

Enhancing customer experience with automation

 By Paula Sartini

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Customer experience is a growing priority for organisations (as it should be) as it is becoming the most critical factor for customers selecting your brand over another. As such companies need to implement measures to meet customer expectations and deliver consistent customer experiences at every customer touchpoint.

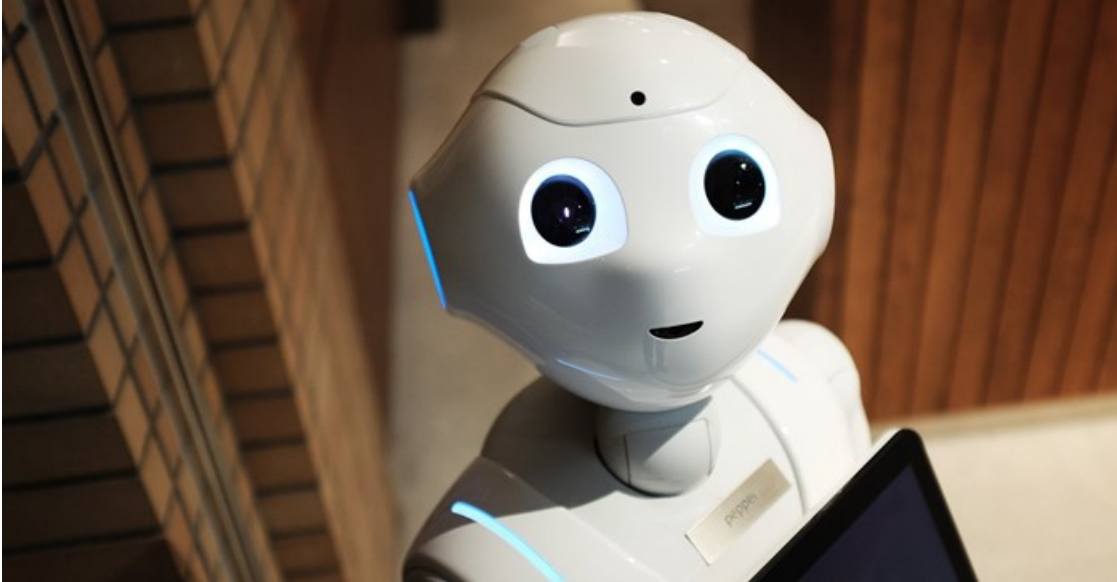


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However, this can seem like a monumental task, particularly for organisations that work as silos – assigning specific responsibilities to specific departments. In today's environment where the customer is king and should be central to every business decision, customer experience can no longer lie on the shoulders of a single department.



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It needs to be the top strategic measurement for the entire organisation.

To be successful today, companies need to develop a customer-centric strategy that is built from the customer's perspective and designed to meet their specific needs. With tech-savvy customers, companies are adopting technology solutions that aim to delight their customers and enhance customer experiences.

According to the [2019 Global Customer Experience Benchmarking Report](#) from Dimension Data, "CX is recognised as the number one driver of digital transformation."

While companies may be keen to adopt technology solutions, often knowing which solutions to select can be a challenge on its own. In addition, legacy systems can also hamper companies from implementing technologies that could potentially be key in improving customer experiences.

However, companies should start by putting the I before the A. This means implementing information automation, which utilises intelligent automation and only once this is in place – implement AI.



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Automating functions and humanising interactions

Some technologies can sound like the silver bullet your organisation needs to improve customer experiences and drive company success, but companies should not adopt technology for the sake of technology. Rather solutions should be used to enhance the customer experience and assist employees to meet customer needs.

Even though customers are tech-savvy and accustomed to using technology solutions to meet their specific needs, technology cannot replace the human touch.



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Automation can enhance customer experiences by improving self-help functions that require limited involvement from employees. At the same time, by automating tasks that take time and resources but add little value to the client, employees are freed up and empowered to focus on high-quality, lasting customer engagements that delight the customer.

For example, if a customer is looking for a statement, rather than placing the customer in a queue to speak to an employee, the customer is able to help themselves to access the information they need.

However, if the customer has a query on the statement, it would be more appropriate to have an employee handle the sensitive issue and spend more time meeting the customer's needs and making a difference where it matters the most.

Making magic with data and automation

Automating repetitive tasks can have a significant impact on improving customer experiences by removing repetitive tasks and empowering employees to give customers the personal touch they seek in specific instances. In addition, it can reduce costs and help drive sales and growth.

These benefits alone present a good case for companies to adopt automation technology, but they would stand to benefit significantly more by using data to firstly determine which tasks should be automated and then understand how customer data can be used to enhance experiences even further.

At the crux, automating repetitive tasks has a significant impact on driving employee satisfaction – which directly impacts on customer engagements. However, when companies put the I (information) before the A (automation) and strategically and intelligently drive automation, this is just the cusp of how the marriage of data and automation impact the customer experience.



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Customer data should be used to add personalisation into your customer engagements. By understanding your customer behaviour, you are able to target them with offers and deals that are specific to their previous behaviour. You are able to engage them when it matters most and enhance the customer experience beyond the standardised content companies have traditionally relied on to reach out to their customers.

This is supported by the Dimension Data 2019 Global Customer Experience Benchmarking Report, which states that “by transforming big data into customer and market intelligence, they’ll be able to align their analytics strategy with their business strategy and design personalised experiences that proactively address customers’ needs – using self-service and automation at the right time in the customer journey.”



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Igniting customer experiences

Although technology brings great promise to companies and is able to increase productivity and drive cost-saving, customer experience is about more than the technologies that companies implement. Customer experience is about creating a customer-centric business where the customer is at the centre of everything the business does.

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So while there is a benefit in giving customers the tools they need to access self-help services at their convenience, employees need to be given the tools that empower them to deliver high-touch customer experiences at critical times. To ignite customer experiences, the customer needs to be at the top of the agenda in all boardroom discussions and solutions need to be developed and tailored with the customer in mind.

Only when the customer is central to the business strategy and employees across the organisation are equipped with the right tools to meet customer expectations across the entire customer journey, will the company be able to create meaningful customer interactions and enhance the customer experience that drive business success.

ABOUT PAULA SARTINI

With over 20 years' experience helping leading organisations overcome various business challenges, Paula understands the challenges that companies face in delivering a consistent brand experience and the impact this has on their bottom line. An analytical thinker that strives to solve business problems with innovative solutions, Paula believes that technology plays a major role in solving critical business and branding challenges. As such, she established BrandQuantum to help businesses overcome their branding challenges in the digital age.

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