue our conversations."

This story is adapted from John Kotter's book, "Leading Change" and shows an example of micromanagement (an incredibly ridiculous and silly one, but one nonetheless). If you plan to run an account experience program this way, you will likely create some resistance.

The best way to initiate an AX program is to gather a coalition of champions looking to transform your B2B enterprise towards a profitable, customer-centric future—and support these champions with tools that allow them to carry out this mission. In other words, the best approach is to invite people to co-create and run your program. The problem is that you cannot invite the entire company to this exercise.

So, your task is to identify what we call *AX champions*. These are people from different parts of your organization who can drive action in their own groups. Champions can help you communicate problems, solutions and other information to their units; they can assume central roles in your program once it's operational, and they can help you coordinate and cooperate across departments.

Here we see an illustration of some of the key departments that would benefit from an account experience tool and program:



Let's build a case for why departments like these should support an account experience program. This will assist you in identifying possible departmental champions for your own AX program.

Addressing Cross-Departmental Challenges with Account Experience		
Department	**Pain Points**	**AX Solution**
C-Suite	C-level executives struggle the most within B2B organizations when it comes to getting a reliable narrative around account experience and potential growth opportunities with customers. Frequently, this is due to two root causes: - Department heads controlling the data these executives see (i.e., cherry-picking data to be looked favorably upon) - A lack of tools that can provide the snapshot or 360-degree view meaningful to an executive	- Ability to see board-relevant, un-biased KPIs, including: retention, churn, and satisfaction metrics; side-by-side with revenue - Better understanding of which factors (drivers) are impacting a business' bottom line - Hierarchy breakdown at the enterprise level for a true 360 degree view of a company's AX-related performance
Customer Experience / Support	CX departments often struggle to gain authority at the C-Suite. Similarly, Support organizations are frequently given very little budget to curtail follow up issues due to a lack of representation at the board room level.	- Take CX initiatives to the boardroom and legitimize CX and Support departments - Incorporating AX monetization allows Support and CX to prioritize follow-up more strategically

Addressing Cross-Departmental Challenges with Account Experience		
Department	**Pain Points**	**AX Solution**
Sales	Sales is taking on a larger role post-sale than ever before in the B2B context. With monetization at the core of an AX solution, such a program becomes a natural sales component. Unfortunately, few CX tools currently offer the kind of customer monetization view outside of AX.	- Revenue stream creator: identify opportunities for account growth more easily - Involve sales more deeply in the customer lifecycle to cultivate business development opportunities - Align with pre-existing account-based sales tactics
Marketing	Marketing first took up the mantle when it comes to both account-based approaches and the importance of focusing on the customer. However, despite leading the way in ABM, few marketers are translating this over to customer marketing initiatives. According to the company Terminus[17], while 74% of marketers determined the goal of their ABM program to be increasing ROI, only 18% of them said they used ABM for improving customer engagement.	An account experience tool allows marketers to address the gaps in their customer marketing, including prioritizing campaigns around satisfaction and revenue data, and specifically: - Prioritize strategic customer campaigns - Develop referral marketing opportunities - Sketch out PR outreach & opportunities - Develop case studies and use cases for acquisition collateral

17 Ward, Shauna. "Customer Marketing for Account-Based Marketing (ABM)." *Terminus*, 22 Mar. 2017, terminus.com/blog/customer-marketing-account-based-marketing/.

Addressing Cross-Departmental Challenges with Account Experience		
Department	**Pain Points**	**AX Solution**
Product/ Services	Building and strategizing innovations without the guidance of clients can spell danger quickly for a company. Without a proper experience tool, many product and service departments lack the visibility they need into the client base to make decisions around their offerings. Back in 1992[18], IBM experienced an estimated $8.10 billion loss against new, more nimble competitors who went after IBM's mainframe computing business with the dawn of personal computing. Why? Because they *didn't listen to their customers...*	- An account experience program connects product/service departments with their clients in a more direct dialog

18 Denning, Steve. "Why Did IBM Survive?" Forbes, Forbes Magazine, 5 Apr. 2012, www.forbes.com/sites/stevedenning/2011/07/10/why-did-ibm-survive/#b77041e1cac4.

Addressing Cross-Departmental Challenges with Account Experience		
Department	**Pain Points**	**AX Solution**
Product/ Services	The CEO at the time found that this hit was a direct result of IBM splitting aspects of its business into different business units (processors, software, etc.). After speaking with their clients, it quickly became clear this was the wrong initiative and was quickly reversed. The rest is history. So, how can your enterprise avoid a costly issue like the one that IBM's product team faced?	- More B2B companies are building lines of business alongside customers, supported by AX tools that allow for more direct feedback across customer channels

Addressing Cross-Departmental Challenges with Account Experience		
Department	**Pain Points**	**AX Solution**
Finance	Finance is not often a department you hear come up when discussing the customer experience. Because of this, Finance lacks visibility into real-time information on customer retention and churn. Given the Chief Finance Officer's (CFO) interest in new revenue initiatives, anything focused around the customer growth funnel would be in their purview.	- To get revenue data into an AX tool, Finance must be involved - AX offers Finance departments real-time reporting on retention, churn and customer revenue metrics - Finance can use AX tools alongside other departments to build what-if scenarios and projected numbers based on CX initiatives

Now that you understand how AX impacts different facets of a B2B organization, let's look at one role that has gained greater prevalence in B2B experience programs, the relationship manager, and why any AX program is incomplete without it.

The Role of the Relationship Manager

If the term relationship manager doesn't sound familiar to you, these may ring a bell: CSMs, Account Managers, Product Experts, etc. All different names for a similar function: managing relationships with your customers.

Across industries, B2B companies are investing in a new kind of account experience workforce: the relationship managers. This team of people can sit in departments ranging from Customer Experience, Sales and Customer Success.

With the emergence of account experience, the role of relationship managers becomes even more vital to manage the lifecycle of multi-layered stakeholders within B2B accounts. We call these multi-layered stakeholders the "Decision Making Unit".

Decision Making Units are the hierarchy of roles within an account, ranging from decision makers who influence future buying decisions to frontline users. In Chapter 4 we'll discuss, in greater detail, the importance of interacting with EACH level of the Decision Making Unit to gain an accurate picture of account sentiment ensure account retention.

Relationship managers are those roles that work with Support and / or technical personnel to address both the needs of customers and support and grow the customer growth funnel of a business. You may have people in positions similar to this description—or perhaps entire account management teams—that support this function. Depending on the size of a particular client, more than one relationship manager may be required, especially on an enterprise or international level.

Relationship managers help customers:

- Achieve business outcomes for multi-contact stakeholders of a single organization
- Scale and support business cases as they evolve
- Address technical or service issues
- Provide product or service expertise to help with self-service
- Educate on new product or service innovations that can help support use cases
- Onboard new users

Relationship managers help companies:

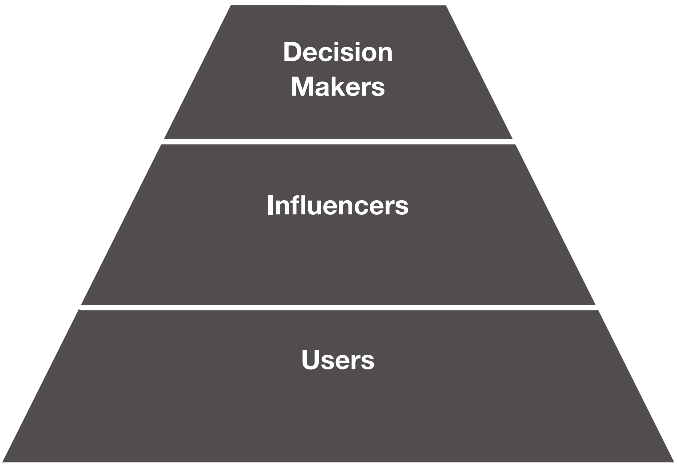
- Manage the customer lifecycle
- Keep a pulse on the health of an account and its multiple stakeholders
- Increase retention and reduce customer churn
- Identify and act on opportunities for growth within accounts, including referrals, up-sells, cross-sells, etc.

To capture the satisfaction of multi-layered stakeholders, relationship managers in B2B companies should use AX best practices like quarterly business reviews (QBRs) to keep a pulse on how each level of an organization feels towards their business.

On a transactional basis (i.e., when a particular action is performed), B2B businesses can trigger transactional surveys to capture sentiment for a particular touchpoint with a single respondent.

We'll discuss more about keeping a pulse on account health and managing multiple contacts in Chapter 4, Account Sentiment.

Below is what we call a "Decision Making Pyramid." It denotes the various stakeholders that relationship managers must consider at every stage.



Decision Makers

People at the top of the Decision-Making Pyramid typically reside in C-level roles and have the executive authority to sign off on large initiatives.

Due to their authority needed on signing off, Decision Makers are often the most satisfied within the Decision-Making Pyramid. After all, their name is on the dotted line, and they are typically the ones convinced into taking on a service/product.

This is good for economic buy-in of your products and services, but not particularly good for long-term operational success and retention. You should ensure that you're addressing the economic and business outcomes of those at this level.

Influencers

Just as your account experience program requires a champion, so too do your own client relationships. The Influencers category are typically those parties that champion you as a vendor, but don't have final sign-off. Keeping Influencers satisfied within a program is vital for maintaining retention and meeting operational expectations and outcomes.

Users

Depending on your particular line of business, who uses your business services or products on the daily may be outside the Influencers category. If so, Users are typically those who interact with your products and/or services the most, but were not involved in the decision-making process of onboarding you as a vendor.

Users along with Influencers work closely with vendors like yourself and therefore have the most direct exposure to you as company. Relationship managers most frequently deal with Users when it comes to support issues.

"Hand-offs" are bad for experience: Across industries, clients time-and-time again prefer the solo relationship manager model, as opposed to the traditional rotating support model (outreach to a different person every time) or automation.

In the UK alone, KPMG found that 95% of companies surveyed preferred/were satisfied with a sole human relationship manager. When the relationship is solely automated, that satisfaction drops to 61%[19].

In other words, the best account experience strategy must happen at a cultural, operational and technical level to support the customer-centric vision.

This brings up an interesting caveat when it comes to AX programs: Automation and self-services are vital in other aspects of the B2B account experience. However, automation when it comes to relationship management doesn't help address the

19 "B2B Customer Experience: Winning in the Moments That Matter." *KPMG*, KPMG Nunwood | Customer Experience Excellence Centre, Feb. 2017, home.kpmg/content/dam/kpmg/uk/pdf/2017/05/b2b-customer-experience-report.pdf.

growing need in B2B for personalization. So while 95% of UK B2B companies indicated that they preferred a real-human relationship manager, 86% of B2B companies in a survey conducted by McKinsey[20] preferred to use self-service tools for reordering.

What does this tell us? When it comes to winning at account experience in a B2B world, as McKinsey[20] notes, the best strategy is striking the right balance between digital and non-digital transformation. In other words, the best account experience strategy must happen at a cultural, operational and technical level to support the customer-centric vision.

Choosing an Account Experience Solution

Once you have the operational support and best practice guidelines in place to steer your account experience program, it's time to begin looking for technology that can aid the customer-centric transformation at a digital level. Below we have a best practice checklist for choosing your own AX software vendor.

Your AX Software Checklist

For your AX program to be successful, an account experience software should allow companies to:

- ☐ Automate CX processes to support post-initial sales Customer Lifecycle Management (CLM)
- ☐ Offer horizontal adoption and visibility in an enterprise setting, including multiple persona views that provide insights to relevant stakeholders
- ☐ Align a customer-focused workforce around the customer
- ☐ Offer all the capabilities necessary to measure account health across channels, for multiple stakeholders
- ☐ Use revenue side-by-side with satisfaction data to help prioritize follow-up that reduces churn
- ☐ Identify opportunities for growth, including referrals, up-sells, cross-sells, etc.
- ☐ Integrate multiple streams of data including support tickets, sales activities, marketing touches and website visits/logins, to track activities and behavioural data from multiple IT systems

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20 Maechler, Nicolas, et al. "Finding the Right Digital Balance in B2B Customer Experience." *McKinsey & Company*, Apr. 2017, www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/marketing-and-sales/our-insights/finding-the-right-digital-balance-in-b2b-customer-experience.

Want a Comprehensive AX System? Feed It.

Like any CX system, you'll need to integrate a certain amount of data to give your account experience tool legs. Customer data, support desk integrations, and revenue data are first priority integrations. Any AX software vendor you choose should be able to support these types of integration or data uploads.

But be warned: if you want to get your program off to the right start, it's important to ensure any data you are adding to the AX system is of the highest quality, meaning: save yourself from a headache later and clean your data now.

In the remainder of this book, we'll walk through best practices for managing every aspect of an account experience program. To get started, we need to talk about one of the most essential steps in any AX program: linking financials.

3

The First Step: Linking AX & Financials

In the early years of traditional CX, to compare revenue alongside NPS metrics, program directors would manually take all of their quarterly NPS results, combine them with their financial information using a BI tool or spreadsheets and spend hours turning the analysis into a presentation that their board can act upon. The work was tedious, if done at all.

And just as that reporting cycle is finished—for example, the first quarter—they'd have to start all over again for the next quarter. Since all of this was done via spreadsheets and not in a single system in real-time, it was not easy for program directors to provide complete transparency on the results, get buy-in from all stakeholders, or stay relevant with stagnant data.

Long-term validation of an AX program depends on both operational success and bottom line ROI improvements. Moreover, if you want the approval and buy-in of your C-Suite, proving the program's financial outcomes are necessary. The only way to get the ROI of account experience initiatives and incorporate monetization into your AX program is to link financials with other metrics of success.

However, combining your AX program with revenue figures, such as subscription fees, sales revenues, profits and customer lifetime values is not straightforward in many companies. So, what can companies do to maneuver these obstacles?

Need Middle Management Buy-In?

Often, the C-Suite will understand the long-term value of an AX or CX program. Middle management, however, might have a more difficult time buying into the vision, as they are already juggling multiple competing projects of their own and additional priorities. To combat this and ensure long-term AX adoption, you need to demonstrate how such a program can help them reach their targets.

Take sales, for example. An AX tool will allow them to easily identify additional revenue streams. This might change their perception of CX from burden to revenue opportunity.

In this chapter, we'll quickly discuss what happens when experience data is put side-by-side next to financial outcomes, and then walk through what obstacles a champion, like yourself, might face when attempting to link financials into an AX system.

Experience Data Meets Financial Outcomes

B2B businesses, at a fundamental level, survive on two things: loyalty and growth. After all, on average, loyal customers stay longer, buy more, and are more likely to refer your brand.

Earlier in this book, we made a somewhat controversial statement: all customers are valuable, but not all hold the same value.

All customers are valuable, but not all hold the same value.

Depending on whether or not your company struggles with churn, this statement can be interpreted in two ways:

1. **If retention/churn is an issue: CRR vs. RRR**

   If retention/churn is an issue within your B2B organization, then the statement above implies that some customer churn is more financially painful than others.

To explain what we mean by that, let's have a look at the concept of CRR vs. RRR:

Customer Retention Rate (CRR) is the rate at which customers leave you. *Revenue Retention Rate (RRR)* is the rate at which revenue is lost. Both are calculated based on a certain time period. Both may have wildly different results. Both are therefore important to mention.

For example, let's say that at the beginning of a period you have 10 customers and at the end of the period you have 5 customers. Your 10 customers are worth $100, $200, $300, $400, $500, $600, $700, $800, $900, and $1000.

The 5 customers that left were worth $100, $200, $300, $400, and $500. In other words, at the beginning of the period the total was equal to $5500 and at the end of the period the total was $4000.

Shown below are the two formulas calculated with the above numbers:

5/10 or 50%
Customer Retention Rate

4000/5500 or ~72.7%
Revenue Retention Rate

A CRR of 50% means that you have retained 50% of your customers and a RRR of 72.7% means that the 50% of the customers remaining have retained 72.7% of your revenue. This reflects the loss of less valuable customers.

If all customers were worth the same, both numbers would be equal; however, the retention rate of revenue remains higher due to retaining the more valuable customers.

Now, imagine the reverse. Imagine that just 10% of your customers churned, but it accounted for a significant portion of your business' revenue. Certainly unlucky, but not something completely out of the question. Most B2B companies live in competitive industries. Many may deal with clients that account for multi-millionaire dollar contracts.

If churn is an issue, measuring the experiences of the multiple respondents of an account and acting quickly to close the loop with accounts is essential for AX success. But, doing both of these, prioritized by the impact on your revenue? That's smart.

Think Like the C-Suite—It's All About Reducing Risk

When explaining a concept like churn or retention to someone at a C-Suite level, it is best to reevaluate your vocabulary. The C-Suite might approach churn as a natural part of doing business. And it's true. Churn is natural in some cases as a vendor or client outgrows the use or need for certain services. However, a lack of visibility into root cause does introduce a good amount of risk.

Risk is a term that the C-Suite can sink their teeth into. Risk mitigation is a common term within the business world, and is more prevalent when talking about things such as compliance. But a lack of understanding behind retention and churn is in itself a form of risk. C-level executives hate this kind of risk because it introduces the fear of the unknown.

If you're looking to build a case for why your company should care more about retention and churn, start by looking at the risk argument first. Specifically, present AX as a way to reduce risk as customer growth carries low-cost, but high pay-off.

2. **If retention isn't perceived as a top priority: account growth opportunities**

   Customer retention growth can't just rely on revenue and usage data to build a picture of whether certain accounts are primed and ready for growth. You need an AX program that brings together relevant metrics side-by-side, including customer satisfaction, revenue, activity and services. After all, a relationship manager or sales executive wouldn't try to up-sell an account where a respondent gave them a 4 on an NPS relationship survey. Just like marketing wouldn't reach out and request that same customer or account to post a review on G2 Crowd.

   Because loyalty and growth are intrinsically tied to the success of a B2B company, having experience data and revenue data in your AX system is essential—whether churn is a problem or not.

Examining your customer satisfaction data against financial data, you are able to ascertain the following:

- The portion of customer revenue that is at risk
- High-priority areas in account experience to focus on
- The opportunities that could lead to account and revenue growth

We'll walk through each of these areas later in the book. Now that you see the importance of bringing together experience and revenue data, next we'll look at possible obstacles that may make the process of integrating revenue data more difficult.

Overcoming Common Obstacles and Challenges

Forbes Insights[14] survey of 300+ C-Suite business executives found that:

"Of those who say that they at least partially practice Revenue Lifecycle Management, bad or incomplete data (30%) is the most often cited shortcoming of their existing programs—a factor that may be impeding them from achieving a true overview of their renewals."

Getting access to financial data can be one challenge, adding it to your solution another. However, when financial data is available it adds an extra dimension to KPIs like the Net Promoter Score, drivers, etc. However, combining revenue figures with metrics like NPS can be a challenging task for B2B companies, from organizational silos to possible legal reasons.

Below we look at the obstacles some companies face with tying ROI to their AX program, as well as their resolutions:

- **Lack of data access**
  Your company's AX champions need to see and use financial data to execute monetization within the program. If your company's financial data is off limits to a CX employee or someone in your department, you should aim to make one of your AX champions someone who already has data access, or perhaps, recruit someone who will.

  Solution: In the previous chapter, we offered a breakdown of how different departments benefit from an AX program. We suggest using this as a guide for pinpointing someone in a role of power when it comes to revenue. You can then build a strong case for their program support. Generally, financial data typically sits in Finance or Account Management departments and includes things like customer details and the revenue associated with it. So, if you're looking for champions to secure the revenue data you need, start there. Or, if your CEO is bought into the vision, have them speak with your CFO.

- **Data restrictions**
  Not every company wants to or is allowed to upload data to the cloud despite the fact that security measures are extremely high with established cloud service providers such as AWS. Data restrictions might also be in place due to certain laws.

  Solution: Companies may circumvent such restrictions through segmentation. It is quite likely that the CRM data they plan to upload contains some segmentation field related to the size of the customer, e.g. a tier size. You can use this angle to discuss anonymizing financial data, for instance, by changing actual figures representing revenue ranges. For example, you may split figures into handy "buckets":

    - #1: $0 - $249,999
    - #2: $250,000 - $499,999
    - #3: $500,000 - $749,999
    - #4: $750,000 - $999,999
    - …

  A revenue of $432,750 will then get the number 2. If these ranges are equally big, you maintain to some extent the proportion between revenue numbers. Using this bucketized approach it's possible to make good assumptions about revenue impact without revealing the individual numbers tied to each account.

- **Poor data quality**
  The second challenge is the accuracy of the financial data at hand. Adding your financial figures to your AX program can only yield clean results if the data you have can be trusted. While a conversation around data quality is not always exciting, it's an important one to have. This conversation isn't just limited to financials. Your CRM and customer data should be as reliable as possible prior to implementing your AX system.

  Solution: Work closely with departments, integration specialists and your team to clean revenue and customer data, as well as update accounts with the appropriate number of contacts.

Once you get the necessary access and clean up accomplished, and are able to upload data for your accounts—congratulations! Not only has your company been given an incredible competitive advantage, but you've also taken the first step to AX success.

In the remainder of this book, we'll look at the two categories of an account experience program, starting with account sentiment.

4

Account Sentiment

The rise of the traditional Voice of the Customer (VoC) program can trace its origins to simple pen and paper. As sketched out in the introduction to this book, companies have used VoC programs to better understand the consumer landscape for years.

While Net Promoter is credited with positioning the CX economy where it is today, it hasn't done so in isolation. Numerous metrics and methodologies are used to capture feedback, and even more to act on it.

As mentioned, account sentiment covers Customer Lifecycle Management activities after the initial sale, such as measuring and analyzing feedback, as well as closed loop activities that help increase retention and employee experience measures.

Specifically, account sentiment covers the following elements of an AX program:

- **Survey program**
  NPS, CSAT, CES, relationship, transactional. There are numerous methods for capturing feedback via a survey program. How and when you ask your customers for feedback should be based on the goals you are trying to achieve.

  Emerging technologies have made connecting with accounts and respondents easier than ever before. B2B companies should utilize account sentiment best practices to optimize their feedback and survey program.
- **Campaign tracking**

How are different areas of your organization tracking success? Does your AX program support the metrics they need to measure to understand and improve performance? Understanding the performance of a survey campaign is vital to ensure you are getting an accurate representation of your client base—and brand perception.

- **Real-time analysis**
  Account sentiment results need to be visible in real-time to increase retention and keep innovation competitive.
- **Streamlined workflows**
  Respondents and accounts hate to be bounced around between departments. A best practice account sentiment program should have the proper workflows in place to ensure issues and opportunities are forwarded to the right people.
- **Closed loop prioritization**
  In some B2B organizations, the loss of a single account can greatly impact the bottom line. Using revenue to prioritize follow-up doesn't mean you are devaluing the needs of other customers, it means that you are addressing the largest fires first to keep the ship afloat for your other clients.
- **Employee satisfaction**
  Want to increase the satisfaction of your accounts? Don't forget to invest in your employees. Because of how important personnel champions and relationship managers are to the success of an AX program, the employee experience requires a unique focus.

B2B companies use account sentiment to gauge relationships across a spectrum of channels for both respondents and whole accounts, as well as prioritize actions and closed loop workflows.

In the following case study, we see how one CRM organization manages their large-scale survey program using account sentiment techniques.

SuperOffice was able to automate aspects of customer relationships that called for digital transformation, while also maintaining the human touch of personalization for multiple account stakeholders.

SuperOffice Uses Account Sentiment to Manage Multi-Layered Stakeholder Contacts

Norwegian-based SuperOffice is one of Europe's leading suppliers of CRM solutions in the B2B market.

The company's software supports businesses in achieving stronger sales, marketing and customer service productivity.

Today, more than 6,000 European companies are using SuperOffice CRM solutions. For SuperOffice this translates into more than 20,000 engaged contacts. So, how does a company manage to obtain valuable, frequent and actionable customer feedback with no organizational overload? The answer: A combination of account sentiment best practices and digital transformation.

SuperOffice kicked off their survey program by focusing on highly engaged accounts and respondents. They defined this level of engagement through the amount of interactions such as meetings, support tickets, sales, etc. It was their belief that these accounts would be the most willing to offer up feedback, as well as provide valuable insights given their level of familiarity with the product.

SuperOffice's team then worked on an algorithm that identified these engaged users and chose to survey a daily number of those users per working day. This strategy proved invaluable in developing deeper relationships with these accounts.

SuperOffice now sends 100 surveys every working day and receives a steady stream of real-time feedback that their sales and CX associates can use to gather insights.

After answering a SuperOffice survey, the data that comes from their account experience system automatically triggers a request in SuperOffice. With this workflow trigger, each detractor case gets automatically assigned to the right department and case manager so the company can act quickly to identify the root cause and save the account from churning.

Measuring and acting on feedback should look fairly similar to other tools you've seen in the CX marketplace before. So what's different within an AX toolset?

The answer:

1. Monetization of accounts
    i. Prioritizing customer experience by the financial impact or influence of decision makers
    ii. Understanding drivers of dissatisfaction by revenue
2. Dealing with complexity
    i. Multiple contacts in client and company
    ii. Hierarchy of Decision Making Unit
    iii. High touch relationships
3. Closed loop workflows
    i. Keeping your promises to clients
    ii. Responding fast to churn alerts
    iii. Amplifying promoters

In this chapter, we'll explain how to put this into practice for your AX program to capture respondent and account sentiment, in addition to best practices for closing the loop in a B2B business.

Surveying Smarter in B2B with AX & Monetization

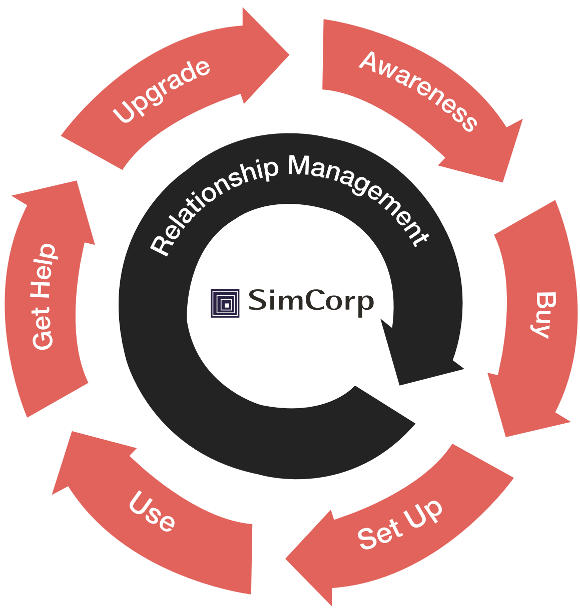
Getting your account experience program off the ground and running means implementing a strategic survey process. Surveys enable companies to measure the satisfaction and engagement of accounts, key decision-makers and other respondents, in the channels relevant to them.

Before kick-starting an AX survey program, your team must consider the following:

- What type of survey should be sent
- Who should be sent the surveys
- How to design the survey to reflect the relevant touch points
- How to prioritize improvements based on the available data.

Below we see a B2B customer journey from SimCorp, a leading investment management software company that sells software to financial institutions. Their customer journey is designed in a circular fashion, as clients upgrade yearly and continuously buy more solutions or new features. Relationship management is a parallel journey within this cycle that is handled by account managers and starts after the initial sale.

Throughout this section, we'll use SimCorp's customer journey to walk through the key aspects of account sentiment.



As mentioned, there are numerous types of surveys and metrics within a VoC program that have become standard in the CX marketplace. There are two distinct survey types that should exist in every B2B customer journey: relationship and transactional surveys. Where the latter are triggered by transactions, relationship surveys are typically conducted with a fixed, consistent frequency. Transactional NPS surveys, or other methods such as CES and CSAT, can also be used to capture individual respondent sentiment in relation to a particular touch point.

For example, SimCorp may send a relationship survey once a quarter to four key contacts, such as a COO, Head of Securities, SVP & Controller or an Asset Manager. They may also trigger a CES survey after a support call to gauge the satisfaction of a single respondent who engaged with the support team.

Because covering the full gambit of surveying best practices in a B2B AX program is beyond the scope of this book, check out The Fine Art of Surveying at www.customergauge.com/resources.

In this section, we'll instead focus on those unique aspects of a B2B AX survey program, including how to choose the right contacts, drivers and business improvements to focus on to strategically improve client experiences and retain revenue.

Surveying the Right People—Prioritized Sending By Revenue and Influence

In Chapter 2, we briefly discussed the importance of identifying individuals on all organizational levels that impact future buying decisions. Not just decision-makers, but influencers on management and employee levels as well. Without this information, B2B companies have a distorted perception of their brand and a more difficult time determining the source of churn.

At CustomerGauge, we often see that B2B companies don't sufficiently survey decision-makers or believe, incorrectly, that the people they survey ARE decision-makers. This may provide a "false-positive CX view" of their brand, meaning the results they see aren't necessarily reflecting reality.

We have also seen examples where only decision-makers were surveyed—and gave very high scores! But, there's a risk here as well. When these decision-makers find new jobs, you'll know little about what the rest of the organization thinks about you.

In one specific instance, we saw the entire executive team in a customer account churn. When the new team arrived, the Net Promoter Score dropped by 80 points. It turned out that everyone but the previous executive team disliked the vendor and voiced this to leadership.

So, how can B2B companies combat issues like this?

Start by looking at the amount of contacts deemed necessary for the retention confidence of an account—specifically the decision makers. Then, focus on the right coverage. Coverage isn't a concept that gets thrown around much in the CX space, but it is critically important in both CX and AX programs.

B2B companies don't sufficiently survey decision-makers or believe, incorrectly, that the people they survey ARE decision-makers. This may provide a "false-positive CX view" of their brand.

Simply put, *coverage* indicates how large a portion of your customer base the collected feedback covers. If you only survey a small fraction of your accounts, it's easier to get a high response rate. However, the response rate alone doesn't tell companies they've captured enough relevant feedback.

According to CustomerGauge's 2018 NPS & CX Benchmarks Report, when coverage grows, so do the sales of existing customers and the share of sales generated by referrals. **We've found two reasons for this:**

- The higher the response rate is, the higher your coverage. Since higher response rates usually mean more engaged customers, high coverage rates usually mean more promoters. The more promoters you have, the more sales to existing customers and referrals you are likely to have too.
- A high coverage rate also allows companies to identify more promoters. Knowing who your promoters are makes it easier to sell more to existing customers. Since promoters are more likely to buy from you, you can better target your sales efforts. Knowing who your promoters are also makes it easier to incentivize them to refer your brand.

But coverage alone isn't enough to tell the whole story. In the forward to this book, Adam Dorrell, CEO of CustomerGauge, discussed the shock in learning that CustomerGauge's top 20 high-value accounts had little to no survey responses and consistently low engagement. "How could this be possible?" he thought. "Our response rates are good, our Net Promoter Score is high, but… we're still experiencing churn and there's clearly a lack of engagement within these accounts." Upon deeper inspection, he quickly realized that key decision makers were being left out of the survey program.

In other words, CustomerGauge wasn't getting the right coverage. Meaning they weren't surveying a large enough portion of their revenue or the right amount of roles in the Decision Making Unit. It was a humbling realization.

Like other B2B enterprises, we needed to first answer an important question: **Just how many contacts should you survey in an account?**

The answer, we've found, depends on the account revenue. As a rule of thumb, in $1 million dollar accounts, there are often at least 9 people involved in new purchase decisions. In hundred thousand dollar accounts, that number is closer to 6. However, it is important to find something that makes sense for your business model.

Salesforce[21], for example, recommends 6-8 contacts when closing a sale lead. We suggest reaching out to your sales organization to learn how many people were involved in the first deal, as this often gives a good indication of how many contacts you need to survey down the line.

The number of known contacts at the user level, in most cases, far outweighs the number of known contacts at the other Decision Making Unit levels. For one thing, they're more involved in the day-to-day of the product/service and seek out support more frequently. But, at the end of the day, the influencers and decision makers make or break a deal. So a bias towards the higher level contacts is also advised.

As an indication for the number of contacts, we would aim for a 3 x 3 model, or three contacts at each level for a million dollar account. You can scale this up or down accordingly. Here is an example of what you can strive for:

Annual Value	Number of Contacts
$1,000,000	9
$100,000	6
$10,000	3
$1,000	1

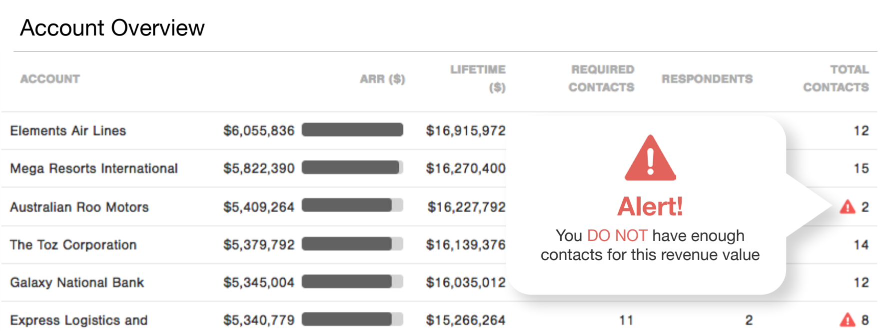
21 Glynn, Fergal. "It Takes 6 to 8 Touches to Generate a Viable Sales Lead. Here's Why." *Salesforce.com*, Salesforce, Apr. 2015, www.salesforce.com/blog/2015/04/takes-6-8-touches-generate-viable-sales-lead-heres-why-gp.html.

Your company will then want to distribute contacts evenly across the Decision Making Unit levels. If you have difficulty finding enough people at the top level, then add more on the second level.

With the right responses, you can learn how to improve account relationships by looking at organizational levels and score drivers. Then, identify the issues that, if solved, will have the biggest impact on improving that relationship. Your organization can then add the plans to their account strategy and include them in your relationship manager's next business review.

SimCorp does a great job of ensuring they have an accurate representation of their feedback. They do this by bonusing account managers based on the number of engaged contacts in each account.

However, it can be difficult to monitor contacts in this way in the long-term, especially in larger B2B organizations. A good AX platform should keep track of the number of engaged contacts in each account. Juxtaposing this kind of information next to revenue, as shown in the image, can also be useful for tackling revenue churn, as companies can prioritize survey campaigns around high-value accounts.


Account Overview

ACCOUNT	ARR ($)	LIFETIME ($)	REQUIRED CONTACTS	RESPONDENTS	TOTAL CONTACTS
Elements Air Lines	$6,055,836	$16,915,972			12
Mega Resorts International	$5,822,390	$16,270,400			15
Australian Roo Motors	$5,409,264	$16,227,792			2
The Toz Corporation	$5,379,792	$16,139,376			14
Galaxy National Bank	$5,345,004	$16,035,012			12
Express Logistics and	$5,340,779	$15,266,264	11	2	8

To better understand the impact contact integrity and proper coverage have on the success of an AX program, let's look at an example:

Let's say Australian Roo Motors is one of your largest B2B accounts, as shown in the image. They've always been loyal, satisfied and profitable customers these last four years. However, over the past five months, there's been a surprising amount of radio silence. Not total cause for panic.

Then, when the quarterly NPS relationship survey from them comes back, your Director of Customer Experience is surprised to find that they've given a six. However, it's the associated comment that strikes further fear:

"We'd like to discuss scaling back some of the feature add-ons, and reducing the total amount of users in the system." When your relationship manager reaches out to reply, they realize that two of your primary contacts, and original advocates, are no longer with the company.

When it comes time for the monthly board meeting, your COO looks at the at-risk revenue, angered to find Australian Roo Motors on the list: "How did this happen? Why is this the first we're hearing of such a large client at risk for churn?"

This story brings to light a number of key takeaways for this section:

- To ensure the reliability of your AX insights, from Net Promoter Scores to driver contributions, proper survey coverage is needed
- Having contacts at each Decision Making Unit level will offer more insight into the sentiment of an account
- Prioritizing survey campaigns by revenue will help reduce large-scale revenue churn

In the next two sections, we'll look at how to strategically choose drivers based on journey touch points. Then, we'll discuss how to prioritize action on internal business and operational improvements using revenue-weighted drivers.

How to Strategically Choose Drivers

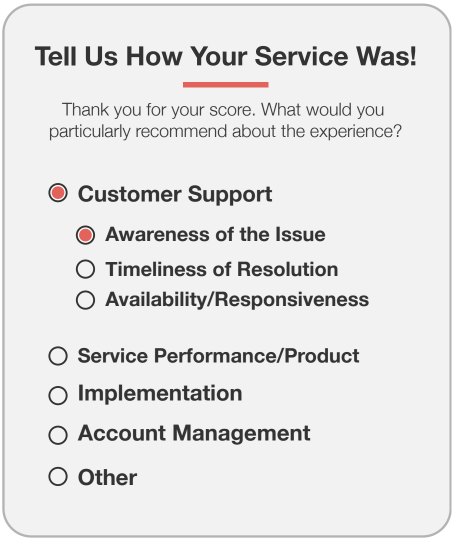
How a company designs their surveys should depend on the touch points within the customer journey. Customer journey mapping can help determine what those driver touch points should be, and also includes a number of other benefits for B2B companies, such as:

- Identifying personas, their goals and expectations
- Listing touch points and the channels in which they occur
- Creating empathy maps explaining the emotions a persona experiences in a touch point
- Visualizing the customer journey

- Connecting insights and attributing their revenue impact

The SimCorp example, shown at the beginning of this section, is a complex B2B journey with two parallel circular journeys: an inner and outer circle. The circularity was due to the fact that accounts are expected to stay for many years and continually buy more products, modules, extended versions and services. In fact, the average customer lifetime is above 10 years, including new customers, which is quite remarkable in their industry.

This outer circle is traditional of other IT companies. The inner circle represents the continued relationship management that happens simultaneously after the initial purchase.



Some customer personas may participate in both journeys and some in only part of the outer journey. To avoid having too many journeys, SimCorp cumulated all personas into these two journeys.

Creating a customer journey map has many cross-departmental uses for B2B businesses. In terms of your survey program, identifying touch points can also help pinpoint survey drivers.

Survey drivers represent the touch points in a customer journey. Within a survey, drivers are represented as tier one and tier two self-select reasons accompanied with different survey questions. They allow companies to conduct short, but frequent surveys, without impacting the quality of results.

AX vs. Market Research

Remember: AX programs help manage and improve the customer lifecycle AND the revenue lifecycle.

Marketing research may be an ancestor to AX, but it is not the primary goal in modern, actionable AX programs.

Market research surveys belong to market research, but can run in parallel, outside an AX program. They will not help you improve your account/customer experience in a measurable way, and they certainly can't be tied to ROI.

Market research surveys can vary quite a bit, but their primary purpose is to investigate specific aspects of the market, such as competitive information, market opportunities, etc.

However, we're not discounting the value such information can hold. Market research can be a valuable tool to get an understanding of a competitive landscape. But they are not a part of an AX program tool set.

Depending on whether a market research survey is conducted by phone or email, the length of said surveys can differ as well. Typical market research phone surveys can go anywhere from 25 to 50 questions. However, online surveys are considerably shorter, with around 10 to 15 or 20 questions.

Account experience surveys use actionable metrics like NPS, CSAT and CES, and in most cases, drivers that represent important journey touch points. This allows companies to keep surveys lean, but still incredibly valuable.

Beyond increasing response rates, data accuracy and keeping surveys short and frequent, drivers can also provide a great reference point for prioritizing areas of your business to improve based on revenue data.

Prioritizing Business Improvements Through Monetization

Analyzing data allows B2B companies to answer questions such as:

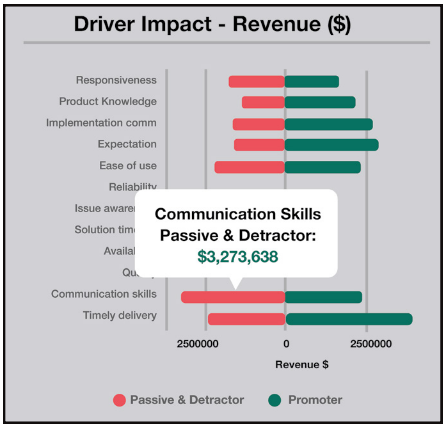
- Why are respondents and accounts detractors, passives or promoters?
- Which elements of your account experience should you improve to get higher scores?
- Which improvements will have the highest impact on your score?
- Do these improvement create less detractors, more promoters or both?

Despite giving greater visibility into your accounts, there's still tough decisions to be made surrounding what to improve once you obtain feedback. A good AX solution should allow a dual view of both the overall sentiment AND the overall impact on revenue churn.

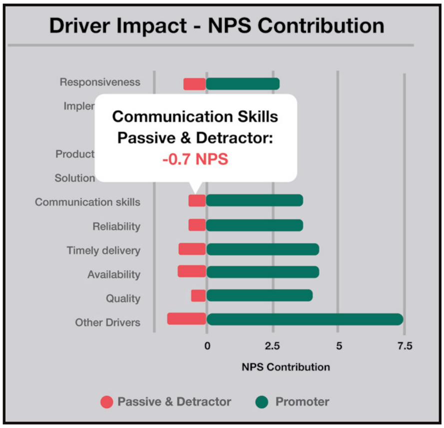
As previously mentioned, survey drivers represent different touch points and business areas within an organization. By associating revenue contribution with drivers, companies can see which areas of their business are creating the greatest risk of revenue churn or retention.

An AX solution should allow you a multitude of options when it comes to analyzing revenue and customer satisfaction against key insights. In the image shown below, we see both NPS contribution and revenue contribution for certain drivers.

Drivers



Revenue Contribution



NPS Contribution

Why are both of these important? It all comes back to priorities: even if a driver has the most negative impact on your Net Promoter Score, that might not necessarily mean it has the largest impact on revenue churn. However, being able to prioritize by these different views gives companies options on what to focus on first.

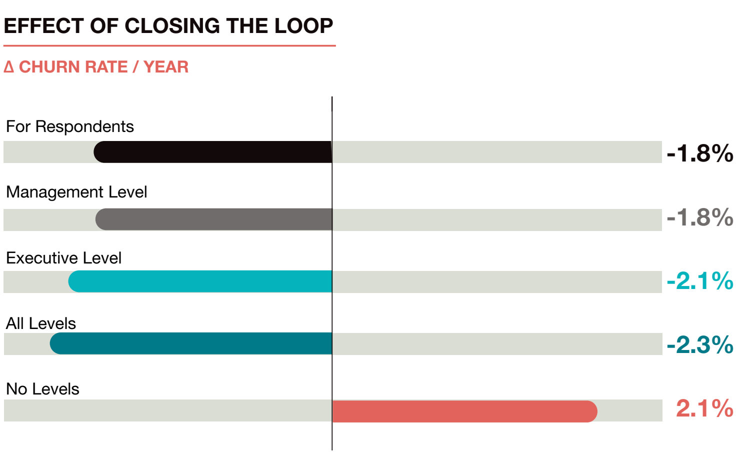
Besides driving growth, the second outcome any AX program should aim for is improving account experiences—and that can't happen unless your company is closing the loop.

Closing the Loop at Every Level to Improve Retention

You've listened to your accounts and their key stakeholders—now what?

Closing the loop is not a revolutionary concept in the CX industry. Customer support found its footing in the early 1960s with the creation of the modern contact center. Now, with the advent of real-time technologies, companies are turning from the reactionary function of the their support origins into proactive customer partners.

In CustomerGauge's 2018 NPS & CX Benchmarks Report[22], 90% of companies reported closing the loop at some level. However, it was those companies who closed the loop at every level that experienced the largest gains.



22 Christensen, et al. "2018 NPS & CX Benchmarks Report." *CustomerGauge*, 2018, https://customergauge.com/benchmarks-report.

But closing the loop at every level has an additional benefit: organizational buy-in and operational efficiency. Only companies with buy-in can manage to close the loop at every level. So not only does cross-level adoption spell success in terms of improving the retention of your customers, but the retention of your AX program as well.

Closing the loop in B2B involves interacting with multiple respondents in an accounts. This gives an additional or alternative closed-loop process to only closing the loop with individual respondents. This additional closed-loop process is mainly relevant for relationship surveys, but can be used for transactional surveys too or in combination with both.

In this section, we'll review best practices for closing the loop in a B2B AX program.

Quarterly Business Reviews (QBRs)

When we first introduced the role of the relationship manager, we mentioned the importance of QBRs in closing the loop with accounts. Note, while QBRs are a traditional term found in the customer success space, we highly suggest applying the concept to your own industry, as many others have started to do. We also suggest having a regular and frequent cadence to them.

QBR are—as implied by their name—quarterly meetings with a customer's Decision Making Unit. The purpose of these meetings is to discuss the customer's strategic targets and how your company can support them.

Moreover, a QBR is:

- An ideal framework to close the loop with B2B accounts and respondents
- Strategic in nature and helps the relationship manager understand the account's business, future plans and how to deliver more value based on those factors
- An opportunity to show that you have completed the action items from a previous meeting
- An opportunity to create trust between you and your client

It's important that these meetings provide value to both parties. As such, relationship managers should be well-prepared beforehand with key talking points and meeting outcomes.

Prerequisites to a QBR

Prior to a business review, there are a number of steps that relationship managers should undertake:

1. **If this is your first business review**
   Be sure to clearly explain the QBR process beforehand to respondents that are participating in the meeting. Let them know what the relationship manager's role is beforehand and what their role is prior to the business review. Inform them that you will be sending a survey prior to the meeting to get an accurate perception of sentiment.
2. **Sending the relationship survey**
   First and foremost, a relationship survey should be sent prior to the meeting for key stakeholders in the business. Prior to the survey send, managers should ensure their contact data is clean and sent to the right contacts. In the survey invitation, be sure to explain to the customers why taking the survey is an important part of the QBR process and that it should only take a few minutes.
3. **Scheduling the QBR**
   Schedule the QBR in advance and ask for the contact information on relevant stakeholders. The purpose of your QBR should always be to get facetime with those who took the survey and/or those who have buying power.
4. **Setting expectations**
   We always suggest providing an agenda before a QBR. This agenda can be updated as necessary, but its purpose is to set expectations. Underline that during the business review you expect to have an open discussion about scores, comments and drivers, and in particular how to improve those scores. We suggest keeping scores anonymous as the issue is not who gave which score, but why they gave that score.

Conducting a Quarterly Business Review

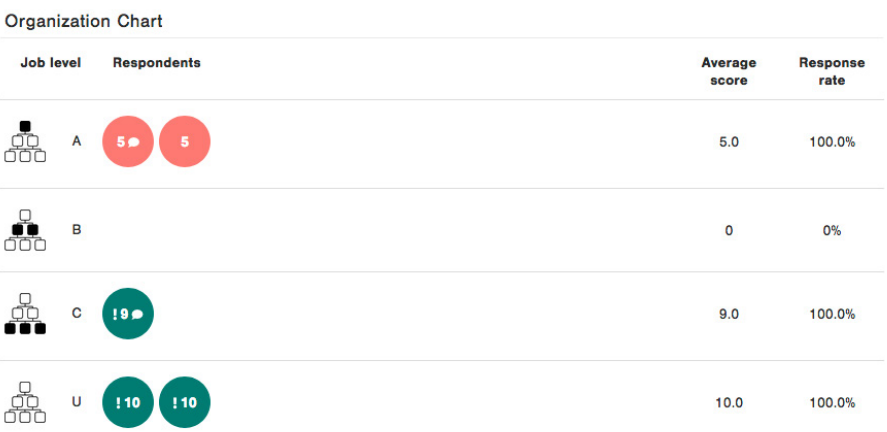
At every QBR, the relationship manager is expected to deliver a presentation that covers the scores, comments, and other feedback received during the quarter. This is also a vital time to understand the perception of your company's brand with different stakeholders.

Are there differences based on varying experiences?

For instance, decision makers may score you poorly and list Customer Support as the reason because they "heard" your support unit didn't deliver the proper levels of support. Your support unit may, however, be a scapegoat for other issues in the customer's organization. So, showing scores—including transactional scores for your Customer Support—and the drivers of the scores may align perception with reality.

Additionally, QBRs may reveal that your program lacks the necessary amount of contacts based on revenue. In the illustration below, we see an organizational chart that shows the scores and comments at each stakeholder level.

However, we also see another element: some missing data. At level B, we lack respondents. This may indicate that some contacts are not engaged or that your survey may not be optimized for easy completion.



Overall there are a number of specific elements a QBR can cover:

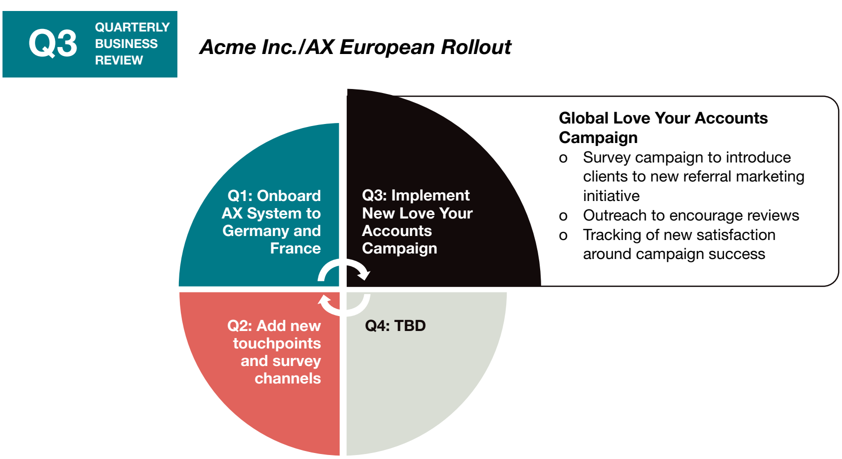
- **Satisfaction review**
  As mentioned previously, a review of scores and comments from the latest relationship survey are typical of a QBR. Who is and is not satisfied with your current services? How can you address these issues here?
- **Support review**
  This is a good time to review other relevant metrics, such as any

outstanding issues, resolved issues, open cases, etc.

- **Maturity assessment/Benchmarking**
  Is the account achieving the goals and action items agreed to in the previous QBR? How has the vendor enabled them to do so? Should these goals be reevaluated? In terms of benchmarking, if the data is available, how does this account compare to other similar industries? Is there any relevant benchmarking information you can offer them?
- **Next steps**
  Every QBR should have action items and agreed outcomes at the end of the meeting. During the QBR, relationship managers and stakeholders should agree on what 3 to 4 activities would improve the relationship the most. These activities may be owned by your company or by the customer, but regardless should be notated on the account.

  If the customer owns an activity then remind them, in good time, before the next business review meeting. If you own an activity, make sure to either solve the issue and inform the customer about any progress at the next business review.

  In the illustration shown, we see a Q3 business review where the company is looking to institute a new referral marketing campaign to customers. A relationship manager would review to see if these objects were met, and then discuss what initiatives the company is looking to do in Q4. Clearly, this is not a first year customer, but the continued support of key outcomes is necessary for review.



One tip for encouraging continued engagement during QBRs: Rotate a different theme for each quarter's business meeting, as shown in the QBR illustration. This will allow you to do a deep dive on four different topics throughout the year, rather than skim multiple topics in each meetings. And it encourages them to come back next time!

At the end of a QBR, the relationship manager should schedule a meeting for the next quarter to ensure alignment, attendance and establish a deadline for achieving certain milestones.

Closing the Loop with Transactional Surveys

Despite QBRs being the most effective way to close the loop with B2B accounts, if your company incorporates transactional surveys into their account sentiment survey campaigns (and we highly recommend they do), then you should also be closing the loop with respondents for transactional surveys as well. For the most part, these respondents will be end users. Ensuring the same quick and proficient follow-up on a transactional basis is important for keeping these stakeholders happy as well.

Closing the Loop at the Management and Executive Level

In some cases, the frontline may not have the clearance or authority to solve certain issues brought up in a QBR or survey feedback. Middle management and executives serve a vital role in closing the loop with B2B accounts in many industries. Typically, there are three main activities middle management are responsible for when closing the loop. When closing the loop, employees at this level must:

- Cross-organizationally align objectives and priorities and embed them into daily, weekly, and monthly KPIs
- Manage performance by identifying top and poor performers
- Share best practices from top performers and implement them across relevant departments

The example illustrated below shows how a Support Department Manager in a B2B company identified a number of best practices based on Net Promoter Scores for individual markets, as well as several operational metrics. The two first best practices, “Triage” and “Task force”, were processes used in the North American market.

Best Practices in Support

Best Practices	North America	North Europe	South Europe	Middle East	South East Asia	China
Triage	Identified	Planned		Implemented	Planned	Implemented
Task force	Identified	Planned	Implemented	Planned		
Service training	Implemented	Planned	Identified	Planned	Planned	
Root Cause training	Planned			Planned	Identified	

During the “Triage” task, the North American support unit divided tickets into three groups:

- Those that could be solved, fast, by junior employees
- Those that could only be solved, fast, by senior employees
- And those that couldn’t be solved fast by any employee

By assigning different experience levels to these tickets, the North American unit was able to bring down the average resolution time considerably. The other best practice, “Task force,” was used for the last group of tickets, or “those who couldn’t be solved fast by any employee.”

Depending on the customer and the expertise required to solve a ticket, the team manager would decide if a task force should be applied. A task force was a small group of experienced employees, typically 2 to 4 people, that would work on the ticket until solved. The customer would be notified that a task force was established and that they had to provide assistance when needed.

These type of workflow changes are something only employees at the middle management level can implement. However, they can have a significant impact on the success of an AX program.

Executives can also close the loop, and are necessary allies in creating the long-term adoption of strategic and cultural changes across a company.

At the executive level, closed loop activities include:

- Handling strategic and structural issues
- Maintaining external support
- Maintaining internal support

The executive team must look at drivers from a global perspective and decide which to solve. Some of these issues may already be solved locally, at the management level, however certain issues can only be solved at the top level of an organization. Some issues are purely strategic, as they require investments, cross-organizational alignment at the top level, or even organizational changes. Examples of these strategic issues could include:

- Part of a customer journey falls between two units and they cannot agree who owns the issue.
- A strategic decision to cut costs in a support department turns into a major point of detraction. The executive team must decide if they want to invest more to increase satisfaction.

A company that wants to handle these issues must establish a flow that allows frontline personnel to highlight and forward the issues to middle management. Middle management must approve these issues and document the impact, for example, by referring to a negative NPS contribution or financial impact.

The executive level—or a team assigned by this level—must collect the issues, qualify them and ensure they are discussed, and that stakeholders are informed continuously of their progress and the results. We mostly see that the AX program coalition, often the customer experience team, handles this work and involves some “AX board” of executives or senior managers when needed.

Prioritizing Follow-Up Based on Revenue

If your company has the resources to close the loop with all accounts—do it. However, it is still possible to do so strategically.

Monetization encourages the upload of revenue data to better understand the ROI and operational cost savings of an AX program.

Earlier we discussed the concept of revenue-weighted drivers/touch points, and how companies could prioritize improvements based on which areas would have the largest impact on their bottom line and customer satisfaction.

A similar approach can be taken when it comes to closing the loop with accounts. Using the average scores from a B2B account alongside revenue data allows companies to SWOT which accounts to focus on at a high level. Tools like the one illustrated below are not only valuable from an account growth perspective (more on that in the next chapter), but for developing strategic retention strategies for key accounts.

As shown here, $2.4 million in at-risk revenue is no laughing matter. Once you understand which of these accounts are at risk, you can go in and identify how to improve that -13 NPS.
A carefully crafted closed-loop strategy is necessary for streamlining an AX program. But, technology and strategy can only get you so far. Having the right people in place that share your company's customer-centric vision is invaluable.

In the final section of this chapter, we'll discuss how account sentiment techniques can be used to champion the success of your workforce and improve the employee experience.

Employee Experience—Retaining Your AX Champions

A poor employee experience (EX) can reverberate throughout an account experience program and negatively impact long-term strategic goals around the initiative. In their research entitled, Building Business Value with Employee Experience[23], MIT CISR found that companies labeled as employee experience leaders had 2x the Net Promoter Score and 25% greater profitability than low performing EX companies.

MIT CISR found that companies labeled as employee experience leaders had 2x the Net Promoter Score and 25% greater profitability than low performing EX companies.

Despite similar mounting evidence that investing in the employee experience is necessary for bottom line growth and customer satisfaction, few B2B companies are offering up resources or developing strategies to tackle employee attrition. But, why?

In Chapter 2, we touched on the importance that each department has on the success of an AX program. However, when it comes to managing the growth of a business, churn isn't just a customer issue. Taking care of the employees that make your company's vision a reality is imperative. As such, every AX program needs to support the management and improvement of the employee experience.

And, while some B2B businesses are making strides in this effort, many are lagging behind. In these businesses, HR, the most direct owner of the employee experience, is not considered the "right-hand" of a CEO. Typically, this role is reserved for VPs and C-Suite executives of other revenue-generating departments such as Sales, Marketing and Finance.

This fact seems odd given HR's necessity in providing critical insights to the operational success of a company.

23 Dery, Kristine, and Ina Sebastian. "Building Business Value with Employee Experience." Center for Information Systems Research - MIT Sloan School of Management, 15 June 2017, cisr.mit.edu/blog/documents/2017/06/15/2017_0601_employeeexperience_derysebastian.pdf/.

Despite this disconnect between HR and the C-Suite, Deloitte Insights[24] found that nearly 80% of executives rated employee experience as very important. However, only a mere 22% believed their company was building a differentiated employee experience.

What do these contradictions tell us?

Generally, that there are three major challenges facing the state of employee experience today:

1. **Lack of C-level HR roles in current organizations**

   As mentioned, HR is often disconnected from the executive level of a company. While some enterprises have begun introducing roles such as the Chief Culture Officer, they are few and far between. Therefore, despite leadership understanding EX is important, no one with the insight to enact changes are designated with the power to do so.

2. **Lack of resources and tools**

   The siloed nature of HR often puts their budget and needs in the backseat of an organization. Unfortunately, this means HR is often left to use antiquated tools and methods to manage, analyze and engage with the workforce. This leaves them little information to advocate for changes.

3. **Lack of timely engagement and follow-up**

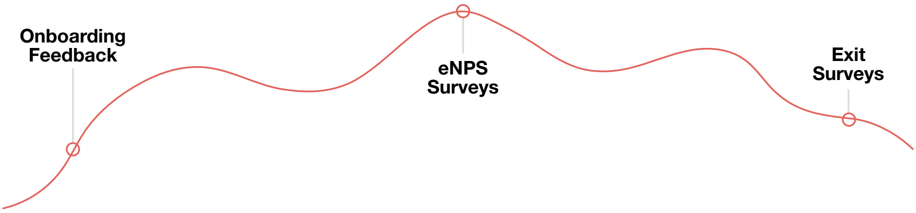
   Many companies fail to survey and engage with employees on a meaningful basis to impact attrition. Moreover, few have the resources or training in place to devise proper closed loop procedures as part of an engagement survey.

Looking at MIT CISR's findings, it's clear that companies who invest in the employee experience are benefiting from both improved CX and increases in profitability.

For companies struggling with this, there are a number of account sentiment features within an AX program that can help further improve the employee experience and empower HR.

24 Bersin, Josh, et al. "The Employee Experience: Culture, Engagement, and Beyond." Deloitte United States, 28 Feb. 2017, www2.deloitte.com/insights/us/en/focus/human-capital-trends/2017/improving-the-employee-experience-culture-engagement.html.

Like account sentiment surveys, employee experience surveys use similar methods to gather insights about your workforce—from onboarding surveys to quarterly employee Net Promoter Score (eNPS) surveys to exit surveys.



Companies can also incorporate additional anonymity to encourage large scale participation, and then allow employees to wave it if they wish to address the issues raised with their manager. Insights like these enable HR to have a larger presence in the boardroom and empowers employees to shape their working environment.

Now that we've discussed the fundamentals of account sentiment, it's time to dive into the latter part of the AX promise: account intelligence.

5

Account Intelligence

While the concept of Customer Lifecycle Management has been standard in the industry for years, RLM, or Revenue Lifecycle Management, is a relatively new focus in the B2B market. Earlier in this book we discussed Forbes Insights'[14] article on the rise of RLM in the marketplace.

In their report, Forbes surveyed C-Suite executives to discover how B2B companies are maximizing their retention revenue activities. Their research found that 72% of senior management recognized customer engagement as a top priority.

However, very few put retaining existing customers and maximizing customer lifetime value above expanding their customer base (they often rated at least 10% lower on both cases). In fact, only 29% of C-Suite respondents said maximizing their customer lifetime value was a strategic priority.

What does this tell us?

Well, that B2B companies are missing out on growth opportunities that can have a substantial impact on their bottom line. **CustomerGauge's 2018 NPS & CX Benchmarks Report found that companies who excelled at RLM experienced a 20% increase in up- and cross-sales and 2X the referral sales volume of non-RLM practitioners.**

Having a satisfied and profitable customer base can also improve businesses in the eyes of potential investors or acquisition opportunities, as the company SingleHop (now part of INAP) would find out.

Positioned for Growth—The SingleHop Story

When SingleHop, a subsidiary of INAP and a leading provider of Hosted Private Clouds and Managed Hosting technologies, first decided to onboard an AX platform, they were a young company experiencing exceptionally high growth. At the time, they were looking to better understand feedback around certain product lines to remain innovative.

Since 2011, their AX program has proved a vital force in not only scaling their customer experiences, but also positioning them as a customer-centric leader in a highly competitive market.

With this mature AX program, SingleHop now has a holistic view of the coverage and types of services their individual accounts needs, allowing them to fine-tune product offerings and pinpoint accounts for greater growth. In 2018, SingleHop felt the success of their hard work:

- 50% increase in retention
- 2x revenue growth
- 42% bump in NPS
- 7x acquisition by INAP, $132 million

"It's really about being as proactive as possible when it comes to customer experience, as well as transparent in the services you provide and proving your value to the customer on a daily basis." – TJ Waldorf, VP of Marketing, INAP

SingleHop[25] made retention and NPS a centerpiece of their boardroom KPIs. They improved their standing with their customer base and positioned themselves as leaders in their industry.

And they're clearly not the only ones. The people over at Dell are continuing their push towards customer-centricity since their time with Bain. Today they are focusing on RLM initiatives to drive growth:

"We're trying to drive our customers toward our consulting services, our software services and deeper into our technology services. I think that's something we're getting stronger at, but our work there is still not as good as our customer acquisition through

25 "INAP Completes Acquisition of SingleHop." *SingleHop*, Feb. 2018, www.singlehop.com/press/inap-completes-acquisition-singlehop/.

upsell. I do think retention is definitely a strength of ours as well. If I were to say onboarding, upsell, renewal, then retention and probably adoption and cross-sell are where we're developing."

—Lou Mabley, Executive Director of Services, Dell[14]

Within the AX model, we refer to Revenue Lifecycle Management activities as account intelligence. Within the account intelligence framework, there is an increased focus on customer lifetime value and how B2B organizations can improve value for customers through RLM activities while also increasing revenue growth.

Specifically, account intelligence covers the following activities:

- **Activity monitoring**
  Product usage isn't enough to paint an accurate picture of engagement. Additional factors from marketing emails to revenue to feedback matter in building an accurate portrait of AX engagement and help build a line of defense against churn.
- **Opportunity tracking and creation**
  Whatever title your relationship managers hold in your organization, there's always a sales element that must be fulfilled to grow revenue within existing accounts. Account intelligence addresses how to handle and track up-sale and cross-sale activities within accounts.
- **Predictive analytics**
  Once your company uploads revenue and financial data for accounts alongside CX metrics, it becomes easier, for example, to predict how shifts in revenue or NPS influence one another. Account intelligence features like predictive analytics introduce greater strategic planning into your AX program.
- **Referral marketing and reviews**
  The power of word of mouth is what drove experts like Fred Reichheld to create the Net Promoter Score in the first place. Promoters are valuable, and AX programs provide the best practices that allow companies to tap into this Voice of the Account.

To begin our discussion, let's dive into one of the most important metrics in any AX program: CLV.

Let's Talk About Customer Lifetime Value

You can't have a discussion about account intelligence without first addressing the customer lifetime value. And that's because the value of a loyal customer can't be understated. Loyal customers…

- Stay longer
- Buy more
- Refer your brand
- Are less price sensitive
- Are easier to serve
- Provide constructive feedback

So, before we dive into the other sections of this chapter, let's look at defining CLV with some simple examples.

The CLV is the net present value of the future stream of cash flow attributable to a customer. The equation for calculating the CLV is as shown:

Customer Lifecycle Value Formula

$$\text{CLV} = \sum_{n=0}^{N} \frac{M_n}{(1+r)^n}$$

Without getting too overcomplicated, here's how we define the known elements:

- N is the customer lifetime in years
- M_n is the margin in year n, i.e. the revenue minus operating costs
- $1 / (1 + r)^n$ is the discount factor (and r the discount rate)

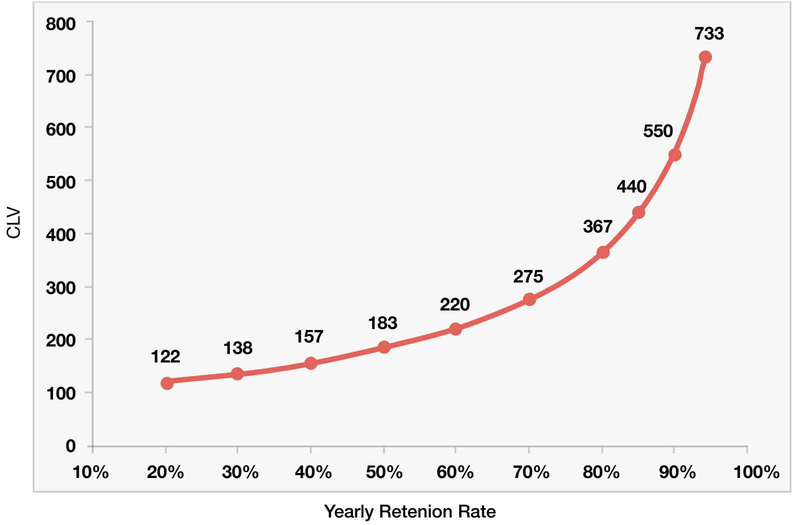
Currently, several factors are unknown. To calculate the CLV, companies can use varying levels of sophistication and accuracy, ranging from a crude heuristic technique to complex predictive analytics. To better explain the formula, let's use an example.

In the table below, we show how to calculate the CLV within a B2B non-SaaS tech example, where a customer has an average lifetime of 6 years.

Year	Revenue	Cost	Margin	Discount Factor	Present Value
0		5200	-5200	1.00	-$5,200.00
1	30000	5000	25000	0.90	$22,500.00
2	33000	4750	28250	0.81	$22,882.00
3	36300	4513	31788	0.73	$23,173.09
4	39930	4287	35643	0.66	$23,385.45
5	43923	4073	39850	0.59	$23,531.30
6	48315	3869	44446	0.53	$23,620.64
				CLV=	$133,892.98

For simplicity sake, we will assume that the discount rate is 10% per year. When we continue the calculation for every year and add all present values, we get a CLV of $133,892.98. As the example illustrates, CLV grows, unsurprisingly, with the customer lifetime. In addition, it grows exponentially with the retention rate. Let's see how:

In the previous example, we used numbers that reflect a B2B non-SaaS company to better understand CLV. In the next chart, we simplified our numbers to show the impact of retention on CLV.



This example assumes that a customer has a profit margin of $100 every year and a discount rate is 10%. If the retention rate is 20%, the customer pays $100 the first year and an average of $20 the second year, which discounted gives a CLV of $18.18. In year 3, there are only 4% of customers left that contribute with a CLV of $3.31. Adding contributions from every year gives a CLV of 122.

A retention rate of 10% more has a different impact on CLV, depending on the initial retention rate. If you improve your retention rate from 20% to 30%, the CLV only grows by $16. However, if you grow the retention rate from 80% to 90%, the CLV grows by $183. So, the higher the retention rate, the higher the impact on the CLV.

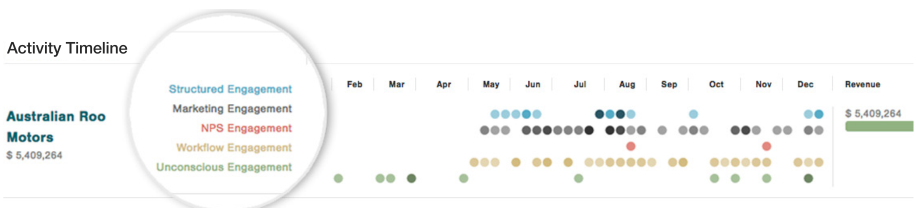
In our chapter on account sentiment, we identified actions and closed loop best practices for maintaining account relationships. However, for a B2B growth strategy to be successful, companies need better insight into the activities across their accounts.

Reactionary to Predictive Account Management

Connecting relevant customer data into your AX platform can provide greater clarity into the patterns and habits of your accounts. This is helpful for understanding and predicting if any of your accounts are at risk for churning. However, undertaking this kind of initiative requires the right data. In this section, we'll look at the factors that will turn your account management practices from reactionary to predictive.

Spend, Say, Do

In the example illustration below, we see a number of metrics being measured on a monthly basis. This goes beyond a typical customer success mindset of usage data and into a multitude of interactions a brand has with an account.



But what exactly are these types of engagement within an AX program?

Those familiar with the Spend, Say, Do model might know. To become predictive in an AX program, B2B companies need to equip their teams with the tools to monitor every facet of an account relationship. The Spend, Say, Do model does just that.

Let's dig deeper into the characteristics illustrated:

- **Spend**
  "Spend" allows companies to identify where revenue is coming from, specifically the ability to segment customer based on their financial commitment to you: past performance, spend trends, company size, etc. Who are your high value customers? Who are your "high spenders"?
- **Say**

  "Say" is a structured approach to customer feedback and follow-up. Specifically, it encompasses VoC metrics, which uses a feedback loop and comments to tell a story around the customer experience and identify the root cause behind that feedback. Are customers satisfied with your brand? Would they recommend your company to others?

- **Do**

  "Do" taps into the more traditional customer success metrics, namely customer activity and behavioral data. How are companies interacting with your brand? Have they been opening your emails?

AX programs use the Spend, Say, Do model to make their B2B retention activities more predictive than reactionary. Specifically, these overlapping data points enable B2B companies to foresee any activities, or lack thereof, that may be a red flag for churn.

Digging into Churn

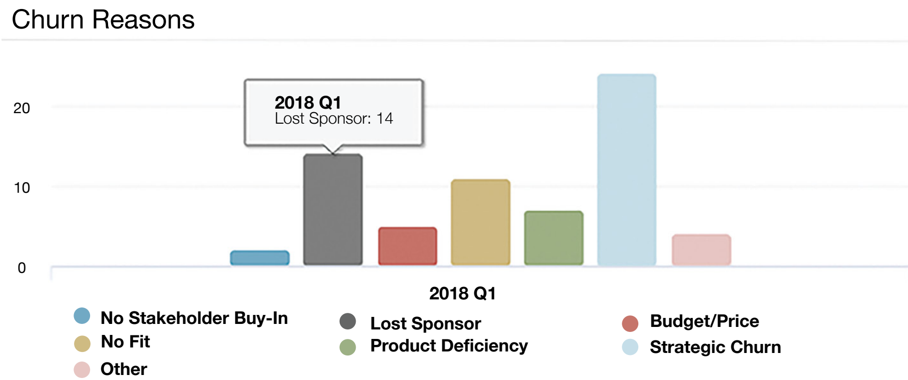
Losing a high value, or highly loved, customer can be a bitter blow. There's often a tendency to bury the bad news internally, or go on the defensive and blame the customer for the breakup. However, conducting a post-mortem deep dive into your churned accounts is necessary to ensure you don't make the same mistakes twice.

At SaaStr 2019, Gillian Heltai, SVP of Client Services at TalkDesk, discussed how her company achieved a net retention rate of 130%—by focusing on the things that went wrong in TalkDesk's customer relationships.

During her presentation, Gillian recommended following three steps when faced with a customer crisis:

1. Have a deep dive into what caused a customer to churn, and really analyze the root cause—without blaming anyone.
2. A good crisis is a terrible thing to waste! If you have bugs, service downtime or a product issue, use this as an opportunity to contact your customers. Show vulnerability and build a relationship during the hard times.
3. When customer feedback is bad, many companies tend to want to hide it from the CEO. This is the wrong approach. Your leadership team needs raw feedback to justify large scale changes and investments. In other words, having this data shouldn't be seen as a blemish on a particular performance, but an opportunity to recommend and get approval for solutions that may need C-Suite backing.

Gillian's first point emphasizes looking at the reasons behind why old accounts were lost. Tracking churn reasons through the analysis of previous relationship surveys or through churn surveys can help mitigate similar issues in the future. In other words, they provide a guide for what actions should be taken around areas of the business line to stop churn in the future.



Some of the takeaways from these churn reasons can also be indicative of additional growth opportunities. As your relationship with an account grows, so too do their expanding needs. Looking at account growth as one-sided isn't realistic or accurate. Identifying how you can better serve your customers may involve introducing additional features or services. In the next few sections of this book, we'll dive into the account growth activities within the account intelligence model.

Up-sales and Cross-sales

According to Forrester[26], accounts that have a good experience with a brand are 3.6x more likely to buy other services and products. Amazon has perfected the art of up- and cross-sales in the B2C eCommerce market. In fact, over 35%[27] of Amazon's revenue is from its killer cross-sales strategy.

26 "The ROI of CX Transformation." *Forbes.com*, Forbes, https://reprints.forrester.com/#/assets/2/73/RES136233/reports?cm_mmc=OSocial_Twitter-_-Watson%2BCore_Watson%2BCore%2B-%2BConversation-_-WW_WW-_-Forrester%2BReport%2BROI%2BCase%2BStudy%2BOct%2B27&cm_mmca1=000027BD&cm_mmca2=10004432.

27 Cohn, Chuck. "A Beginner's Guide To Upselling And Cross-Selling." *Forbes*, Forbes Magazine, 15 May 2015, www.forbes.com/sites/chuckcohn/2015/05/15/a-beginners-guide-to-upselling-and-cross-selling/#dbbbbeb2912e.

However, translating over the "Other Customer Also Bought These…" strategy to a B2B model isn't entirely intuitive.

Accounts that have a good experience with a brand are 3.6x more likely to buy other services and products.

Before we dive into why B2B companies might struggle with account growth, let's clarify the difference between our presented terminology:

Up-sales are those sales where the customer purchases a more expensive service or item than originally intended. *Cross-sales*, on the other hand, refers to sales of a different product or service to an existing customer. Below we have a formula for calculating the percentage of up- and cross-sales

$$\textit{Up-Sell/ Cross-Sell Rate}(\%) = \frac{\text{\# of People Who Purchase Add-On or Upgrade}}{\text{Total \# of Transactions}}$$

Earlier in this chapter we discussed customer lifetime value (CLV). The examples in that section showed that as retention grows so does the lifetime value of that customer. Monetization involves activities that improve and expand CLV both to the benefit of the customer and the B2B enterprise.

According to Gartner[28], despite a 2.3x increase in the size of the average sales teams' B2B portfolios, "only 28% of sales leaders believe existing account management channels meet cross-selling account growth targets."

This indicates a growing issue within B2B enterprises around the role of the relationship manager. Earlier in this book we discussed how integral this

28 "Drive Account Growth Through Smarter Account Management." *Gartner IT Glossary*, Gartner, Inc., www.gartner.com/en/sales-service/trends/account-growth.html.

concept was to the retention and growth of accounts.

However, the diversity of skillset required for this type of job cannot be understated. Not only do individuals in these types of positions serve as the first line of defense in mitigating churn, but they now take on an entirely new sales position within an organization to support the customer growth funnel. And according to Gartner, this isn't being supported with the necessary tools and insights to get the job done.

So, how can companies position themselves for growth with existing accounts? Let's look at some of the facts:

- **Great customer service is not enough**

  88% of the relationship managers surveyed in Gartner's report wrongly asserted that great customer service can translate into growth. However, this same report found that this simply isn't true. To change this mindset, B2B companies must teach relationship managers that account growth activities help support the use cases of their accounts. Which brings us to our next point…

- **Relationship managers must be customer improvement leaders** According to Gartner, the value B2B relationship managers provide is found in their ability to give customers a new perspective on "how they might operate their businesses (i.e., new ways to make money, save money, mitigate risk, etc.), a vision forward for their business and the [perceived] value of a commercial relationship."

  Relationship managers have a dual responsibility within an organization to provide value to both their accounts and their company. Because of this, relationship managers' greatest strength is guiding their accounts into using their services and products to grow and improve their own businesses. Executing this customer improvement responsibility effectively, says Gartner, can lead to a 45% increase in account growth alone.

- **Give relationship managers the tools they need to support growth** S o how do relationship managers and account management leaders identify where improvements and growth opportunities exist within an account? An AX platform that supports the sales farmer function of a relationship manager is essential for this task. At the end of the previous chapter, we introduced the SWOT model. This positioned revenue opportunities next to CRM and satisfaction metrics to determine at-risk and strong accounts.

Tools like these are fantastic for identifying known opportunities within a customer base, from both an up-sale and cross-sale perspective.

Up- and cross-sales activities aren't the only areas where account growth and monetization are possible. Customer marketing relies heavily on the insights gained through an account experience program for strategically identifying referral marketing and review opportunities.

Referral Marketing, Reviews and AX

Using an AX program to improve referral marketing and initiate a review program can shorten the sales cycle, onboard more qualified accounts, and increase overall CLV. So, why are so many B2B companies reluctant to incorporate these kinds of customer marketing activities into their B2B CX efforts? In this section, we'll look at best practices for doing both.

Amplifying the Customer Voice with Referral Marketing

Referral marketing is a marketing discipline that leverages customers to bring in new business. Either it creates the circumstances where people feel inclined to refer your products/services or it incentivizes people to actively refer you, for example, by offering the existing customer and the referred customer discounts on future purchases.

Referral marketing is the intersection between the marketing and customer growth funnels, and demonstrates once again why a true AX program is cross-departmental.

According to research from Demand Metric and RewardStream, 60% of companies do referral marketing in some way, though only 5% of these companies have a system to support it. CustomerGauge's Next-Generation Net Promoter white paper[29] revealed that only 39% of responding companies track referrals.

29 Christensen, Jørgen Bo. "Next-Generation Net Promoter®." CustomerGauge. http://content.customergauge.com/next- generation-net-promoter.

Referral marketing is strategically smart from a monetization and retention perspective, as it leverages loyalty to promote growth and increase the overall CLV:

- **Referred accounts are more loyal than non-referred accounts**
  The referral establishes immediate trust with a brand. Companies and/or organizational leaders jeopardize their own reputations when referring colleagues and businesses to a brand, and even their own relationships with the referred customer. People will only refer if they truly believe in the company. This level of trust not only helps B2B businesses win new business at a lower cost, but increase loyalty over the customer lifetime.
- **Get the right accounts from the start**
  People only refer when it makes sense. If people think that a product or service isn't relevant to a party, they will not refer it. So, referrals are more likely to attract the right customers from the start. This makes the initial sale easier and cheaper from an acquisition standpoint, as well as ensures easier adoption of products and services later down the line.
- **Referred accounts come with higher value**
  Referred accounts often come at a higher lifetime value because they start at a higher level of trust. In an empirical study by Wharton Business School, a large German bank's referred customers churned 18% slower than non-referred customers and had a 16% higher customer lifetime value[30].

80% of reviews originate from follow-up emails by companies asking customers to refer or review their product/services.

Very few companies—in fact less than 10% according to CustomerGauge's 2018 NPS & CX Benchmarks report—use AX programs in connection with referral marketing. Since an AX program identifies who's likely to refer new customers, there is definitely some potential in such programs for growth.

Some companies assume that simply having promoters is an indication of future referrals. However, this is far from the truth. According to Northwestern University[31], 80% of reviews originate from follow-up emails by companies

30 Gains, Brandon. "17 Surprising Referral Marketing Statistics." *CustomerThink.com*, CustomerThink, 11 Jan. 2017, customerthink.com/17-surprising-referral-marketing-statistics/.

31 "How Online Reviews Influence Sales." *Northwestern.edu*, Spiegel Research Center | Northwestern,

asking customers to refer or review their product/services.

By combining referral marketing with an AX program, B2B companies can begin to target new areas of growth, specifically:

- Target promoters and passives to refer new customers by incentivizing them and the referring customer.
- Use a combination of referral and NPS data to determine which types of customers are most likely to refer new business. In a B2B context, there is some more complexity in this respect, but knowing your potential referrals does make your referral marketing more successful and less costly.
- Request to publish scores and comments on a review site or social media to generate new business and improve SEO.
- Make referral marketing a part of your closed loop process by training employees to ask if a customer will refer them at the end of a resolved issue.

Start by identifying which of your customers are willing to refer, and what it will take to get a referral. Similar to identifying opportunities for up- and cross-sales, understanding which customers to target for these campaigns requires tools that position satisfaction metrics, revenue data, segmentation data and product/service data side-by-side.

After this, it's important to determine:

- How much referrals affect sales and the sales process
- How much revenue referrals generate

Identifying these factors will help encourage leadership to invest in more marketing efforts aimed at customers, outside typical demand generation acquisition activities which often take up the majority of the marketing budget.

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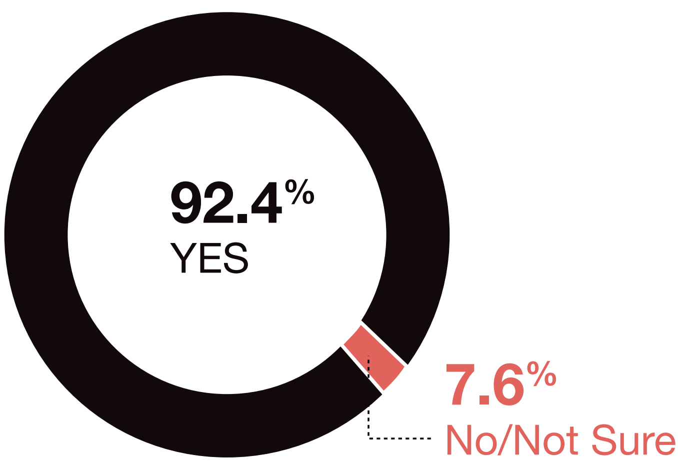
spiegel.medill.northwestern.edu/_pdf/Spiegel_Online%20Review_eBook_Jun2017_FINAL.pdf.

Embracing the Power of Reviews—Get In Front of the Right B2B Buyers

Outside of referral marketing, in a more passive capacity, reviews are another area B2B companies can use to monetize their existing AX feedback to generate more business.

According to G2 Crowd[32], despite over 90% of these B2B buyers indicating that reading a review is more likely to lead to a purchase, only 1 in 5 B2B companies use reviews for marketing efforts. B2B customers are making financially larger investments than those in a B2C customer journey. As such, the value of a review is invaluable during the consideration stage of a B2B buyer journey, where, according to G2 Crowd, 71% of buyers actively seek reviews.

Are you more likely to purchase a product or service if you have been able to read a trusted review about it?



Source: G2 Crowd, 2018 Benchmark Report: The Impact of Reviews on B2B Buyers and Sellers

32 "2018 Benchmark Report: The Impact of Reviews on B2B Buyers and Sellers." *G2 Crowd*, G2 Crowd | Heinz Marketing, 2018, learn.g2crowd.com/hubfs/Marketo%20LP%20Documents/Asset_Report_TheImpactofReviewsonB2B_Final.pdf?t=1535619364297.

As part of their account sentiment activities, companies can ask customers to publish their comments online, or encourage them to post on sites such as G2 Crowd. Remember, companies can't just assume that promoters will automatically refer or review their brand. They must be asked.

Companies can also use their own individual sites to promote reviews online. Not only do these help shorten the B2B buyer journey, but they also improve SEO standing amongst competitors.

The pay-off for implementing a review strategy as part of your AX program can be huge for companies. The previously mentioned Northwestern University[31] study found that displaying five or more reviews for products/services increases purchase likelihood by 270% compared to products/services without reviews.

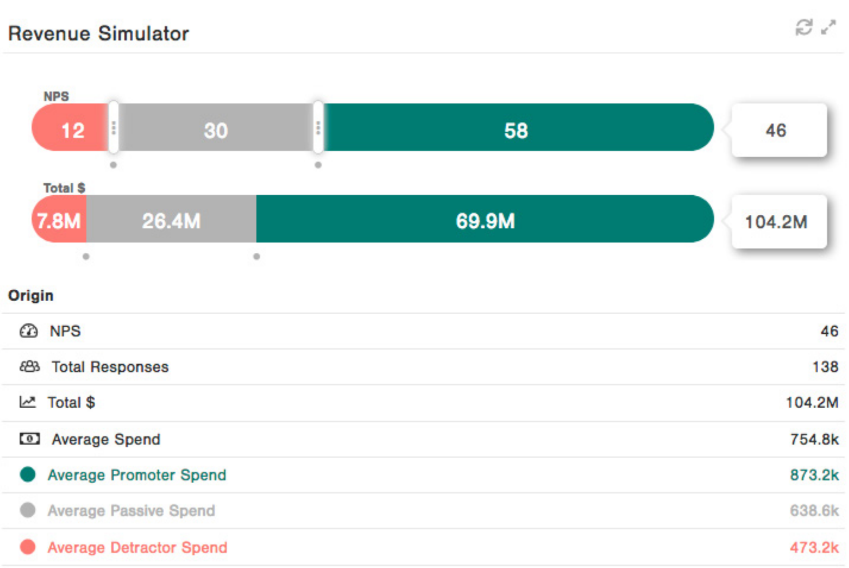
Smart Technologies Transforming AX Tech

What if you could predict what an increase in Net Promoter Score could translate into in terms of revenue? Or understand how translating churning customers into promoters could boost your overall bottom line? How would this alter your B2B CX strategy and dictate improvements moving into the next quarter?

Predictive analytics have transformed a number of operational industries, enabling efficiency on an unheard of level. However, similar technology has been slow moving in the CX space. Because financial data is a necessary integration with any AX platform, companies can use this information to better understand how an improvement in CX can impact the bottom line of a company.

This technology is relatively new, but significant for future growth planning within an AX program. At CustomerGauge, we've developed this further, with built-in "what-if" simulators. This turns what once required elaborate spreadsheets and sharp minded analysts into an automated model.

In the below image, we see an illustrated rendering of the CustomerGauge Revenue Simulator.



This type of model enables companies to understand a number of things:

- How an increase or decrease in satisfaction impacts total revenue, based on feedback from surveyed customers
- What an increase/decrease in promoters, passives and detractors will have on a company's bottom line and Net Promoter Score

Marrying advanced tech with CX models is a significant step for the CX industry—but a much needed one to legitimize B2B AX programs. While there's a lot more that can be said towards B2B technical innovations within the CX space, we'll end this chapter here so we can begin discussing the exciting possibilities that lie ahead.

Conclusion:

The AX Industry Today

In this book we aimed to address what problems account experience (AX) solves that the current CX and CS market misses, as well as introduce the AX model and methodology to the marketplace.

Some of the concepts introduced in this book look and sound familiar. Customer feedback programs used to gather sentiment across channels will always have a place in any CX-oriented program. However, the CX movement can no longer be viewed as a fluffy metric or happy by-product of a service job well done. Within a B2B setting, companies need hard metrics surrounding their CX efforts to justify program initiatives and tie meaningful outcomes to their AX program.

Current marketplace best practices are underserving the B2B economy in this respect, and customer success tools are too SaaS, tech-focused to make an impact in the thousands of other B2B industries struggling with retention and account growth.

In closing, we'll quickly cover three topics:

- A recap of the modern day AX model
- How B2C companies can use AX practices to improve monetization and ROI within their CX programs
- And three trends we see impacting AX in the next few years

Account Experience Model Recap

To recap, there are two primary purposes behind every AX program:

- To manage the post-purchase customer lifecycle to increase retention and improve business processes and value for customers (i.e., account sentiment).
- To grow accounts and existing customer revenue streams through Revenue Lifecycle Management activities (i.e., account intelligence).

Account experience caters to the B2B economy, primarily, but holds similarity to some of the practices within the CX industry, especially in terms of account sentiment management. Unlike customer success, AX can apply to non-SaaS and non-technology industries.

Other key characteristics of an AX program are as follows:

- It is a cross-departmental tool that caters to the needs of multiple levels of an organization
- The role of the relationship manager is paramount in applying personalization and the human touch to the B2B journey
- Monetization lives in every facet of the AX model, from prioritizing follow-up initiatives to future goal planning
- AX programs require technologies that can handle the complex hierarchies of a B2B enterprise
- AX programs put an increased focus on the employee experience to support bringing in qualified personnel to execute the customer-centric vision

Before we close out this book with a review of future trends, let's address one question that we expect many of you have pondered while combing through these pages….

Can B2C Companies Use Account Experience?

Earlier in this book we mentioned how some in the customer success market have attempted to expand the reach of CS and its usage to a non-ideal audience. Before you think you're in for the same boat, listen: generally speaking, B2C companies can use similar account sentiment features to their B2B counterparts, as long as the proper B2C views and analysis are provided.

B2C companies don't think of customers as "accounts," but they certainly need to use segmentation when it comes to analyzing aspects of their business lines. Many of the features and analysis methods discussed here can also be engineered to account for monetization of drivers, etc. in a B2C setting.

However, analyzing aspects of products and services with revenue in mind is indeed possible, if done properly. For example, if you were looking to survey customers segmented by a San Francisco Wendy's location, North American iPhone XS, etc., you could juxtapose revenue next to satisfaction information to better understand where to focus energies based on location, product lines, and more.

We'll be the first to admit that AX technologies and the model itself are primarily built around the needs of the B2B market, and therefore may be outside the scope of or missing elements that meet B2C CX demands.

Moreover, there are many so-called "B2C" companies that are actually B2B2C companies. They don't sell to consumers directly, but to retailers. Therefore, many B2C companies have accounts as well that an AX tool would work with.

In addition, in some traditional B2C industries, AX features around account intelligence and monetization, like the ones we mention in this book, may be appropriate. Like, when customer lifecycle value is in the $10,000's or $100,000's, for example. High net value individuals may need a similar B2B treatment, as often there are multiple contacts in addition to the main consumer.

What's Next For AX?

When the needs of a market begin to outweigh what's available in the marketplace, categories emerge. Monetized NPS was built out of the gaps within the Net Promoter space to attach ROI to satisfaction metrics. AX grew from an underserved segment of the CX industry.

This book has dived deeply into the intricacies of the AX model and the technologies needed to support it. To round out our discussion, let's look at the three emerging trends that may impact the AX market moving forward:

- **Digital transformation will increase channels, but also make B2B feel more human than ever before**

  The emergence of technologies such as AI and predictive analytics have transformed customer journeys across numerous industries. Within the B2B market, new technologies have helped support the concept of personalization within the B2B journey. For example, a logistics B2B company using real-time tracking and app tracing to offer by-the-minute updates to accounts. This concept sounds familiar for B2C customers, but is emerging in the B2B space.

  At the same time, B2B industries are coupling these tech innovations with the relationship manager role. As mentioned earlier in the book, when it comes to winning the B2B customer journey, the best strategy is striking the right balance between digital and non-digital transformations.

  For smaller B2B companies, digital transformation is strongly needed in AX programs. These size companies don't have the capacity to run AX programs without a high degree of automation.

- **The convergence of customer success and sales**

  The concept of the relationship manager requires a workforce that specializes in a skillset that supports both areas of expertise. Your organization may have other names that encompass some of the responsibilities we've laid out around the relationship manager—perhaps even more than one role. For larger accounts, you may even require the coordination of more than one relationship manager. For example, some organizations have account managers tackling customer revenue growth and CSMs handling customer improvements and nurture activities. The important takeaway here is that these roles must be in close contact at all times to support your growth and AX vision.

  B2B companies may struggle with this convergence. In a previously mentioned Gartner report[28], one VP put the issue more straightforward then this: "…the potential for cross-sell and portfolio expansion with our clients has never been higher, but we just can't seem to execute."

  As such, companies should begin training their current employees to exhibit the relationship manager responsibilities laid out, including:

  - The customer relationship management activities of a typical support role
  - The business expertise of a business specialist
  - And the growth and sales expertise of an account manager

Not an easy task, but one well worth the effort.

- **Elaborate use cases**

  B2B companies offer a more complex landscape for AX to consider. Moving forward, companies may demand more of AX technologies to support elaborate use cases of complex heavy industries such as manufacturing, logistics and more. This may call for incorporating more operational data alongside financial and experience data.

  Qualtrics[33] was recently acquired by software powerhouse SAP. The purpose behind the merger? To bring experience data next to the complex operational data of which SAP is responsible for. Moves like these help legitimize the AX marketplace, but also herald in additional use cases the industry must address.

We hope this book has provided a roadmap for standardizing your B2B CX initiatives moving forward. We're always looking for great stories to add to our plethora of resources to help companies like yours build sustainable AX and CX programs. If you have something you'd like to share, send us your story at marketing@customergauge.com.

33 Lev-Ram, Michael. "Just Days Before a Planned IPO, Qualtrics Is Acquired By SAP for $8 Billion." *Fortune.com*, Fortune, 12 Nov. 2018, fortune.com/2018/11/12/sap-qualtrics-acquisition/.

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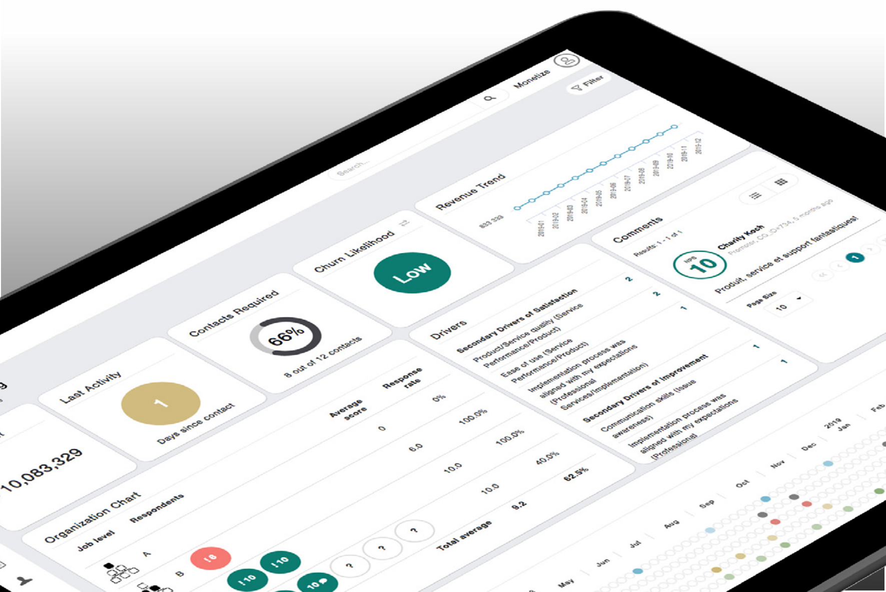
Introducing Account Experience™

Avoid The Pain Of Losing a Million Dollar Account

You have the guidance. Now invest in the tools to put your B2B CX strategy in motion. Introducing the first dedicated B2B CX SaaS tool on the market. Our enterprise-grade Account Experience™ solution makes blindsides and blind spots a thing of the past and ensures the relationships of today stay the relationships of tomorrow.

Request Demo



Author & Contact Information

CustomerGauge is a software-as-a-service platform that helps clients improve and monetize the B2B account experience. The system automatically measures and analyzes feedback, reduces churn through close-loop tools, and helps retain accounts. Results are published and analyzed in real-time, using a highly customizable reporting tool, making it ideal for global enterprises.

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