NTT

Future Disrupted:
2021 technology trends

Customer experience

5 Key trends for 2021

In the last year, a harsh light has been shone on 'dead-end' design and siloed thinking that leaves customers exasperated. In 2021, the race to provide an effective, digitally focused customer experience (CX) will accelerate.

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1 COVID-19 has made customer behaviours across all demographics more digitally focused

People of all generations – not just 'digital natives' – **have become more confident and comfortable with online engagements and transactions**

Some **81.6%** of businesses acknowledge that customer experience offers a competitive edge and **58.0%** consider it a primary differentiator.*

Steps to take in 2021

Over the next year, the organizations that will win will be those able to interact with customers virtually … but this should not negate the value of the power of the 'human touch', which is still a fundamental part of the marketing, sales and service mix that builds successful CX.

With this in mind, creating and managing customer journeys to create a personalized experience, are critical.

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2 Rich and personalized content will be king

Instead of merely mapping a customer's transactional and interaction flow, **businesses will now have to work on becoming a part of the customer's life: the true customer journey map**

Many organizations still have a way to go, however: **40.9%** of businesses struggle to optimize customer journeys due to a lack of expertise in-house.*

Steps to take in 2021

You need an enterprise-wide integrated mindset and an experience, design-led approach to product and service delivery.

When successful, such integrated delivery teams bring cohesive creative, content, design, technology and analytics capabilities together to create a differentiated experience.

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3 A move towards a CX environment that balances virtual and physical presence

A virtual environment that balances human intelligence and artificial or machine intelligence, **but also creates an equilibrium between physical presence at the appropriate points in time**

Organizations 'highly satisfied' with their CX capability are receiving unparalleled CX advocacy **scores and set the benchmark others should aspire to achieve.***

Steps to take in 2021

Reflect the appropriate mix within your operating model so you can harmonize the customer experience while also adhering to the correct standards.

If you can seamlessly and proactively combine the power of their digital capability with 'hand in glove' advisory human capability, you'll reap the rewards of providing a concierge capability and retain and grow the value of their relationships.

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4 Core CX competence will hinge on having a data-driven and well-documented strategy

Instead of merely mapping a customer's transactional and interaction flow, **businesses will now have to work on becoming a part of the customer's life: the true customer journey map**

Some **77.2%** of businesses say that the need for data scientists/analysts will increase in the coming 2 years.*

Steps to take in 2021

Have clear data policies, strategies and management capabilities in place, and ensure they're comprehensively documented.

Recognize that moving certain CX workloads to the cloud will provide you with the ability to scale.

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5 Ongoing performance management of infrastructure to meet customers' expectations, will become critical

The ability to **constantly monitor, tweak and manage the performance of your digital infrastructure** to ensure your customers are getting an adequate experience, is essential

Just **12.1%** of organizations say customers rate their CX at a promoter level; the percentage of 'detractors' is actually worsening – now at **42.9% versus 27.2% a year ago.***

Steps to take in 2021

Established managed data center, cloud and networking experts can help you pinpoint the business processes you perhaps need to change.

They may advise and assist you to migrate certain applications to a public or, private cloud environment to further mitigate the risk of poor online customer experiences.