

Don't Be New Coke: Five Keys to Successful CX

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For many electrifying years, digital technologies have been exploding. We are amassing data, building AI algorithms and developing platforms in an effort to create stellar products and services. But amid this exciting frenzy to develop and ideate as digital pioneers, we forgot somewhere along the way that robots aren't using these products and services; we—humans—are.

We are now firmly in an era where customer experience (CX)—how a customer perceives your company treats them throughout their interactions with your product and services—should be front and center. CX is as crucial to the design of a service, app or product as its underlying code.

When CX is good, both the customer and the company win. It's a fluid process: You design products and services to delight them; they use (and love) the products and services; they share that love on social media; that compels others to try the products and services. This virtuous cycle is what all companies dream of because customers are willing to [spend more](#) on products and services that give them great experiences and memories. Apple, Amazon and Zappos are brands that famously thrive on the love of their loyal customer base. Brandwatch [recently named](#) Sephora in the top five brands to deliver great CX citing the beauty retailer's in-store customer service and rapid online responses—something Sephora devotees often rave about in social media just as much as they do their new lipsticks.

However, when CX is bad—check out any number of harrowing airline stories from the past couple of years—the cost is grave. According to PwC, “[i]n the U.S., even when people love a company or product, 59% will walk away after several bad experiences, 17% after just one bad experience.”

Over the past few years, those of us in digital consulting have been responding to a wellspring of clients who have realized just how much they need good CX. And often, that means changing the way they think.

We here at OZ use behavioral design thinking to help our clients figure out how to best reach their customers and provide those customers with the right cache of digital tools that will inspire delight with every experience. Design thinking is solution development that considers not just the product or service but also how the user experiences and interacts with it. If you spend extra time on the front end considering a customer’s desires, the result will be a superior solution. It seems simplistic, but it’s a step too often dismissed in the glory of production.

But the smartest companies are catching on. For example, Ford Motor Company, which has been building cars for more than 100 years, [recently hired](#) a furniture maker, a famous design thinker to create cars that improve the human-machine interactions (HMI) of their drivers rather than obsess on the crankshafts or the engine torque ratio.

As more and more businesses harness the power of data and digital technologies, it’s imperative that they always remember that people come first. With that in mind, here are five keys to a successful merger between technology and human—which we have built into our design thinking and digital innovation services at OZ:



1. Empathize Like Family:

There is nothing more vital to CX than identifying your customers’ feelings, motives and emotions surrounding your potential product or service. The primary driver to what we buy is emotion, not logic. This is why it’s key to bring in your customers during the initial design period so you can better understand how customers interact—with the product, or service, and with each other—from an emotional level. In a future article, I’ll address how to tap into your customers’ empathy and the best ways to build it into your brands and services.



2. Ideate for Humanity:

Unfortunately, all too often design and development is black-boxed. This often leads to a product that is brilliant technologically, but a dud when put in the hands of the customer. Google Glass anybody? Understanding the interaction of humans with new products and services is absolutely critical to successful design and development. Design Thinking embodies this approach and is central to how OZ works with every client on every engagement.



3. Prototyping Is Digital Sculpting:

Feedback is key here. In order to get to nirvana, you need to go through multiple, agile prototypes, asking customers their thoughts and then quickly layering and iterating them in until everyone is thrilled. Think of it as sculpting your product to be Michelangelo's David rather than launching New Coke on a bemused customer.



4. Mobile or Wither and Die on the Vine:

Customers expect everything—barring the kitchen sink—to be mobile these days. So you know what? Don't try and retro-sync at the end. Design the product or service from day one to be mobile. This is phenomenally important in CX, but it's often an afterthought in product and service creation. Facebook's primary reason for acquiring Instagram, in 2012, was because Instagram was designed and developed on a mobile platform and Facebook was not, and needed those capabilities for the Facebook platform. And according to a [recent survey](#), a whopping 52 percent of customers are less likely to engage with a company because of a bad mobile experience.



5. Digital Honey:

Gone are the days when companies can brazenly "push" brands on customers. People like to think they are drawn to a product organically. How do you do this? Engage in pull marketing, which emphasizes turning your customers into a loyal following who, in turn, will advocate for your products and services on social media. Retailer Zara deftly pulls in shoppers with fun experiences like mobile access to every store's inventory and augmented reality, which Forbes likened to "digital honey" for millennials.

After years dwelling in the tech side of things, it's almost old-fashionedly refreshing to think about the customer again. We're merging human feelings and hunger and desire for cutting-edge, innovative products and services in a way that's never before been possible. But as our world flies by at break-neck speed, one thing remains constant: People want to feel good about the products they buy, the services they use and the companies they buy them from. CX-driven design is the way to achieve that.