

Digital experience vs digital business

 By [Kieron McCann](#)

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In many organisations there's a turf war going on. It may not involve switchblades or baseball bats, but it is serious. On one side, we have the 'doing digital' gang. Typically made up of digital marketers, this group spends significant amounts of time and money on building digital experiences and delivering them across a number of channels, including web, social, mobile, apps and digital advertising. They're aiming to gain insight, grow pipeline, accelerate conversion, and improve customer preference through designing a pleasant, engaging and consistent digital customer experience.



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On the other side, there's the 'being digital' gang – made up of business functions trying to deliver 'real stuff' to customers and stakeholders. These are digital business champions that want to digitise business processes such as recruiting new employees, transacting sales, providing customer service or supporting distribution partners. They want to drive down costs, grow revenue and improve satisfaction. To do this they are investing in automation and self-service capabilities such as building customer portals, partner portals, e-commerce and e-procurement platforms.

Chasing the tech dragon

Adding fuel to the fire is a growing list of tech vendors, arming the factions with a host of tools, each with capabilities that overlap each other. Today your e-commerce, ERP, CRM, document management and even your recruitment platform are all capable of delivering digital experiences. They can be bought as-a-service, so switching from one technology solution to another has never been easier. Which means everyone ends up chasing the tech dragon with their own siloed projects.

I've heard some of the following phrases used in organisations without a joined up digital strategy. If they sound familiar to you, there's a good chance you're in the same boat:

- "It's like marketing are trying to take over the whole company via digital!"
- "Customer services are sending out thousands of customer communications and none of them are integrated with our brand experience"
- "We'll just add a [insert business group] portal login off the main site"
- "We can just build a separate site/microsite/portal and host it on Amazon"
- "We've got some real cost savings to deliver, I don't want to waste time debating what colour the logo is!"

Somewhere in between all this a CIO trying to keep everyone happy, while attempting to bring some semblance of order to the whole 'digital transformation' effort. Whatever that really means.

It's easy to see that siloed efforts in digital can lead to confusion and most likely a poor overall customer experience. Disjointed actions, while well-intentioned, usually end up with fragmented experiences. The truth is that a good customer experience is not about the sum of its individual parts.

Relentless focus on the customer experience

Despite the massive technical advances that are happening in the world of digital, it appears many organisations are struggling to make headway. A recent PWC study found only 52% of executives had confidence in their organisation's digital abilities – a record low. It's clear that there is a problem that needs to be addressed.

Cracking this problem depends on a relentless focus on the customer experience, which starts with the customer journey. That's the entire customer journey, not just the part that your business group is responsible for. It shouldn't be a battle between doing digital and being digital. Transacting digital business must be knitted into the overall customer experience, and the customer experience platform needs to be planned with more than just digital marketing in mind.

Without a clear sense of purpose and a clear set of success metrics there's a good chance your digital investment will struggle to deliver an adequate return. Frankly that reflects poorly on us as well as you.

Your digital experience platform should be capable of not only delivering better marketing and communications outcomes, but also better operational outcomes. To do that you will need to think about working more collaboratively across business groups.

It will almost certainly require you to work in a more agile way and to adopt a culture of continuous delivery, to ensure that nobody feels sidelined while waiting for someone else's mega project to be completed. By focussing on the customer experience, you put an end to the digital turf war.

ABOUT KIERON MCCANN

Kieron McCann has worked in technology marketing and marketing strategy for 17 years. Kieron's experience spans industries as diverse as drinks, consumer packaged goods, telecommunications and IT services. Kieron has a passion for technology and how it can free businesses to drive change.

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