

Steps to effective customer experience management

 By [James Maposa](#)

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In markets where product and service differentiation continues to narrow down, a customer-centred approach takes centre stage. Businesses today compete in an era where the 'customer is truly king' and a few wrong turns could be detrimental to a company's growth and progression.

Forsaking the cliché that customer experience is the new brand image is a risk that most organisations are now unwilling to take. This could be due to the empowerment of the modern day consumer. Despite being spoilt for choice, social media platforms provide consumers with a tool that enables them to provide real-time feedback on a purchase or service experience (good and bad) to friends, family and anyone else who cares to listen.

In addition to social media, word-of-mouth recommendations are also growing in significance. Not being able to nip a customer's dissatisfaction with a brand in the bud within a short space of time poses more of a threat to a business from a customer retention perspective than before. A disgruntled customer has more alternatives to choose from if he or she is dissatisfied with the way that the brand is serving them.



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To avoid the potential loss of clients, a customer-centric approach is critical to a modern day business' growth and progression. But how does a business become customer-centric? To whom should it look for to develop its customer centricity? A good starting point is its customers. No one knows more about what they want to get out of a product or service than the people that it is being made for. Understanding a client's needs and wants is crucial to evolving a business to become truly customer-centric.

Businesses are now establishing customer experience departments to grow their understanding of what a customer desires from a product, service and overall brand experience. The insights obtained from initiatives such as "voice-of-customer" programmes are leveraged to develop ideal customer experience journeys. The design of an ideal customer experience helps an organisation to identify and discard customer experience pain points and enables it to identify attributes that ensure it delivers delight for most if not all client-business interactions.

A good second step is employing the right people to deliver a company's client experiences. A workforce that identifies and believes in an organisation's brand delivers a more delightful customer experience. Having the right employees on board edges an organisation closer toward delivering an ideal customer experience for each client interaction. A series of positive client experiences could subsequently contribute to a rise in an organisation's brand equity.

It must be appreciated that there are going to be times when an organisation gets something wrong. A business is 'human' and will make a mistake. When a situation like this occurs, a customer-centric business owns up to its misdeeds immediately and works round the clock to correct the mistake. Exemplary customer experience management includes commitment to addressing an awry situation effectively and following through on this promise whole-heartedly.

When a business' employees' go out of their way to resolve a problem, it may be perceived by the client that the organisation has always been committed to its number one goal; consistently delivering an experience that delight customers for every interaction.

In conclusion, a customer-centric business' long-term focus should be to retain its existing customer base, providing a customer experience that encourages them to spend more with the brand and compels existing customers to recommend your brand to other potential clients. Getting this right is challenged by the fact that a customer's impression of a business only goes as far as their last interaction with the organisation. Consistency is critical to delivering an experience that endears customers to the brand.

ABOUT JAMES MAPOSA

Maposa is the founder and managing director of Birguid, a research and advisory company. Maposa has 15 years work experience, mostly spent in research and strategy consulting. Maposa is passionate about socio-economic development, business growth and continuity.

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