

An aerial night view of a city, likely Dubai, featuring a prominent highway interchange and numerous illuminated skyscrapers. A digital network overlay of glowing blue nodes and connecting lines is superimposed over the cityscape, symbolizing connectivity and technology. The text "It's time Taking customer experience to the next level" is positioned on the left side of the image.

**It's time**  
Taking customer experience to  
the next level

Digital technologies have dramatically reshaped customer expectations, and companies need to understand the clear shift that has happened in customer behavior. In order to stay relevant in the digital age, companies must react to behavior that has been digitally disrupted by offering personalized experiences and be able to create memorable moments for their customers. For Consumer Packaged Goods (CPG) companies and retailers to create new human-centric experiences, they need to consider a number of factors in order to better engage their customers, create higher value for them, and thus achieve much faster growth and better ROI.

### 1. Understanding how customer behavior has changed

Customer behaviors and expectations have dramatically changed in the digital age due to the new possibilities and the number of new communication channels, resulting in the rise of a new, dynamic customer journey and a different way of looking for and connecting with brands. Today's customers perceive a company or a brand based on experiences, rather than products or services only. They demand more self-service capabilities and define their customer journey in a dynamic way every time they interact with the company. In addition to exceeding their expectations with regards to product and service quality and benefits, customers expect companies to offer them relevant interactions over different online and offline channels, thus addressing their buying behavior and preferences and keeping them engaged. As the new path-to-purchase is no longer linear, and involves several interactions and channels, today's consumers more than ever are looking for experiences that

matter to them and are tailored to their specific needs and the needs of their families.

### 2. Changing the core business capabilities

As today's customers segment themselves into tribes that share common mindsets and goals, they look for brands that are omni present and can be integrated into all aspects of their lives. Accordingly, CPG companies and retailers must completely change their business capabilities, especially in the front office, in order to create personalized, memorable experiences, achieve better omni-channel presence, and be relevant to their customers where they are. Their strategy should start by focusing on Customer Engagement using digital technologies to create meaningful and insightful connections with new and existing customers, and leveraging new sources of data and analytics to provide automated services and recommendations. They should also put an increased effort into understanding and addressing customer needs and providing personalized customer experiences and new front office operating models for each customer profile. And as customers today seek quicker resolutions to their problems, companies must leverage their entire ecosystem and digital capabilities to offer first-class customer service and create a seamless, omni channel experience across the entire customer journey. In other words, they must respond to the changed behavior by focusing on experience and brand purpose, creating new business models, and offering data-driven personalized communication that feels tailored for

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each user and to his or her specific set of circumstances and needs.

### 3. Leveraging the power of intelligent platforms

Companies need to understand how technology can be an enabler for digital transformation and help them engage with consumers effectively through different digital channels. Leading technology vendors such as SAP, Salesforce and others, offer state-of-the-art CX platforms that allow CPG companies and retailers to engage with customers and consumers effectively on different digital touch points and bring together all aspects of customer relationship leveraging an integrated portfolio of cloud solutions across marketing, commerce, sales, and service, as well as customer data and analytics. They also offer a wide range of industry-specific solutions that can be tailored to build a true customer-centric digital organization. These platforms are designed to be experience-driven and modernize the sales-only focus of legacy CRM products in the past. Companies that manage to leverage the power of such intelligent platforms are usually able to offer their customers an orchestrated and connected experience across all channels, processes, and business units, thus helping them advance in their journey and become more connected to the brand, not just digitally but also emotionally.

### 4. Focus on creating a connected experience

Companies in which each business unit operates its own set of customer engagement applications typically maintain different views of siloed

customer data, which in turn leads to different disconnected experiences for the customer. While today's consumers are always connected, the experiences offered to them by most CPG brands and retailers haven't been up to their expectations yet. To enable intelligent and connected customer experiences, the entire front-office architecture design needs to move away from the federated model based on business functions and technology components, and evolve to a customer-centric model based on different layers that consider the needs of today's customers and ensure a seamless, best-in-class omni-channel experience. By bringing together siloed applications and data sources to an integrated platform, following a cloud-first and mobile-first strategy and leveraging the power of analytics and AI, CPG companies and retailers can build a secure and intelligent, best-in-class platform, which offers customers the connected experience they are looking for.

### 5. Adopting an agile human-centric approach and mindset

Finally, choosing a human-centric and agile approach when designing for change and innovation is a key factor to ensure a successful understanding of customer needs, goals and pain points, and to build and offer the memorable experiences that customers and consumers are looking for. This introduces an engaging approach to problem-seeking and problem-solving by thinking from a user's perspective and can only be achieved by adopting the right organizational culture and mindset in addition to the right methodologies and tools. Modern approaches, such as human-centered design, require a new

mindset and new operating models, for example agile co-creation, design thinking, minimal viable products, pilots and iterative product development. They typically result in community based-personas, market archetypes, and user centered customer journeys, rather than the traditional customer segmentation based on demographics or socioeconomic factors, or defining and describing organization-centered business processes. By adopting this new mindset and culture, CPG companies and retailers can leverage the common drives that support these principles in order to create and build connected, user-centered, and value-focused experiences that customers will love so much, that they will happily act as advocates and ambassadors for their favorite brands.

Developing and delivering a holistic customer-centric strategy and transformation is not an easy task, and many companies tend to manage digital initiatives in ways that take the form of projects or are limited to activities within a given division or function. CPG companies and retailers that want to move away from that tendency need to develop a digital mindset by which a company's digital activities, people, culture, and structure are aligned with the organization's broad ambition.

It is time for CPG companies and retailers to start putting the human perspective into the center of their digital transformation journey in order to take their customer experience to the next level. ●

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