

How technology helps brands evolve

 By Paula Sartini

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Today's customers are tech-savvy; have access to brands across a global marketplace; are not restricted to trading hours; and they know what they want.



Image credit: Jaromir Kavan on Unsplash.

To compete in this market, brands have to evolve to meet customers' needs and exceed their expectations. This can only be done by implementing technology solutions that provide a seamless experience whether in-store or online, local or global.



Global tech trends impacting consumers

Lizette Akker 7 Aug 2019



Technology is imperative to connect with customers, improve experiences and drive customer loyalty.

Technology savvy customers

Customers rely on peer reviews before making purchasing decisions. They search, browse and research products online and make purchasing decisions before they have even walked into a store.

In some instances, with instant access to the internet via smartphones, they compare products and prices in-store before making final purchasing decisions.

Customers also aren't limited to trading hours or geographical boundaries as online and mobile shopping presents a convenient alternative to spending time in stores. They can find the brands they are looking for and make purchases instantaneously without the hassle of shopping around first and standing in queues.

This is supported by research from [Nielsen](#) – which states that 30% of global retail sales will be made through an app or software by 2020.



The customer experience drives digital disruption

Vishal Barapatre 30 May 2019



Using data to make decisions

Technology isn't only available to consumers. Brands should be using technology to improve customer engagements and drive brand loyalty. This can be achieved by starting with the data.

For years, companies have collected customer data, now they have technologies to analyse the data and make informed business decisions.

Starbucks, for example, has [implemented technology](#) that enables it to instantly track and aggregate sales and other data to determine which products are the most popular with customers and understand when and where customers are making purchases.

This data is then used to determine which new offerings it should introduce according to customer preferences.



Harness potential of data-driven tech to keep customers happy

19 Jul 2019



While companies can use data that customers have provided, companies need to be considerate of adhering to regulations such as the PoPI Act and protect their customer data.

This is supported by the PWC Global Customer Insight Survey 2019 – which cautions that “customers want the companies they interact with to protect their data, and indicates that they'll take their business elsewhere if they don't trust that a company is safeguarding their particulars.”

Customer experience is key

According to the Interbrand Breakthrough Brands survey of 2016, leading brands are customer-centric and comprehensive in approaching their touchpoints.

This means that companies need to focus beyond product launches and marketing campaigns and pay attention to the entire customer experience in the initial planning of their go-to-market strategy.



Customer experience: The marriage of marketing and technology

Paula Sartini 10 Dec 2018



Brands need to consider the holistic experience delivered across all devices from direct customer engagements through to online and mobile experiences and ensure that they are all aligned to the brand.

However, it is equally important that brands are also looking inwards to ensure that they are considering how they are engaging employees to deliver the brand experience consistently in every customer engagement.



Enhancing customer experience with automation

Paula Sartini 26 Aug 2019



This is supported by findings from the [PWC Global Consumer Insights Survey 2019](#) – which highlights that companies are moving towards the ‘return on experience’.

Meaning that they are measuring the return on experience based on how customers interact with their brand and how employee experience contributes to the overall experience.

Technology solutions can help empower employees to exceed customer’s expectations by automating repetitive tasks that are time intensive. For example, customer statements could be automated, while more intensive customer queries could be handled by employees that no longer need to search for statements for clients.



Creating competitive advantage through CX

Derek Bose 28 Jun 2019



Personalisation

Human interaction is a key factor that will differentiate brands from other offerings on the market. While technology can be used to change the way brands work, it cannot be used to establish relationships of trust with customers.

As such, the most critical differentiator for customers will be the human touch. Technology and customer data work hand in hand to help deliver personalised experiences that meet customer’s needs.



Four ways technology delivers a personalised retail customer experience

Interact RDT 6 Jun 2018



Customers no longer want an SMS or email with their name on it, they want information that is relevant to them, they are looking for personalised experiences and they want to feel like companies know who they are and what they want based on their previous behaviour with the company.

This means reaching them at a time that is most convenient or relevant to them with information that is specific to their

needs rather than bombarding them with content that is designed for everyone.

For example, if a customer purchases pizza every Wednesday, they should be targeted on a Wednesday with a special offer and a prompt – which suggests having the order ready for them at the usual time of collection rather than sending messages to them on other days with deals that aren't relevant to them.



Enhancing the in-store experience through personalisation

Gareth Hawkey 27 Aug 2018



Weave technology into the brand

With tech-savvy customers, brands cannot afford not to embrace technology solutions as part of their offering. While traditionally companies needed to incorporate their core values and mission throughout the brand, today technology needs to be added to this mix.

According to Sidney Harman, “the more technology is woven into your values, the more likely it is to be used wisely.”

The wise use of technology is critical for businesses to succeed in today's global market. No longer is technology a nice to have or can it be incorporated for technology sake. It has to meet the specific needs of customers.



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Kantar 11 Jun 2019



As such, the customer should be at the centre of every business decision and determine which technologies are incorporated to streamline engagements and delight customers.

Technology, which should serve as a competitive differentiator in aiding brands to provide a superior experience and connect with audiences, should integrate into existing systems to ensure that it is easy to use and used regularly and effectively.

To achieve this marketing and technology departments can no longer work as silos within an organisation. They need to sit at the boardroom table and make decisions together to develop solutions that ultimately enhance experiences and delight customers.

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 bottomline. 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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