

# Customer Start.

Putting **Customers** at the **Start** of your Strategic Thinking

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With the current economic uncertainty, customers and consumers are re-assessing where their money is spent with many starting to cut back on extravagant purchases and luxuries to gain a tighter control of household budgets.



Companies are already reporting on the impact of this behaviour and are starting to tighten their own budgets which subsequently impacts B2B transactions.

This unfortunately can create a cycle of ever decreasing returns.

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## Weathering The Storm



We know from research that customer-centric companies are far more resilient to external market pressures.

The natural behaviour for companies during a downturn is to start cutting budgets across the board. This however may cause much longer-term damage to the organisation than taking a more proactive approach to concerning times ahead.

**Building resilience needs be based on a multi-faceted approach cutting back on areas that do not provide value or ROI while at the same time doubling down the key aspects of Customer Experience (CX).**

As companies, we all need to make money. To do that we need customers. During turbulent times, companies become extremely vulnerable to losing customers. The critical question becomes: **how readily can your company mitigate or reduce customer churn?**



## Building Resilience

You can build resilience through becoming customer-centric. Here we will outline some of the key concepts which will help you on your journey.

1. Mindset, Culture & Strategy (Your foundations)
2. Understanding what 'Customer Value' is (Proposition)
3. Listen, Learn, Act, Repeat (A virtuous cycle)
4. Trusted Relationships (Advocacy)
5. Amazing service (Trust)

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## Mindset, Culture & Strategy



*“Customers are at the heart of everything we do”*

Many companies say that customers are at the heart of what they do, but that's as far as they go. Make sure they are not just words on the page otherwise you will create *cognitive dissonance* in your team which is the fast track to customer churn.

It's more important than ever to ensure everyone in the organisation is focussed and aligned on the approach to *customer centricity* and *continuous improvement*.

Customer-centric organisations think about customers **every day**; in every meeting and in every decision. They are constantly finding ways to add value and improve the experience for their customers. They build greater understanding of customers and their needs, motivations and feelings to ensure customers feel valued and gain value from their relationship with your company.

## 5 Ways to Improve Customer-Centricity:

1. Create a clear Customer Strategy to align your organisation
  2. Think about your core company values; who are you?
  3. Empower and enable your employees to create amazing experiences
  4. Talk about customers, their needs and their feedback regularly - tell stories
  5. Enable innovation and agility, find ways to continually remove frictions and simplify processes. Set-up a sub-group to drive customer improvements
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## Customer Value

Understand and articulate the value that you provide customers while being mindful that customer needs **do** change and evolve over time.

Customers make decisions to purchase and stay with a company based on their needs and goals.



The product or service you provide must enable customers to:

- A. Achieve their goals
- B. With relative low effort/friction
- C. In a way that promotes advocacy for your company

And don't forget about cost; customers will continuously assess the cost against benefits/value, so make sure your customers are getting value and find ways to remind them.

These benefits may come from a range of areas based on their motivations and needs, including, but not exclusively:

- Reducing complexity
- Saving time
- Providing reassurance/expertise
- Reducing cost

Through understanding your customers in a more holistic way you can think about ways to improve or create new services with further added value.

A few things to think about:

- Why do you exist?
- What do customers get out of it? Is it worth it?

- How do you engage with your customers to show value and care?
  - Are your competitors offering greater value?
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## Listen, Learn, Act, Repeat



If you show your customers that you listen, learn from and understand them while making the end-to-end customer journey great, you will build advocacy, loyalty and trust leading to far higher retention than your competitors.

Customer insight can come from many sources including your CRM, ticketing system, complaints, surveys, social media and review sites. It's vital to use this powerful insight to help prioritise where to focus your investment and improvement initiatives.

Building a more holistic view of your customers will help you innovate, improve, and stay ahead of the competition.

Think about how you are listening today and more importantly how you use that information to improve. If your surveys are not providing **actionable** insight, you then need to change the questions you are asking.

Ask yourself the following questions:

1. Do we know how our customers feel about our services today?
  2. Do we understand their current frictions?
  3. How do they feel about our price point?
  4. Do they see the value we provide?
  5. Do our customers feel we care about them?
  6. Do they **love** our Customer Service, our products/services?
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## Build Trusted Relationships



Retention is based on relationships and how your customers feel about your organisation.

- Do your customers feel valued?
- How do you currently manage customer relationships?
- Do you communicate regularly with value-added information?

Building a clear calendar of events, meetings, communications for your customers across their lifetime journey is important.

Regularly speak to your customers to see how they are, ask them what they would like to see improve, recognise their **key milestones** while ensuring they are able to extract the maximum value from their services.

If done in the right way this can become a key driver on customer insight while showing your customers how much you value their feedback.

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## Amazing Customer Service



This is your chance to show customers that you genuinely care about them.

For many customers, most of their interactions with your business will be with your customer service team.

This is key - customers contact Customer Service when they need help. The way that help is provided will either reinforce your

company values, building advocacy, or alternatively erode them leading to churn.

A clear focus on ensuring that your service team are empowered to help can go a long way. Customers typically don't want to contact support so utilise your data and discover the top ten reasons for customers making contact. Then, either improve your products or services or enable self-service so the customer can resolve their issue(s) themselves.

1. Outline the key reasons for contact and find ways to mitigate
2. See complaints as opportunities
3. Resolve issues fast, with empathy and reassurance
4. Have clear service recovery approaches when things go wrong (which they will sometimes)
5. Provide an Omnichannel experience
6. Look at how self-serve could work for your business (Knowledgebase, AI Chat)
7. Empower your team to **amaze** your customers (They are the face of your business)
8. Be proactive where it makes sense and provide information to customers before they know they need it

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[Contact us](#) if you would like any help to improve the Experience for your Customers and differentiate yourself from your competitors.



## About Us

Customer Start are specialists in Customer Experience, working with innovative SMEs who have a genuine desire to differentiate their business through delivering exceptional experiences. We provide a range of training, advisory and consultancy services to help take your business to new heights.

## How we can help you...

We can help you build a more customer-centric company that is more resilient and financially robust than your competitors through greater customer happiness, retention, satisfaction and recommendations.

We do this by focussing on some of the key elements of Customer Experience (CX) such as;

- A customer-centric Mission and Values to direct the culture
- Helping you to build effective ways to listen and act upon feedback from your customers
- Improving the function of Customer Service through clear goals and employee empowerment
- Building a robust approach to Customer Relationship Management and Customer Success

This structured focus will lead to improved customer satisfaction, retention and lifetime value of your customers.



We work with both small businesses who might not yet have structured CX initiatives in place and medium-sized organisations who may be a little further along that road but need expert assistance to boost their initiatives.