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Creating a High-Impact Customer Experience Strategy



Despite a mandate to create a differentiated and innovative customer experience (CX) strategy that will drive business growth, over 70% of CX leaders struggle to design projects that increase customer loyalty and achieve results. Our research shows an improved product experience is key to success.



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Overview

Most companies believe their CX teams must deliver an innovative customer experience to meet their business goals. CX leaders, however, spend most of their time fixing existing CX pain points rather than developing new, innovative CX projects. Unfortunately, this “fix-first” strategy fails to have the desired impact on customer loyalty.

This is because CX teams focus disproportionately on fixing elements of the interaction experience, which is less salient to customers than the product experience. Our research shows that by improving the product experience (that is, how the product performs and how customers feel about it), and more specifically, by enabling customers to self-affirm their purchase decisions, CX teams can build lasting customer loyalty.

Key Findings

- CX drives over two-thirds of customer loyalty, outperforming brand and price combined.
- While 95% of business leaders believe CX teams must deliver a superior or world-class customer experience, most CX leaders doubt their current project selection strategy can accomplish these goals.
- Delivering an easy and convenient interaction experience creates a good impression, but not one that lasts. In fact, continued improvement does not result in additional loyalty.
- A personalized interaction experience is not a game changer, creating no lasting impact on customer loyalty.
- Only salient experiences that enable customers’ self-affirmation, helping them feel confident about their purchase decision and the value they derive from it, can help build lasting customer loyalty.

A “Fix-First” Strategy Isn’t Enough to Drive Loyalty

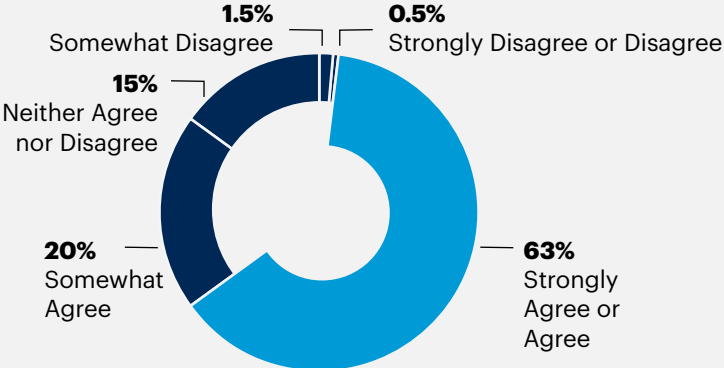
In an increasingly competitive and crowded marketplace, customer experience is fast becoming the coin of the realm. As such, companies expect their CX teams to outperform their competitors and deliver a world-class customer experience. Moreover, 63% of business leaders believe that to build

customer loyalty, their CX teams must be primarily focused on creating new and innovative experiences for their customers. Despite these lofty goals, less than 30% of CX leaders feel they strike a good balance between fixing current areas of customer dissatisfaction and exploring innovative new ideas and projects (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: CX Innovation Expectations and Project Results

Q: “In order to build customer loyalty, our company needs to be primarily focused on **creating new innovative experiences for our customers.**”

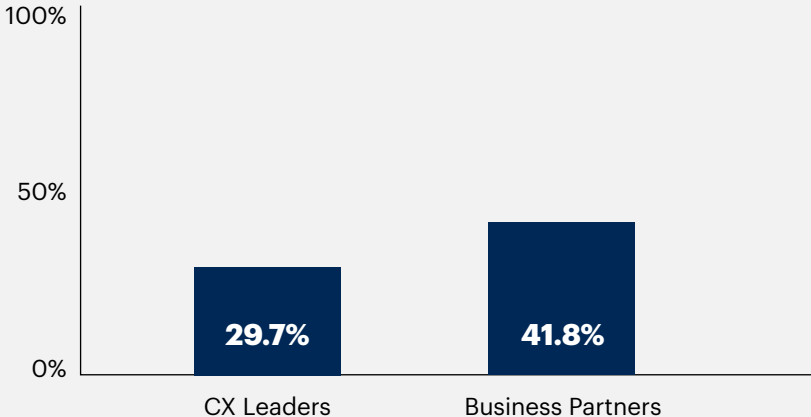
Percentage of Business Partner Responses



n = 500 business partners
Source: Gartner 2018 Customer Experience Business Partners Survey

Q: “Most of the projects that the CX team has worked on across the company **have achieved the intended results.**”

Percentage Who Agree and Strongly Agree



n = 45 CX leaders; 500 business partners
Source: Gartner 2018 Customer Experience Leader and Business Partners Surveys

For CX leaders, building customer loyalty is the key to meeting their company’s business goals and improving financial outcomes. Yet, the lackluster impact of the “fix-first” strategy most CX teams currently pursue reveals a gap between what customers really want to stay loyal, and what CX projects focus on.

Building a strategy that will have a meaningful impact on customer loyalty and, ultimately, business growth, requires CX leaders to create experiences that are salient for customers. As a first step, CX teams have to learn more about why customers come to regard certain experiences as more memorable and important than others and to dig deeper into the determinants of customer loyalty.

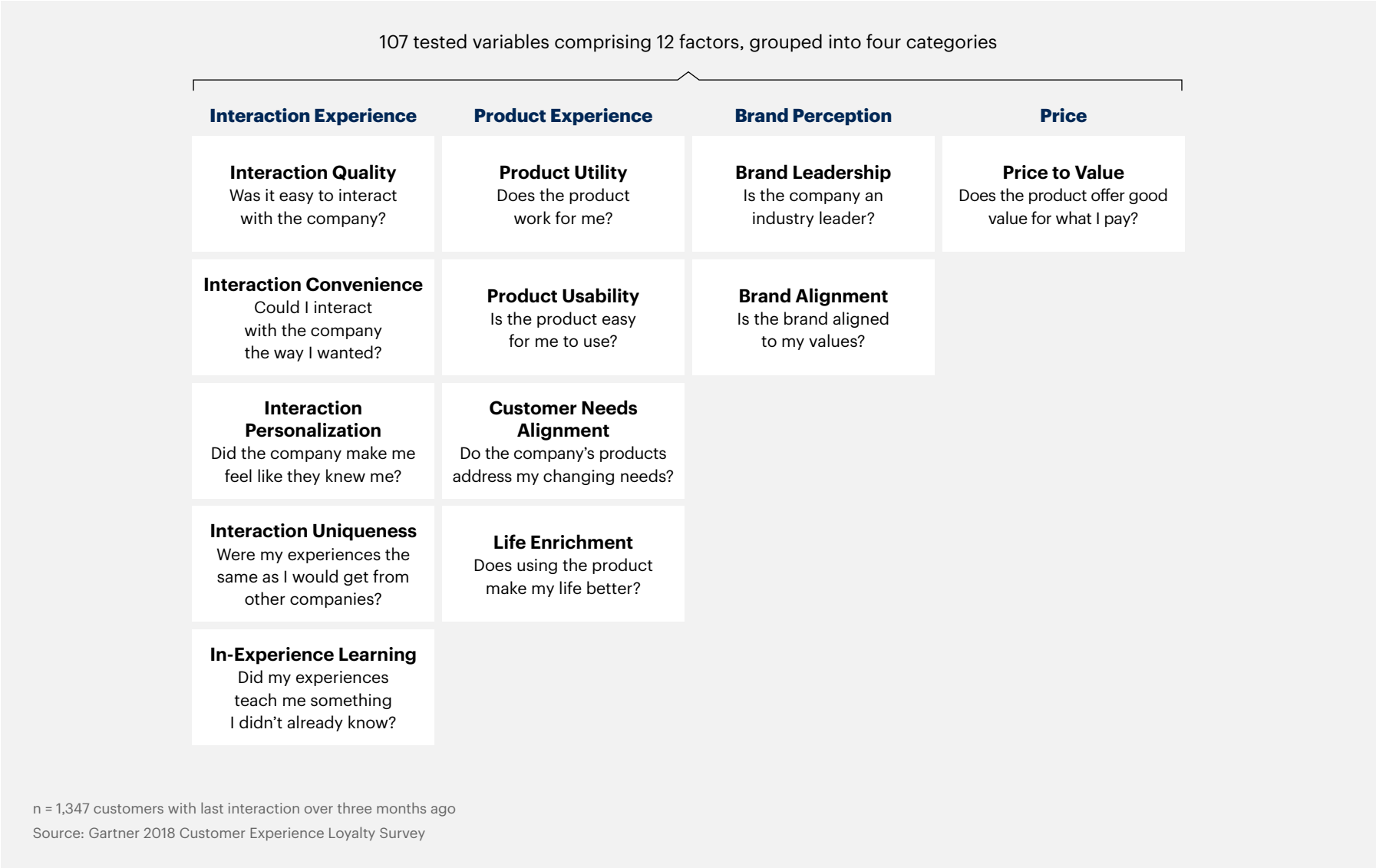
Salient Experiences Are Key to a High-Impact CX Strategy

To better understand what drives customer loyalty, we surveyed 4,090 B2B and B2C customers across a range of industries in the U.S., U.K. and Australia about their experience of making a well-considered purchase from a primary supplier. Our attitudinal loyalty index accounted for how likely customers were to continue using their current supplier, consider a new offer from that supplier, and recommend the supplier to others.

We found that the details and feelings customers retain at least three months after their most recent interaction with the company (what we call salient customer experiences), are the ones most likely to influence their future loyalty behaviors. Salient experiences, then, are the foundation for building a CX strategy that will increase customer loyalty, drive competitive differentiation and deliver a high business impact.

Using factor analysis, we identified four primary categories of customers’ salient experiences: interaction experience, product experience, brand perception and price (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: CX Loyalty Model



Interaction experience — what the company does, and how it feels to customers — speaks to specific evaluations customers make about their interactions with a company based on considerations such as effort (or ease), convenience, personalization, uniqueness and in-experience learning.

Product experience — what the product does, and how customers feel about it — reflects how customers feel about the company in light of their experience using the company’s product/service. This includes factors such as product utility, usability, customer needs alignment and life enrichment.

Brand perception reflects customers’ view of the company’s industry position and sense of alignment with the company’s values, while price includes their estimation of whether the product offers good value for money.

Taken together, these four categories represent the customer’s evaluation of the companies they do business with and the products they purchase. But interaction experience and product experience are the two areas where CX leaders have the greatest influence and that have the biggest impact on customer loyalty.

Our Research/Findings

Our research shows that a reactive “fix-first” strategy aimed only at patching up or refining elements of the interaction experience will not build customer loyalty. In contrast, by innovating salient experiences linked to the product experience, progressive companies are able to achieve true differentiation. Our findings include the following.

Product Experience Counts Most

Product experience has the greatest impact on customer loyalty, accounting for over 36% of the change in the attitudinal loyalty index, compared with 30.4% for interaction experience, 20.4% for brand perception and 13% for price.

No Points For Interaction Excellence

Forty-seven percent of business partners want their CX teams to be better than their competitors in most categories, and another 38% expect them to be “world class.” Yet, we found there is little added loyalty benefit for delivering an outstanding interaction experience. It is true that as interaction quality, convenience and in-experience learning continue to improve, customers grow more loyal. But beyond a threshold of 5 on a scale of 1 (low interaction experience) to 7 (high), the “loyalty dividends” dissipate.

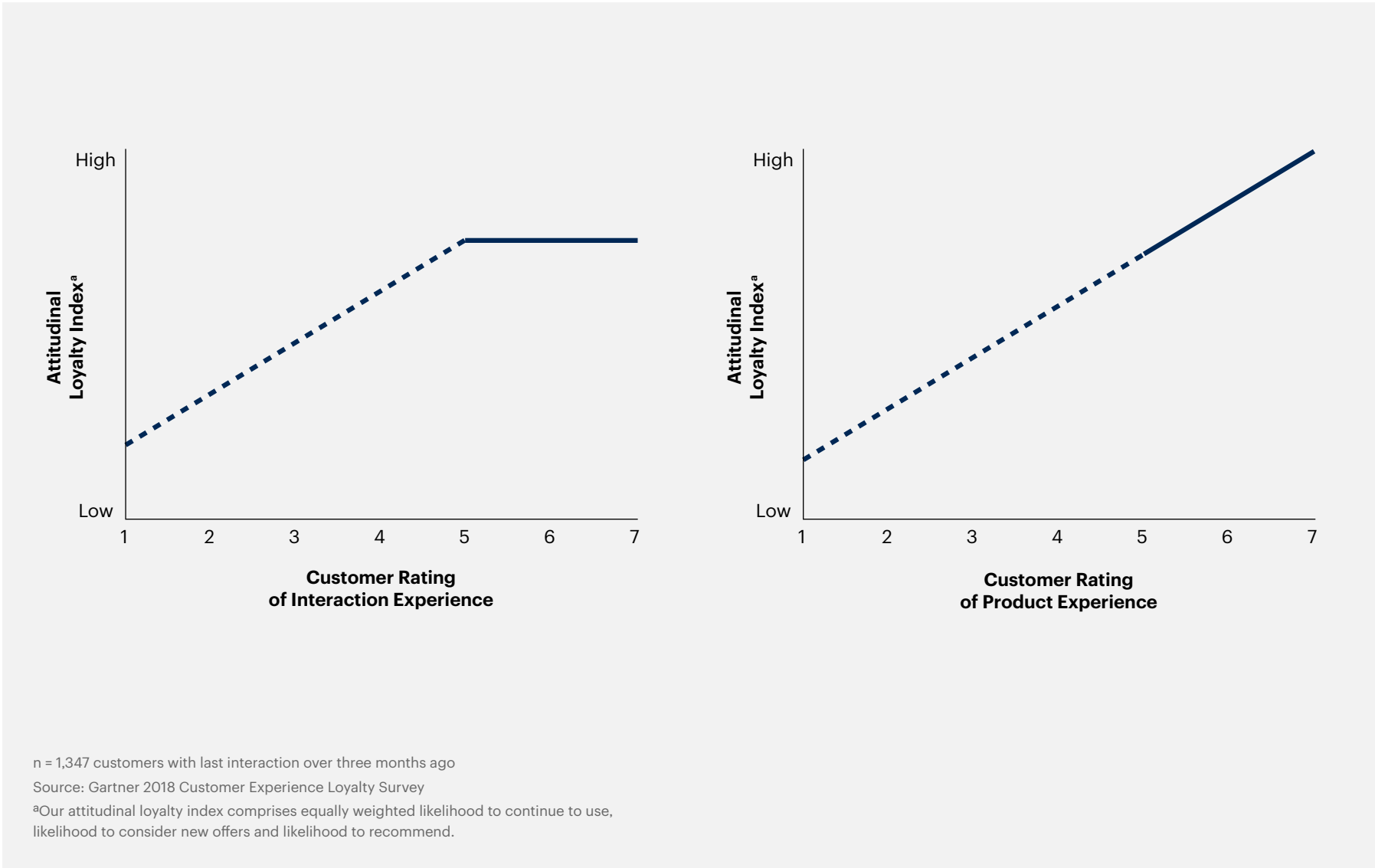
No Additional Gains From Interaction Personalization and Interaction Uniqueness

Many companies are investing heavily in capabilities and technologies that allow them to deliver a highly personalized and customized CX, believing it will increase customer loyalty, satisfaction and retention. Our findings, however, suggest a more personalized or unique interaction experience doesn't lead to greater customer loyalty. Although demonstrating how well you know your customer may leave a positive impression, it doesn't seem to have a lasting, salient impact. Personalization, therefore, is not the key to a truly differentiated CX. Nor can it provide companies with the competitive edge they need to connect with their customers in a meaningful and impactful way.

CX Projects That Enhance the Product Experience Strengthen Customer Loyalty

Our research shows that beyond a certain threshold, improvements in the interaction experience fail to resonate with customers, providing no additional lift in terms of customer loyalty. In contrast, continued improvements in the product experience are rewarded with greater loyalty (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Impact of Interaction Experience Versus Product Experience on Customer Loyalty

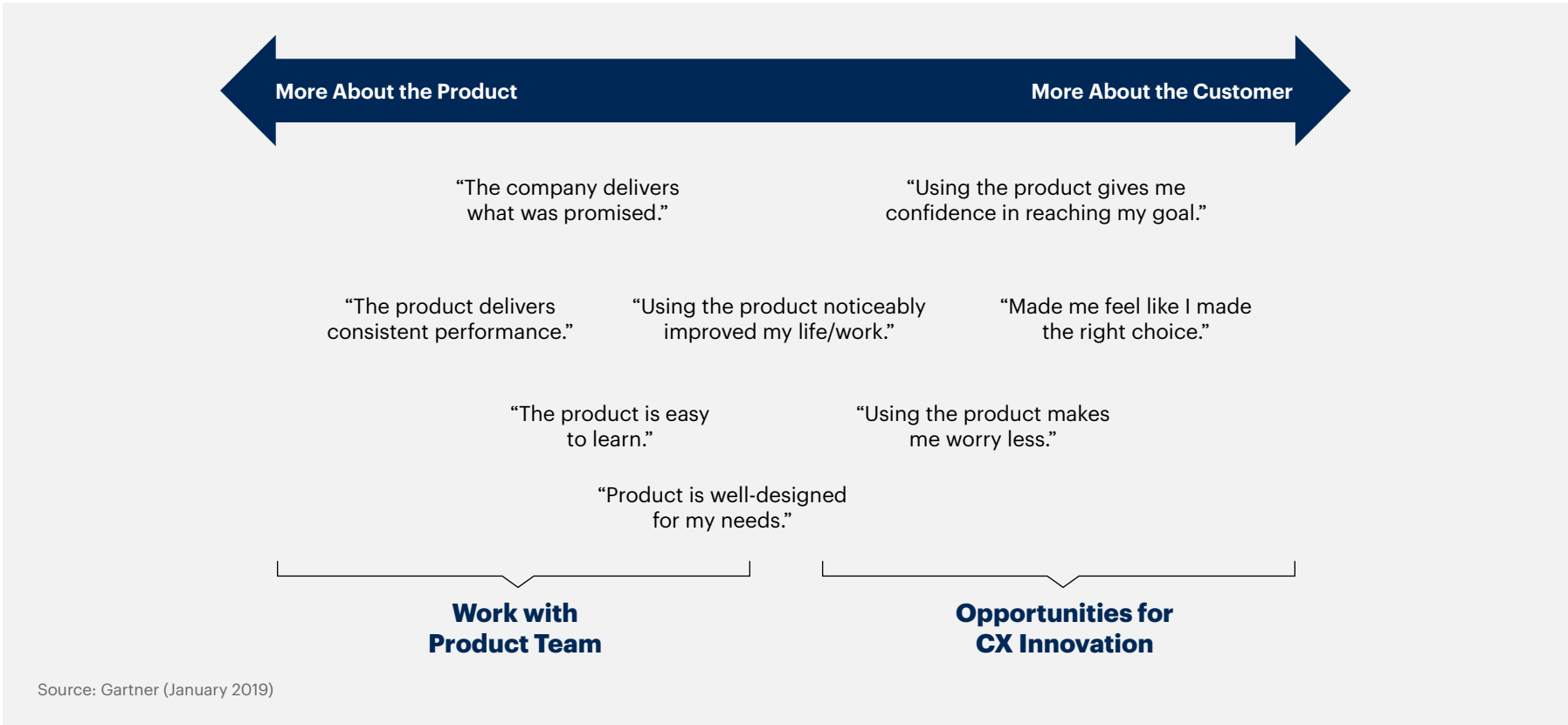


Product Experience Improvements That Enable Self-Affirmation Help Build Loyalty and Create a Differentiated CX

The product experience encompasses a range of impressions; some more product-centered and others more customer-centered. While CX leaders can certainly work with the

product team to ensure the product meets customers’ needs and expectations, they are uniquely positioned to attend to the customer-centered elements of the product experience (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Significant Attributes of Product Experience



CX projects advancing customer-centered improvements to the product experience should ultimately evoke positive impressions and sentiments from customers. Our research shows that customers who feel the product noticeably improves their work and even life, makes them worry less, and gives them confidence in reaching their goals tend to be more loyal. All told, the most powerful “loyalty trigger” CX projects should aim for is making customers feel they’ve made the right choice.

Progressive companies are beginning to innovate by adding new touchpoints to the customer experience that allow their customers to self-affirm the value they derive from the purchased product or service. Our research finds these types of innovation fall into a number of categories, based on the particular way they enable customers’ self-affirmation. And while innovation is a notion that is generally associated with large-scale, multi-year efforts, these CX innovations are in fact relatively easy to develop and execute.

Implications

Creating Salient Customer Experiences That Build Loyalty

To build lasting customer loyalty, CX leaders need a strategy that centers only on salient customer experiences. They also require tools and processes to identify and prioritize opportunities to make customers feel they’ve made the correct purchasing decision and are benefitting from using the acquired product or service.

Our empirical analysis looked at what type of interaction proves most memorable and important — or salient — to customers. We also studied a broad range of touchpoint innovations calibrated toward enabling customers’ self-affirmation as well as processes that standardize and routinize the development and implementation of new ideas and designs. Based on our findings, we propose three mutually reinforcing ways CX leaders can build lasting customer loyalty and achieve their business goals.

- 1. Build a CX strategy rooted in salience** — Learn to identify and prioritize only those salient experiences that shape customers’ future loyalty behavior, redesign to improve touchpoints that customers remember, and increase efficiency and impact by discounting a large portion of negligible customer issues.
- 2. Recognize and seize opportunities to enable customer self-affirmation** — Create touchpoint innovations that reduce customers’ tendency to consider alternative options by enabling them to affirm the wisdom of their original choice.
- 3. Develop and implement self-sustaining practices** — A disciplined process for identifying opportunities, ideating solutions, prioritizing projects and building and testing new experiences is the key to scaling innovation.

1. Build a CX Strategy Rooted in Salience

Tasked with representing the customer’s point of view to their companies and inundated with complaints about existing CX pain points, CX teams make difficult choices about where to allocate their limited resources and time. As a result, they often end up spending most of their time fixing voiced customer problems. If companies could “fix” their way to enduring customer loyalty, this would be okay.

Unfortunately, most CX projects target issues that don’t necessarily matter much to customers, and therefore have a limited impact on long-term customer loyalty behaviors. This is because it is difficult to know which issues produce “sticky” memories for customers as well as how to redesign the customer experience to capitalize on these moments.

Part of the challenge is that emotional impressions and attachments are difficult to decipher using standard quantitative surveys and voice of customer (VOC) data. Traditional methods of prioritizing customer issues can also fail to guide the CX team toward the most impactful customer experiences. Finally, for many teams, redesigning the customer experience is a massive undertaking involving efforts to find and fix every issue in the customer journey, all without any guarantee that the changes will pay off.

Our research suggests customer attitudes are driven by just a fraction of their experiences. If companies can learn to identify these salient experiences, they can then use this understanding to design improvement initiatives more efficiently. Doing so requires CX teams to change how they listen to customers — and what they listen for — to effectively determine which projects can create a truly differentiated customer experience.

Salience-Based CX Listening Strategy

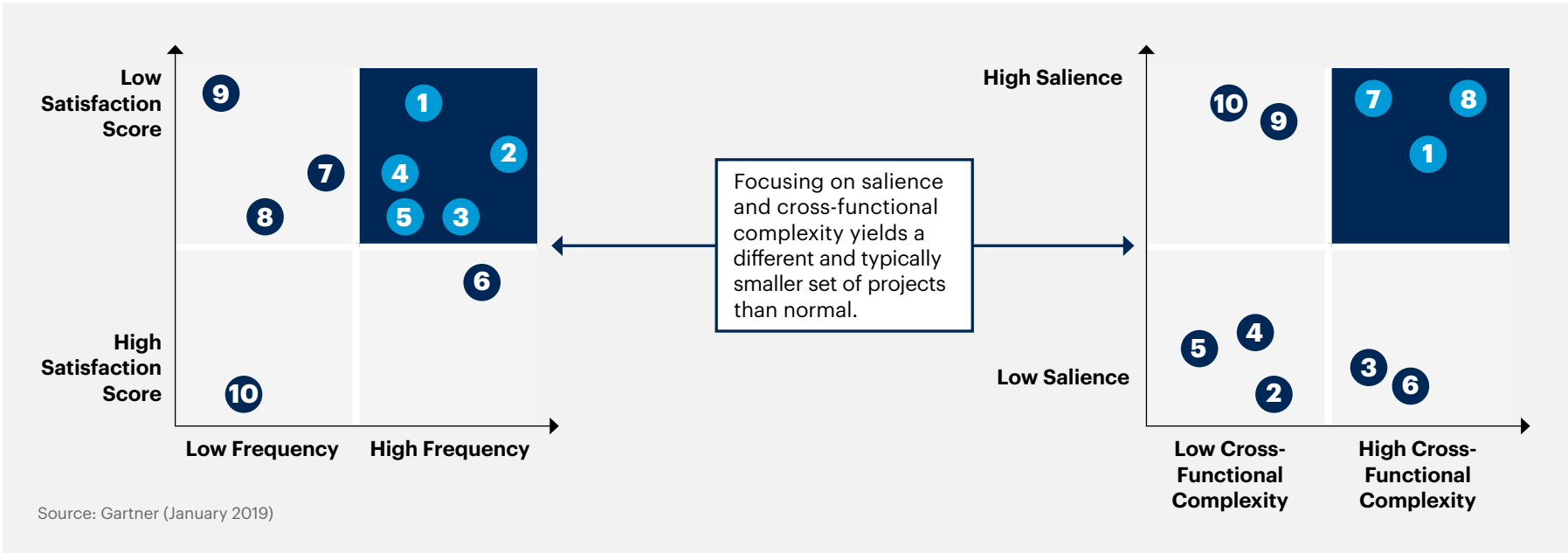
By filtering customer feedback for indicators of salient issues in existing experiences, CX leaders can develop criteria to prioritize projects that address issues of greater importance to customers and ignore the numerous issues that don’t affect customers’ loyalty behavior.

VOC feedback from quantitative surveys is perhaps the most common way to gain insight into customer motivations, impressions and experiences. But CX teams need to know what kind of cues and clues to look for when trying to better understand what events and experiences are remembered and important for customers. Our research shows the two key filters for screening customer feedback in search of salience indicators are issue durability and issue polarization.

Issue durability is a straightforward metric of customer memory that uncovers the positive and negative issues customers remember over time. Issue polarization signals a large spread of opinions and impressions. Whether customers are highly satisfied or deeply unsatisfied, the issue at hand clearly has strong emotional resonance. Taken together, these filters can help CX teams identify salient issues for customers, which in turn should serve as the foundation for CX project design.

Changing how CX teams listen to customer feedback to focus explicitly and exclusively on those issues and experiences that create memorable and meaningful impressions is then the first major step in building a CX strategy rooted in salience. Next, CX teams must prioritize projects to pursue. Here, our research identifies a major disconnect between the typical CX prioritization matrix and one based on salience (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: Typical Versus Salience-Based Methods for Prioritizing CX Projects



Source: Gartner (January 2019)

Based on the typical CX prioritization matrix, CX teams usually select projects in areas of low customer satisfaction that rise frequently. This prioritization method often yields many projects that demand immediate attention but that don't necessarily resonate with customers. This helps explain why many CX leaders feel they have an endless stream of issues and problems they must fix, yet are ultimately unable to meet their overarching business goals.

In contrast, salience-based prioritization points to an area where CX teams can not only have a great impact but also have a unique opportunity for innovation. Prioritizing projects based on high salience is more likely to result in greater customer loyalty. At the same time, focusing effort toward areas of high cross-functional complexity involves the CX team in issues other functions might be reluctant to pursue, increasing CX's overall organizational impact.

Minimal Required Redesign

Analyzing customers' salient experiences and journeys often illuminates numerous suboptimal touchpoints that contribute to customers' overall perceptions, challenging even companies focused on the right experiences. However, by focusing redesign efforts on only those moments within touchpoints that leave a lasting impression on customers, teams can selectively recommend specific high-impact improvements. Using salience as a design screen limits the total amount of work required to shift long-term customer behavior and ensures that the specific changes to processes and workflows are both necessary and sufficient to improve loyalty.

WSECU

Case in Point: Building a CX Strategy Rooted in Salience (WSECU)

Washington State Employee Credit Union (WSECU) recognized the need to improve its home equity loan application process, which customers described as too complicated and difficult. By applying salience filters to customer feedback and following the minimally invasive redesign model, the CX team was able to narrow down the number of projects to those that targeted only salient experiences within the complex, multistage customer journey. Improvements to the customer experience then focused on reducing customer uncertainty by minimizing friction in transitions from first-contact staff to product specialists, reducing the need to repeat personal information, and providing proactive updates. An additional change was geared toward reinforcing customer accomplishments and celebrating the loan-signing experience. Boosting customers' confidence in their progress toward their broader goals helped create positive, long-lasting memories. Over a year, WSECU was able to cut the number of "customer issues considered critical to fix" by 76%.

2. Recognize and Seize Opportunities to Enable Customer Self-Affirmation

A salience-based CX strategy shifts gears from fixing low-impact customer pain points to creating touchpoint innovations that bolster customers' confidence in their decision to purchase the company's products and services. That said, knowing when and where such opportunities for customer self-affirmation may arise, and learning how to design innovative projects that capitalize on such moments and interactions can be challenging and time consuming.

Fortunately, CX functions around the world have been experimenting with a range of new touchpoint innovations and we have catalogued these into eight different categories that CX teams can use to enable customer self-affirmation. Note that none of these projects is explicitly focused on selling a particular product or service. Instead, the focus is on innovating new experiences that amplify the value customers receive from their purchase and provide self-affirmation that they have made the right choice.

Show my accomplishments is an opportunity to reinforce clients' confidence in their purchase decision by demonstrating the value they derive from it. This can be done by celebrating noteworthy moments or landmarks, such as the completion of a buying journey, or by highlighting progress to give customers a sense that they're making headway towards their ultimate goals.

Enable my exploration speaks to a set of touchpoint innovations that take place while customers are weighing their options at prepurchase. In a world of seemingly endless options for most consumer goods and services, allowing customers to draw a direct comparison between different products and services can increase their confidence in their eventual purchase and prevent buyers' remorse.



Case in Point: Enable My Exploration (Neiman Marcus)

As part of its broader efforts to develop an innovative, tech-savvy customer experience, Neiman Marcus' Innovation Lab (or i-Lab) partnered with MemoMi, a digital imaging software company, to introduce Memory Mirrors in some of its stores. A full-sized fashion mirror, Memory Mirrors allow customers to record a video of themselves wearing different outfits and products, so they can be easily compared. The mirrors can also change the color or pattern of items depending on the other options in stock and suggest complementary accessories. The innovation was so well received that it has since been adapted for eyewear and beauty products.

By enabling a direct and vivid comparison between several options, Neiman Marcus' Memory Mirrors make customers feel they're making an informed decision, which enhances their confidence in their choice. And having "tried it on for size," customers are also less likely to experience buyers' remorse.

Guide me to success entails providing customers with a clear, easily digestible and user-friendly plan to follow in pursuit of their goals. Reducing complexity in complicated, multistage buying journeys or usage processes bolsters customers' self-confidence and sense of control. Similarly, the feeling of forward progress reduces uncertainty and stress. These types of interaction and experience can then convince customers that choosing a particular company has put them on the path to success.



Case in Point: Guide Me to Success (Lowe's)

In Spring 2017, Lowe's introduced Holoroom How To, a virtual reality program that teaches customers about the supplies and basic DIY skills needed to accomplish their task. The program proved capable of elevating unskilled "DIYers" to memory performance levels comparable to those of experienced DIYers, as they learned to complete tasks such as tiling a shower. The fully immersive virtual reality experience gives customers the confidence they need to undertake potentially daunting home improvement or renovation

Allow me to control my schedule is a way to help customers use the product or service on their own terms. For example, Amazon lets customers track en-route packages on a mobile app and make last-minute changes to their delivery to better fit their schedule. Allowing for flexibility and in-experience adjustments shows companies are paying attention to their customers' needs. Doing so reinforces the feeling that the customer has made the correct choice of company or product/service and creates a lasting positive impression that fosters future loyalty.

Free up my time is another way companies can demonstrate value by being mindful of their customers' time and needs. Here, touchpoint innovations should allow customers to offload low-value tasks while using the product, which lets them spend time on things they care about more. One example is Disney's FastPass, which allows customers to avoid standing in a long line waiting for a ride, instead letting them spend their time elsewhere in the park until their reservation.

Let me participate in shared experiences reflects an understanding that in an increasingly interconnected and networked environment, customers want to share information and experiences, and feel they're part of a broader community of users. By enabling the development and proliferation of customer communities and facilitating social connections between customers, companies can help customers derive even greater value and validate their purchase choices.

Reduce my momentary uncertainty tackles the moments of doubt (and self-doubt) customers experience after making a purchase. Here, companies should provide detailed and up-to-date information during the different stages of the postpurchase experience. A popular innovation of this sort is Domino's Tracker, which gives customers continuous updates on their pizza — from order to prep, bake, quality check, and delivery. Knowing what is happening or should happen at moments of uncertainty makes customers less likely to worry or question their purchase decision.

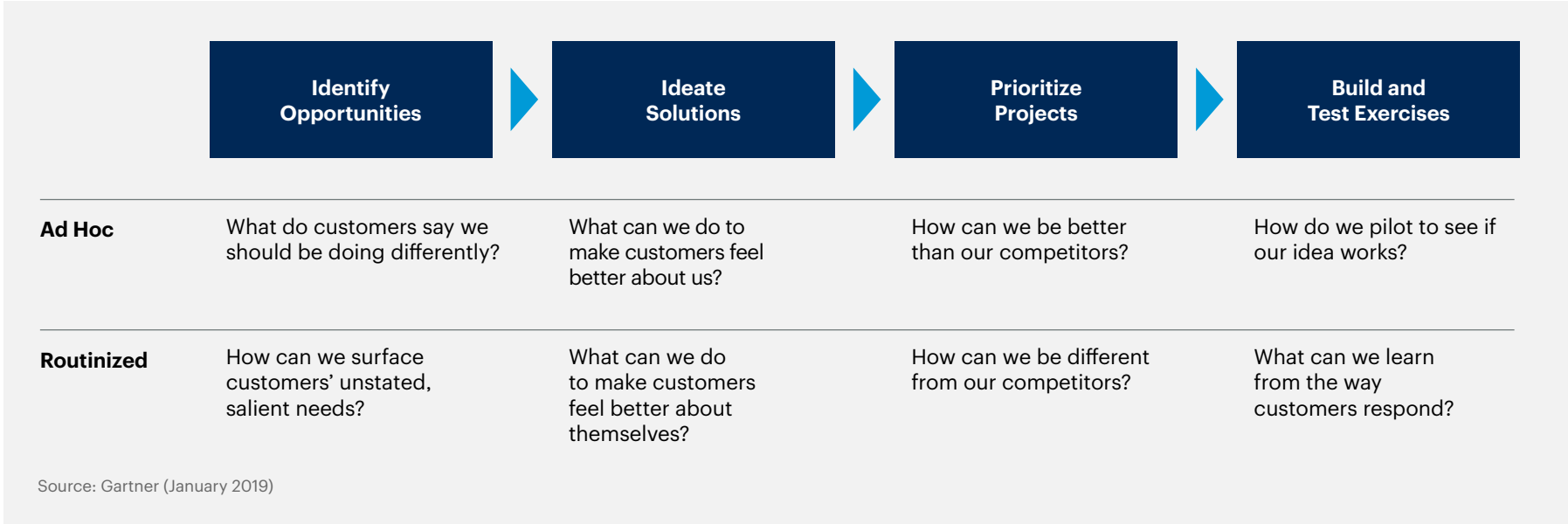
Provide me with an added bonus is an opportunity to surpass customers’ expectations of their initial purchase. By sharing uniquely valuable data with customers or providing them with an unexpected benefit, companies can improve their experience and make them feel validated in their choices.

To be clear, companies don’t have to implement all of these initiatives to build lasting customer loyalty. In fact, making even minimal and incremental improvements to the customer experience along these lines can make a meaningful difference. Moreover, most of these touchpoint innovations are relatively cheap and easy to execute, and some simply entail minor adjustments to existing projects and practices.

3. Develop and Implement Self-Sustaining Practices

Our research shows CX teams typically approach CX innovation in one of two ways. The ad hoc approach is the most common one; it entails a relatively random (but not necessarily unsuccessful) process of identifying opportunities and ideating solutions based on what customers explicitly state they want fixed to make them feel better about the company. A desire to be better than the competition guides project prioritization, while building and testing experiences requires an elaborate pilot to determine whether a given idea works (see Figure 6).

Figure 6: Ad Hoc Versus Routinized Approach to Experience Innovation



Progressive companies, on the other hand, are charging ahead by implementing practices that not only facilitate and enable the development of new ideas and designs, but also standardize and routinize the innovation process. The routinized approach, then, centers on surfacing customers' often unstated salient needs and ideating solutions that make them feel better about themselves and their choices. Prioritization of projects stems from a desire to be different, while efforts to build and test experiences emphasize iterative learning based on customers' responses.

Two key things then differentiate progressive companies from others. The first is discipline; progressive companies routinize the process of CX innovation to enable innovation at scale. The second is a customer-focused rather than a company-focused approach to identifying opportunities, ideating solutions, prioritizing projects, and building and testing experiences.

Opportunity Surfacing Process

In search of opportunities for customer experience innovation, most CX teams regularly rely on statistical techniques such as root cause analysis to spot patterns in their VOC data and systematically identify the main drivers of customer issues. Many also have processes in place to ensure continuous improvement.

Progressive companies, however, realize that traditional methods of VOC data collection and analysis often miss customers' salient experiences. Therefore, they turn to in-depth qualitative research methods to complement VOC input and gain a better understanding of unstated customer needs. Ethnographic interview research questions, for example, can help companies grasp the context of their customers' experience with the purchase, and paint a more complete picture of the issues raised through VOC.

Collection and analysis of customer feedback fuels the process of ideating solutions. And customer insight gleaned from a combination of VOC and in-depth qualitative methods enables progressive companies to brainstorm and create solutions that satisfy unstated customer needs. However, to be both productive and routinized, this process of generating new and innovative ideas should proceed in line with clear and tightly defined parameters that specify:

- Who — The persona or customer
- What — A clear benefit and related feeling that the intended customer will internalize
- When — The particular moment of the customer journey when the customer will achieve the outcome

Having straightforward criteria for translating customer feedback into specific, actionable opportunities allows CX teams to design and execute new projects more quickly and replicate successful projects in the future.



Case in Point: Opportunity Surfacing Process (Spectrum Enterprise)

To address the frustrations and challenges surrounding customers’ VOC feedback, Spectrum Enterprise’s CX team conducted qualitative interviews and ethnographic research to first better understand the context of the customers’ work environment and responsibilities. In doing so, they learned that client project managers need to consume the information provided by Spectrum Enterprise and clearly communicate it to others within their business. Using a who-what-when framework to interpret this feedback, the CX team then brainstormed a number of potential ways to help clients communicate more confidently with their business stakeholders. This structured, customer-focused approach helped the team identify concrete and actionable CX design and solution opportunities that directly target customers’ unstated, salient needs.

Iterative Experience Development

Having identified opportunities for innovation in the customer experience, CX leaders need to prioritize ideas and projects to pursue in the face of limited resources and time. At the most basic level, new ideas have to align with the company's broader vision and strategy; CX leaders then need to balance ambition and risk. Ambitious projects are more likely to provide a differentiated customer experience and have the greatest potential customer loyalty benefit, but tend to be more expensive and time-demanding. Moreover, considering the uncertain returns on investment from such innovation, getting the go-ahead from the company's leadership is often an uphill battle.

Our analysis suggests organizations should use the following criteria for prioritizing new ideas and projects: precedence in other fields but not the company's, opportunity to enable customers' self-affirmation, low upfront testing costs, and feasibility with existing capabilities.

Experience precedence — CX leaders can mitigate innovation risk by modeling their new ideas and designs on projects and experiences previously implemented by companies outside their industry or field. Doing so can give them confidence that the proposed project is sufficiently ambitious and viable, while also providing them with a unique opportunity for industry differentiation.

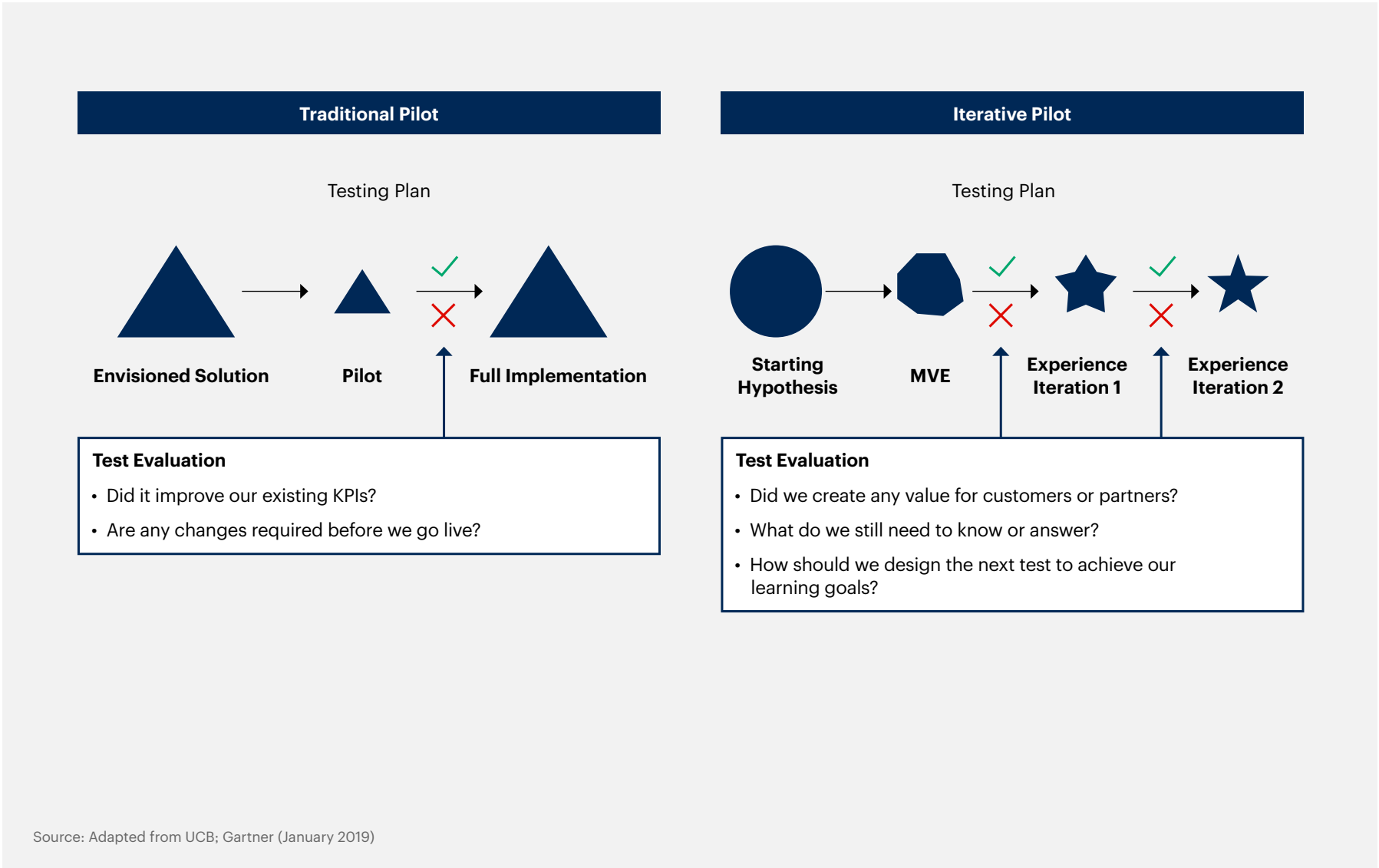
Opportunity to enable self-affirmation — As already discussed, the greatest potential for innovation lies in advancing new projects and experiences that enable customers' self-affirmation.

Low upfront testing costs — The cost of testing the minimum viable version of the proposed project or experience is critical to the project selection process. As such, there should be a way to test the basic idea, and answer the most important questions about the proposed project, without significant investment.

Feasibility with existing capabilities — The company should be able to execute the envisioned idea or project at scale with its existing technical, operational and financial capabilities.

To balance ambition and risk, progressive companies are also developing innovative processes for testing new ideas. In contrast to traditional pilots, which aim to validate improvements to an existing experience or test-run nearly fully developed projects on a smaller scale, iterative learning pilots test the minimum viable experience (MVE) — a narrow but potentially impactful aspect of the larger innovation. Such pilots are ideal for testing initial hypotheses about how to create value for customers and exploring the potential viability of new experiences. And because they are cheaper and quicker to implement than traditional pilots, these iterative, “start small” designs with predetermined interim milestones can help reduce the investment risk of new experience creation and improve the odds of successful project execution (See Figure 7).

Figure 7: Traditional Versus Iterative Learning Pilots



Source: Adapted from UCB; Gartner (January 2019)



Case in Point: Iterative Experience Development (UCB)

With limited access to traditional VOC feedback, the CX team at UCB drew on ethnography, industry immersions and employee hackathons to develop a project selection and testing process to explore innovative projects with manageable risk. For example, their peer support network project, which helps new patients adjust to living with epilepsy, was selected based on feasibility, low testing costs and precedence in other fields besides biopharmaceuticals.

The MVE version of the project equipped precertified tenured patients with a preloaded tablet to answer new patients’ questions. After the initial test of the MVE revealed that new patients sought advice on managing personal and professional life with epilepsy rather than medical issues, the team moved past the first go/no-go decision point and invested more in the project. The second iteration entailed a secure digital platform for multiparty interactions, culminating in a successful new program. Overall, after implementing the iterative testing process, the number of experience opportunity tests the UCB CX teams conducted annually more than doubled.

Conclusion

CX teams are facing internal and external pressures to create an innovative and differentiated customer experience that will help build customer loyalty. Yet, most are falling short on their goals. This disappointing performance stems from a mismatch between what customers value and need to be loyal, and what CX teams spend most of their time and resources trying to fix.

Correcting this misalignment requires CX leaders to adopt a strategy that centers only on salient customer experiences and capitalize on opportunities to enable self-affirmation, that is, make customers feel they’ve made the correct purchasing decision and are benefitting from using the product or service they acquired. Overall, such a strategy offers a promising yet unappreciated opportunity for innovation, differentiation and impact.

Recommendations

To build lasting customer loyalty and meet their business goals, CX leaders should:

- Incorporate the idea of ‘salience’ into the prioritization of experience initiatives by filtering existing VOC data for indicators of highly salient customer issues and using this understanding to build and prioritize initiatives most likely to influence customers’ future loyalty behavior.
- Assess in-flight CX projects for their potential to enable customers’ self-affirmation by identifying potential touchpoint innovations where a relatively simple and low-cost redesign can be impactful.
- Use iterative design to routinize the incubation of customer experience innovations by working with their teams to build controlled project selection and testing processes that advance incremental, “start small” designs and incorporate customers’ responses into the innovation process through iterative learning.
- Shift CX investments away from a “fix-first” strategy toward creating new, differentiating customer experiences by adopting a salience-based CX strategy that steers the team’s resources, time and creativity toward creating new and innovative experiences that customers value, remember and reward with lasting loyalty.

Recommended by the Authors

- [“Using Customer Feedback to Predict Behavioral Loyalty”](#)
Learn how to better predict loyalty by evaluating customers’ salient experiences from feedback solicited two to three months after an interaction.
- [“Filtering VOC Data to Identify Salient Customer Issues”](#)
Learn how to prioritize identifying customers’ salient issues by analyzing existing VOC data for customers’ durable memories and calculating the polarization of customer attitudes driven by specific issues.
- [“Tailoring Surveys to Prompt Customers for What Really Matters”](#)
Learn how to use open-ended survey questions to prompt customers for their salient memories and reveal what really matters to them.
- [“Needs-Surfacing Interview Techniques for Experience Innovation”](#)
Use our framework of interview techniques to help uncover needs that cannot be identified with traditional voice of the customer (VOC) methods.
- [“8 Kinds of Experience Innovations That Build Loyalty”](#)
Discover eights ways for companies to re-emphasize the value customers already receive from the product and enable them to self-affirm purchase decisions.

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