

The CX Trends to Watch in 2020, According to the Experts

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With more shopping options available than ever before, your customers aren't just choosing your brand based on price and product. They're thinking about their experience with your brand across multiple channels, and if that experience doesn't live up to their expectations, they'll go somewhere else.

In their [Customer Experience survey](#), Gartner found that two-thirds of companies were competing mostly on the basis of customer experience (CX)— and that 81 percent of companies expected to be competing mostly or completely on CX by 2020.

With 2020 fast approaching, leading brands are increasing their investment in the customer experience. [76 percent of executives](#) say that improving the customer experience is a high or critical priority, and [more than 40 percent of data analytics projects](#) conducted next year are expected to relate to CX.

However, even as brands increase their commitment to CX, they'll still encounter challenges as technology and customer expectations continue to evolve.

We asked 10 CX industry leaders what trends they thought would have the biggest impact on the customer experience in 2020. Check out their responses below.

Organizations Will Look for Ways to Simplify CX

There are many different ways complexity can creep into the customer experience. Internal operations, product design, and the external customer onboarding process can all become overly complex, leading to frustration for customers. **Ricardo S. Gulko, Managing Director and Co-Founder of Eglobalis Information**, predicts that leading organizations will start looking for ways to simplify.



“I believe that one of the biggest key indicators of success in 2020 will be an organization’s ability to simplify.

Simplifying internally will reignite innovation, directly impacting the external human experience and organizations’ ability to drive adoption, growth, and more business. Organizations should utilize what I often call ‘design to adopt’ while designing technologies or any experience. Enterprise technologies are still incredibly complex and AI is not yet replacing us entirely, but by mixing humans and tech and simplifying [processes and products], companies will gain a significant advantage over their competition while simultaneously improving their overall human experience.”

Ricardo S. Gulko

The Connection Between CX and EX Will Become Increasingly Clear

As Ricardo pointed out in his prediction, your organization's internal processes can have a significant impact on how your customers experience your company. To take that one step further, the way your employees experience your company influences the customer experience. **Denise Lee Yohn, keynote speaker and author of *FUSION: How Integrating Brand and Culture Powers the World's Greatest Companies***, thinks that in 2020, company leaders will be paying more attention to this connection.



“CX and EX (employee experience) will grow increasingly interdependent.

Companies will find that employees can and will only deliver to customer experiences that they have themselves. Company leaders must deliberately design and manage daily experiences that engage, empower, and equip their employees to differentiate and excel at CX.”

Denise Lee Yohn

Brands Will Need More Than Great Messaging to Stand Out

Karen Jaw-Madson, Principal, Co.-Design of Work Experience and author of *Culture Your Culture: Innovating Experiences @ Work*, also sees the connection between CX and EX growing stronger— and also sees an increasing need to focus on the overall brand experience.



“Brand, Customer Experience, and Employee Experience will become even more inextricably linked and codependent in 2020. This goes far beyond well-written communications and fancy ad copy and into intentionally designed and implemented experiences that differentiate business performance as a whole. The organizations that ‘get’ this opportunity will set themselves apart, while those that ignore this will fall behind. There’s no status quo when it comes to this

— you can count on this gap increasing.”

Karen Jaw-Madson

More Companies Will Invest in Proactive Experience Recovery

In 2020, leading companies won't just wait for their customers to tell them that something has gone wrong. According to **James Dodkins, host of the Amazon Prime show *This Week in CX***:

“Only 4% of dissatisfied customers will complain, and an overwhelming majority of the remaining 96% will just leave. Adopting the mantra ‘Don’t wait for the complain’ will help companies fix problems for the 96 percent, improve customer loyalty, and lower customer churn. I think we will see an increase in ‘Proactive Experience Recovery.’ This is where companies identify the things in their experiences that cause dissatisfaction, monitor the experience to notice when these things occur in real time, proactively communicate to the customer that they know something has gone wrong, and then put it right or compensate without the customer having to ask. They will work to fix the experience in the experience.”

James Dodkins



CX Professionals Will Be Asked To Do More With Less

Improving CX in 2020 isn't just about bolting on new technology to existing processes. It's about choosing the right tech stack to deliver a frictionless customer experience. **Chad Horenfeldt**, VP of Client Success at **Updater**, predicts:

“Customers will have even higher expectations of their support experience in 2020. Cross-channel communication must be seamless and delayed response times of even a few minutes will lead to lost business. With tighter budgets, those companies that adapt to the right technology can deliver an improved customer experience at a reduced cost and beat out their competitors.”

Chad Horenfeldt



Objective Measures of CX Will Become Essential

CX professionals have long relied on key performance indicators such as Net Promoter Score (NPS) and customer satisfaction scores, which rely on customers to report how they feel about their experience with a brand. But now, companies are beginning to focus on objective CX metrics. **Steve Towers**, Founder and Executive Vice President of the **BP Group**, says:



“In 2020, we’ll all be getting more scientific about the customer experience. We are going to see a continued trend towards objective proactive measures of customer experience that contribute directly to shareholder value. The subjective reactive ‘soft and fluffy’ measures such as NPS are simply no longer good enough, and progressive organizations are now learning to course correct in the moment rather than driving the car by looking in the rear-view mirror.”

Steve Towers

AI Will Empower Support Agents

As artificial intelligence-powered technology continues to improve, many workers are expressing fear that AI will eventually eliminate their jobs. However, in the coming years, AI seems poised to empower, not replace, workers— especially those in customer support. According to **best-selling author and customer experience expert Shep Hyken**:



“Many organizations have started using AI for customer support, and that means Interactive Voice Response and chatbots are interacting with – and sometimes frustrating – the customer. AI, in this capacity, will get better, but the trend we’re seeing now is that smart companies are recognizing that the power of AI in customer support will be when the machine interacts with a live agent helping a customer, giving that agent relevant information about the customer’s question or problem, as well as important information about the customer’s history with the company; their past purchases, requests for help, buying patterns, and more.”

Shep Hyken

More Companies Will Experiment with AI

Mike Wittenstein, Founder and Managing Partner of StoryMiners, also predicts that AI will play an increasingly large role in CX— and that companies will get bolder about testing out AI solutions. He says:

“2020 will be a year to experiment with Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning to create better experiences—especially in call centers, at support desks, in forms management, through chatbots, and around process optimization. There will be both huge successes and dramatic (but hopefully short-lived) disasters. It’s been my observation when companies employ new tools that it takes their people too long to adjust their dashboards. So, new outcomes get measured based on old measures. I predict that the firms which employ AI + ML to optimize customer outcomes and add value to the customer’s side of transactions (in balance, of course, with outcomes for the business) will become the most successful.”

Mike Wittenstein



The Gap Between Those Who Focus on CX and Those Who Don't Will Widen

You'd be hard-pressed to find a company leader who doesn't say they care about CX, but there's a big difference between companies who say they're committed to improving the customer experience and those who are actually taking steps to do so. According to **Jeanne Bliss, founder of CustomerBliss and pioneer of the Chief Customer Officer role**:



“This is the year that will shake out those who jumped in because this work is on everyone’s lips and those who mean to focus on this work as a way to grow their business. CEOs have said let’s ‘do’ CX but they haven’t all put their skin in the game. After a couple of years of this, those not committed will begin to fall away, and we will see real action from leaders who intend to change how they do business.”

Jeanne Bliss

Final Caveat: Balance Predictions With a Focus on the Present

Predictions can be useful for helping us identify areas for improvement and experimentation, but it’s important to balance making predictions with focusing on what’s happening right now. **Adrian Swinscoe, customer experience consultant and author of *CX Punk***, weighs in on this idea, saying:



“I wish that folks would focus more on the present and getting things right in the here and now. This is where we live and where we serve our customers. That is not to say that we should not keep an eye on the future. That is essential, but we shouldn’t do it at the expense of getting things right today.”

Adrian Swinscoe

Thanks to all of the CX leaders who shared their thoughts on what we can expect in 2020 and beyond.