

Measuring the new context of CX in SA: The must-have retail checklist

By [Mark Molenaar](#), issued by [Kantar](#)

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When it comes to delivering winning customer experience to today's consumers, brands need to streamline their focus and deliver on their promise of seamless CX in a channel-less world. What is the impact of a broken brand promise? What are the seven steps to create an emotionally engaging digital experience whether your store is online, offline or both...



Tech has graced us with a plethora of new ways to interact with customers, but are you available where they want to interact with you? In exploring South Africa's most preferred platforms across the customer journey, apps shine strongest overall, but customers prefer different channels depending on what they are trying to do. So, where app adoption is likely to be low, more traditional channels like the website and email play an important role, with the call centre retaining prime position when customers need to deal with uncertainty and want to speak to a human.

But whatever the channel, 78% of SA internet users want brands to fit in with and add value to their lifestyles by providing relevant, personalised experiences; 68% want brands to understand their life stage and offer appropriate products and services; and 66% want brands to use their personal information to better tailor products and services to suit their needs, which includes discounts based on their social media and online activities.

Apps are the preferred channel across all stages of the customer journey, but customers prefer different channels depending on what they are trying to do



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That's a lot of expectation, all of which needs to be further offset by providing an emotionally engaging digital experience.

7 steps to create an emotionally engaging digital experience whether your store is online, offline or both

Emotion is the basis of memory, playing an integral role in how customers make decisions and form judgements. If businesses don't make a positive emotional connection online, they therefore risk diminished customer loyalty based on experience that misses the mark on their expectations. Qualtrics, Kantar's CX partner, says to factor in the following to get this right:

1. Anticipate what digital customers want to achieve
2. Personalise digital experiences for individual customers
3. Observe and respond to digital customers' emotions, make it easy to reach a human
4. Let digital customers know they are on the right track
5. Follow social norms and good design principles
6. Design digital experiences that embody your brand
7. Apply digital learnings to future interactions

Emotional engagement relies on playing to channel strengths, so these learnings also apply in the bricks-and-mortar space. In physical retail, brands need to create a sense of wonder, excitement, novelty, entertainment and engagement. Attacq's Mall of Africa puts this front and centre in creating retail-experience hubs, while Checkers' Fresh X targets market share with more affluent South Africans through its [fresh-food theatre](#) concept.



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In digital retail, brands must make customers' lives easier and reinforce that emotional engagement. 70% of shoppers rated simplicity and time-saving as most significant influences in online store choice.

Digital retail business barriers to overcome

Aim to deliver a positive experience through convenience. 27% of shoppers mentioned delivery lead time as a barrier to online purchases, with the latest wave of our [C-19 Barometer](#) study among connected South Africans revealing that only 39% of South Africans reporting a mostly good online shopping experience for groceries and household products over the past year.



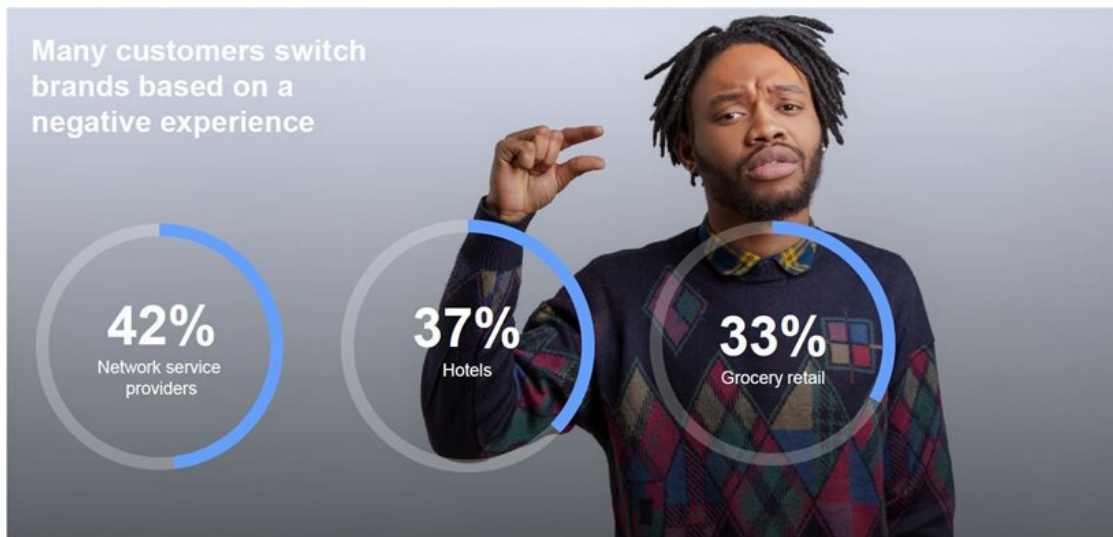
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Also factor in generational differences, as security concerns are an issue for more than half of Gen X, with the cost of mobile data an inhibitor for younger Gen Z and delivery cost the biggest barrier overall. Lack of payment options can further inhibit purchases, with over a third of customers worried about the process of returning items.

These may seem like obvious pain points, but they need to become a priority, as the cost of acquiring new customers is much higher than that of retaining existing customers. A lack of customer centricity and great experience directly affects your brand's bottom line.



Power of the consumer: The impact of a broken brand promise

Customer experience and brand strategy can no longer sit in organisational silos. The brands delivering the most successful experiences are those where it exceeds the brand promise.

But as the realms of brand and CX converge, one poor experience is all it takes to break your brand promise. Especially as brand equity has three dimensions: being meaningful, not only functionally in meeting consumer needs but also emotionally; being different, in order to survive in a massively competitive environment by showing uniqueness and setting trends; being salient, coming to consumers' minds easily.



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So, while it's already difficult to be a truly meaningful and different brand in today's cluttered retail space, it's almost impossible when your brand doesn't deliver what it promises and actually irritates or frustrates customers. Listening to the voice of the customer across all channels therefore does wonders in notching up customer-centricity.

There's no room for the ostrich approach in 2022. Customer feedback key to closing the loop on problems your customers are experiencing and integrating CX feedback with your marketing stacks and web analytics also serves as a strategic tool that reduces churn, creates cross-sell opportunities and helps innovate new solutions – the cornerstones of business success in 2022 and beyond.



Interested in the power of customer feedback? Get in touch for the impact of your brand's digital experience on customers' overall relationship with your brand, and measure customer experience across digital channels at different points in the journey to act in real time. Catch our webinar on-demand that unpacks the story: 'Seamless CX in a channel-less world: Delivering winning customer experience to today's consumer': <https://bit.ly/CXSA2022>

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Sources: Kantar SA ecommerce survey 2022, Kantar CX+ 2020 global results, Humanising Digital interactions. Bruce Temkin and Isabelle Zdatny, 2017 (Qualtrics).

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