

The automotive industry's nine pillars for exceptional customer experience

By [Dereshin Pillay](#)

28 Sep 2017

The digital revolution is not just apparent in the design and build of cars themselves, but digital tools are reshaping the automotive industry's customer buying and after-sales environments as well.



Dereshin (Dees) Pillay

In fact, nowhere is the digital revolution more apparent than in the automotive sector, as traditional players fight to maintain traction in a market becoming overrun by exciting auto-tech players like Tesla, Faraday Future and Google.

Consider that customers spend an average of 14 hours^[1] researching cars via digital channels – pouring over reviews, videos, comparing prices, viewing the line-ups on dealership and manufacturer websites and even playing around with the different customisations like interior and exterior colours.

In fact, research suggests that over 75% of the purchasing journey happens online^[2], with customers only visiting dealerships an average of 2.2 times^[3] – often once to test drive, and the second time to collect.



#InnovationMonth: How AI will change the automotive game for the better

Trevor Hill 11 Sep 2017



These experiences set the tone for the future. Positive experiences can lead to lifelong brand loyalty – towards certain brands of cars, certain models, and even certain dealerships.

We've identified nine key pillars - across the entire buyer lifecycle – from which automotive players can build their customer experience strategy, combining and capitalising on some ground-breaking new technology innovations.

The nine pillars

1. **Proximity-based solutions:** Let's start in the showroom. With that average of just 2.2 physical interactions, it's critical to make them great. With proximity-based solutions, dealerships can digitise the showroom experience, providing rich data about the vehicles on the floor, and augmenting the experience for those browsing. They can initiate relationships that can be continued into the digital realm – through a mobile app for example.
2. **Mobile appointments:** Secondly, by establishing a direct digital touchpoint with potential customers, they can easily book mobile appointments – such as requesting test drives, consultations, service appointments and the like.
3. **Sales process:** Hopefully, customer interest turns to desire, and then to committed action. Dealerships can use cloud-based systems to accelerate the sales process, integrating with partners from warehouses to financing companies, to ensure a smooth delivery of the vehicle to the customer.
4. **Smart workshops:** Smart workshops encompasses a range of services, from online and even automated service scheduling, to rapid check-ins using tablet-enabled service consultants, mobile alerts for you to track the servicing progress, and even parts approvals with just a tap of the screen on a mobile app.
5. **sCheck:** In fact, sCheck is a module created as part of T-Systems broader suite of customer experience management tools for the automotive sector – which wows the customer with a sleek write-up process, involving them closely in the process, allowing them to choose service packages, and more.
6. **Tracking:** IPS and GPS technology enable detailed tracking of vehicles, helping to guide customers on how to best maintain their vehicles and ensure safe journeys to their destinations.
7. **Feedback management:** Technology can be used for feedback management, to quickly address customer issues, complaints or other problems, enabling dealerships to benefit from customer feedback. ISO-certified complaints and approval process ensure the best possible experience for users.
8. **Predictive aftersales:** Continuing with the after-sales theme, predictive aftersales, the analytics platforms that collect data about the car's usage and the customer's preferences. With this, automotive players can arrive at targeted and compelling offers – to upsell, cross-sell and entice people with specials.
9. **360° View:** The final pillar, 360° View, pulls together data about the vehicle, the financing, the service history and the customer.

As the explosion of digital, mobile and social tools completely reshapes the way customers engage with automotive companies, those that keep up with the pace of change are more likely to garner loyalty and market share.

Undoubtedly, customer behaviour is changing, as they look to interact quickly and access information across any form of media and device, anytime and anywhere.

“ They're looking for tailor-made, personalised service, and as little friction as possible. ”

By digitising one's sales and after-sales processes with the clever application of technology to address these nine pillars, it's possible to meet and even exceed these demanding customer expectations.

References:

[1 & 2] [Experience is Key to Success in Automotive Industry](#)

[3] [Half Visit Only One Dealer Before Buying](#)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dereshin (Dees) Pillay, Head of Manufacturing & Automotive at T-Systems South Africa

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