

Digitisation is not about building an app, it's about the customer's journey

By [Craig Terblanche](#)

24 Aug 2016

The introduction of digital platforms, like Uber and Airbnb, have transformed competition and is forcing the conventional "pipeline" business to embrace three key shifts. These three shifts include moving from a resource control model to an orchestration model, internal optimisation to external engagement, and shifting focus from customer value to that of an ecosystem.



The advent of mobile platforms have enabled businesses to interact with consumers, using data and information as its assets. Increasingly, companies seem to believe that building a digital strategy is all about creating an app. This is however, not the same as driving a digital transformation.

More and more apps are created because it serves the business' needs and fails to recognise those of the customer. This is because the process isn't started with the end user, but rather with the technology and how it serves the company objectives. Businesses are looking at things inside out instead of outside in to serve end customer objectives.

It's the wrong way round. It isn't about the technology at all - that's just the enabler.

Customers, clients and end-users are increasingly choosing how they would like to interact with products and services. And the sooner service providers realise that the process should be about serving a customer on their terms, now that you're in their pocket, the sooner true digital transformation can begin.

Understanding what your customer needs and what their objective is, is critical and this can be achieved by looking at the customer context.

As an example, if you know they are ordering party packs then you can offer them ice or a jumping castle. If your customer is about to travel, you can offer them additional insurance.

Providing a seamless customer journey is also about making sure that what is promised, can be delivered.

This requires focus on delivering a complete end-to-end solution. One that starts with a seamless onboarding experience, not just attracting a new customer but also retaining current ones, requires follow through, from their experience of choosing the product or solution, through to payment and post purchase service.

An example of this experience would be making sure that a customer's credit card details are stored securely so they only need to load them once, or using information that you have to provide services that are relevant to the customer in context.

An app is just one function of a digital strategy - a micro-service that forms part of a business objective. If the platform of choice is not supported by effective back-end processes and doesn't follow through with a holistic offering - it could be potentially damaging the brand.

Word of mouth is still the most effective form of marketing, but can also do a disservice to the brand if an ineffective process or disjointed experience is communicated to fellow consumers.

If an experience is not seamless, such as the intuitive services that platforms like Facebook provide, then this will deter any interaction with the business.

It's no longer about a single view of the customer, but rather about providing a single view of your business to the customer. Customer objectives are paramount and prioritised over company objectives. It's also about a business becoming transparent, a dynamic that customers are becoming accustomed to as a result of the digital era.

Potential and current clientele want to feel that a business they interact with cares about their needs, rather than them needing to fit in with the way the business wants to work.

The final part of the customer journey is the role of analytics. This data can measure the impact a business' service is having on the customer journey, interpret client feedback and make more informed decisions to help influence and serve the customer better.

In essence businesses need to stop banding industry buzzwords around. Cloud, big data, BI and customer experience are spoken about and not implemented in a way that is meaningful to the quality of customer service. It's about using the tools that technology provides to create a customer journey that will both attract new consumers and ensure that they want more.

Many business' are embracing this concept, but the risk is that incumbent industry players will lose out to new, dynamic players if they do not focus on the customer's journey, driven by the customer's real needs.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Craig Terblanche is the regional director at OutSystems South Africa

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>