Axios SYSTEMS

The Leading Provider of IT Service Management Solutions

Why you should care about the IT customer experience

…and what you can do about it

An Axios Systems whitepaper

Executive summary

In 2015, the quality of the Customer Experience (CX) became the number one focus for business and technology leaders, according to Forrester Research.[1] 97% of execs say delivering a great customer experience is critical to their business.[2] Yet only 80% of CEOs believe they offer a superior customer experience and only 8% of their customers agree.[3]

Organizations have realized that in the "Age of the Customer" – where customers have the power to switch brands with ease – customer experience is the battle ground where business is most frequently won and lost.

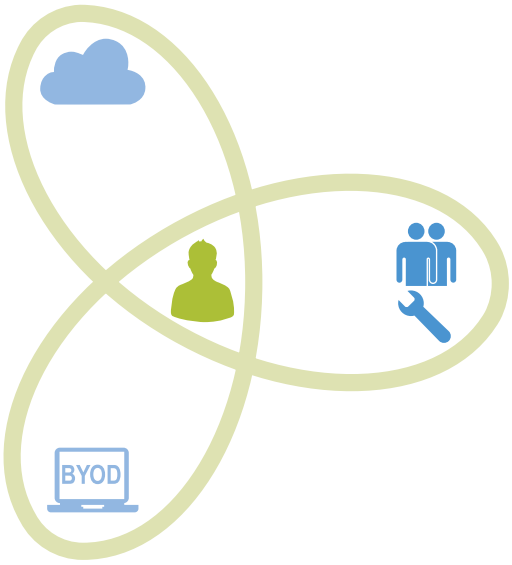
Data from customers proves this to be true: a full 89% of customers have switched to a competitor because of a poor customer experience.[2]

The same behavior is impacting the corporate IT department. When IT's customers don't get what they want they seek outside sources for solutions to business challenges. The cloud technology explosion and the easy availability of powerful consumer technologies are empowering business technology customers to select and buy solutions without the involvement of the corporate IT department.

The irony is that as technology becomes an increasingly vital part of the end customer experience, corporate IT is becoming less involved in creating that experience.

The IT department's inability to provide a high quality experience for end users within the organization means business leaders are unlikely to trust IT with building and managing the end customer experience – pushing an increasing portion of total technology spend into the hands of the Chief Marketing Officer, Chief Digital Officer and Chief Customer Officer.

In the face of strong external competition, the corporate IT department needs to consider the quality of its own customer experience. End user expectations are rapidly evolving, driven by their experiences in the consumer-world. These accelerated expectations put increased pressure on IT to deliver a comparable quality of experience – and fast. The challenge for IT is to remain relevant in an environment where IT is competing with an increasingly strong and agile open market, where powerful consumer devices and cloud-based services present very viable alternatives to what corporate IT provides.



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What is customer experience (CX) and why should IT care?

Introduction

For many years, creating a great customer experience meant one thing: optimizing the in-store experience.

As new technologies have enabled new communications and sales/ marketing strategies (mail, phone, web, mobile and social) the dimensions of the customer experience landscape have exploded. Organizations face the challenge of optimizing the customer experience across multiple digital and non-digital touchpoints – as well as tying these interactions together to gain 360 degree visibility and create a seamless experience for the customer. The same challenge applies to corporate IT as an internal service provider: provide the right outcomes to end users – quickly and simply – and avoid the sort of poor experiences that drive end users to consider alternative service providers. The quality of the customer experience matters. Customers and end users care as much about the experience as they do about the core outcome.

However, in many IT departments, a legacy technology-oriented mindset still prevails. Performance is measured in terms of network and system uptime and the end user perspective is never adequately considered or addressed. IT processes, designed to streamline efficiency within the IT department fail to take the IT customer's expectations into account, and instead focus on cost reductions which often create unwelcome friction for the end user. Services are frequently designed behind closed doors and away from the end user - with a zeal for technical function (what the service does). Where a technical mentality prevails, form follows function and, by default, the shape of the end user's experience is defined by the inner workings of the service – not their own needs, context or expectations.

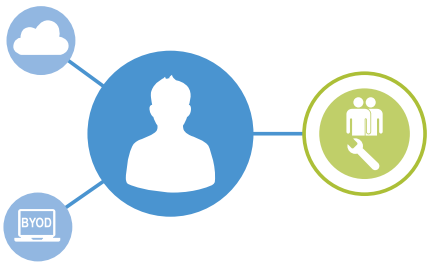
The challenge of matching experience with expectation is amplified by the dynamic nature of work today. End user expectations vary depending on work context (a combination of who they are, where they are, what they're trying to do, how they want to do it, the type of device they are using, their state of urgency and more). Archaic IT processes, designed for a simpler age (where standard-build PCs and desk-bound employees were the norm) are too clunky to work across all these new digital and mobile scenarios. The services provided may well be functional, but the experiences that surround them are not.

End users are frequently forced to flex to fit around IT processes – instead of vice-versa. This is a source of friction, frustration and dissatisfaction for end users: productivity is compromised.

It is necessary for IT to understand emerging end user contexts and expectations – defined by work pressures and heavily influenced by the experiences end users have in their consumer lives - in order to provide an experience that meets expectation.

In a world where there are many external alternatives to what corporate IT can provide (rising BYOD and shadow IT trends are an expression of dissatisfaction with corporate technology), IT needs to realize that IT customers are as free to "vote with their feet" in their business lives as they are in their consumer lives.

When they do so, the corporate IT budget shrinks and the business takes yet another step away from the IT partnership.



" It doesn't matter if your data center operates like a Swiss watch: Customers only see the outcome. Operational excellence means focusing on what customers think is important."

JP Garbani, Forrester Research

What is Customer Experience (CX)?

Gartner defines CX as "the customer's perceptions and related feelings caused by the one-off and cumulative effect of interactions with a supplier's employees, systems, channels or products".[4]

It is an aggregation of a customer's direct experiences with a company's products, services and communications, as well as other indirect factors such as word-of-mouth recommendations (or criticisms) coming from customers and other third parties. Collectively, these digital and non-digital points of contact form the complete customer experience – the way the customer thinks and feels about an organization or brand – with some interactions being more memorable than others.

These include the ads that customers see, the in-store experience, how sales people behave, the ecommerce website, the mobile app, calls to customer support and conversations with friends and family about customers' own experiences. The core product or service that a company offers is the center of a much broader experience (what James McQuivey of Forrester calls the "total product experience").

To use an analogy, we can talk about a restaurant experience. Going for a meal in a restaurant is a service: the outcome of which is (at a minimum) that you no longer feel hungry. At the center of the service is a core product (the food), but the service experience is of great importance to the overall satisfaction of the customer.

The service attributes that customers look for depend on their context: a quick bite to eat at McDonald's before jumping on a plane, a memorable dining experience to celebrate an anniversary, and everything in between. In each case, the experience that the customer is looking for is different, so the restaurant's process for providing customer satisfaction is also different. Each respective customer experience is designed differently to suit different contextual needs.

For the IT customer, the experience is defined by the hardware they are issued, the applications they use, the services that support their business processes, the way they are helped when something goes wrong - and all of the projects, conversations and collaborations with IT people. The scope of the IT customer experience goes far beyond the commonly accepted "face of IT" – the service desk.

What is Customer Experience Management (CXM)?

With so many points of contact – some of which are within the direct control of the organization and some of which can only be influenced indirectly – it is a major challenge for organizations to measure and improve the Customer Experience (CX).

Customer Experience Management (CXM) is about taking a strategic approach to managing the total experience; to gain a 360 degree view of interaction with the customer and use this visibility to improve the overall experience. Why? Because service delivery is only as strong as the weakest link in the supply chain. One negative interaction can wreck the overall experience and lose a customer forever.

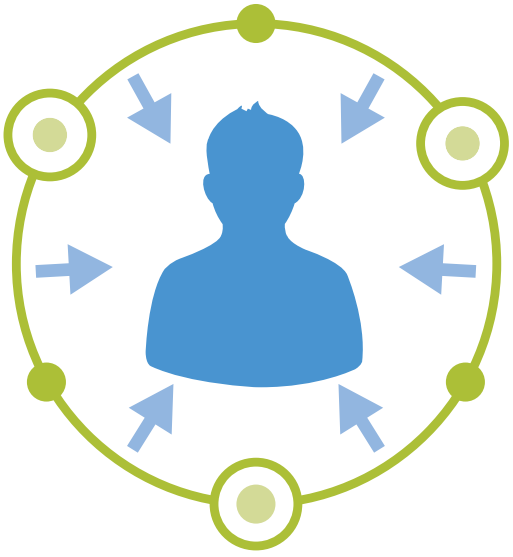
TechTarget defines CXM as “The collection of processes a company uses to track, oversee and organize every interaction between a customer and the organization throughout the customer lifecycle”.

Gartner defines CXM as “The practice of designing and reacting to customer interaction to meet or exceed customer expectations and, thus, increase customer satisfaction, loyalty and advocacy”. [4]

In essence, Customer Experience Management is about examining what the organization does from the customer’s perspective: taking the “outside-in” view versus the legacy “inside-out” perspective which is primarily concerned with devices, operational efficiency and internal metrics.

CXM prioritizes “doing the right things” over “doing things right”, knowing that the wrong outcome delivered perfectly is still a failure. CXM measures performance in terms of holistic customer satisfaction, whereas the traditional operations focus only measures the performance of the constituent teams. These local, siloed metrics often cause conflicts with global performance in terms of the customer outcomes and experience.

The application of holistic metrics that represent the customer’s satisfaction with the whole experience enable the prioritization of global optima over local optima: improvements that increase customer satisfaction are kept; improvements that cut costs for an operations team but fail to advance the customer experience are abandoned.



Why CX is top of the executive agenda

Continuous digital disruption is constantly changing customer expectations and organizations have to work harder to attract and retain customers in the face of greater competition.

Low prices and innovative products/ services are no longer enough to retain customers. The customer experience – the way you do business with customers - is now as important as what you sell. Organizations must deliver the whole package: the latest innovations, competitive prices and an appealing customer experience.

Research from the Institute of Customer Service shows a 10% increase in customer satisfaction score results in a 12% increase in trust from customers.[5] Numbers from an American Express study indicate that customers who have received great service spend 13% more.[6] In short, organizations get more out of their CX programs than they put in.

The risks that stem from poor customer experiences also indicate the critical importance of getting the customer experience right: 44% of consumers take their business elsewhere as a result of poor service.[7] Two out of three customers will talk about a poor customer service experience they have received. And one in two will tell over ten people.[8] When businesses fail to provide a superior customer experience, they lose customers – and those customers put off other customers.

Customer experience is the new battleground on which customer satisfaction and loyalty is won. 62% of customer service organizations see customer experience as a key competitive differentiator. 85% of organizations already support multi-channel interaction options with customers (a common customer expectation) and 63% of companies expect to spend more money on further developing the customer experience angle.[9]

The impact of this on IT? A poor experience will crucify service adoption, use of automation and will stifle IT's introduction of service innovation.

" What your company sells is no longer a product [or service]. The product is now at the center of a total product experience."

James McQuivey, Digital Disruption

What good customer experience looks like

Good CX	Bad CX
Any time/any place/any device accessibility Customers have 24/7 digital access via any web-enabled PC or smart phone.	**Time wasted travelling to log in** Users have to go back to the office to access services, get information and update systems.
Customers know what's happening Amazon-like tracking confirms with the user at each step of the delivery process.	**Customers left wondering** Requests and enquiries fall into a "black hole" and end users need to make repeated, pro-active contact to find out what's happening.
Things happen quickly Efficient processes guide rapid, predictable delivery, automating the automatable. Human interventions benefit from a trained and engaged workforce.	**Sluggish responses** Execution processes are badly designed (or nonexistent), operated manually and poorly resourced with badly-trained, unmotivated staff.
Simple and frictionless The mental and physical effort the end-user needs to put in is minimized, leaving him or her to focus on productivity.	**Jumping through hoops** Clunky systems, broken processes and rigid policies throw up hurdles that frustrate customers.
Personal service The service provider recognizes the customer across different channels and adapts both the conversation and the resulting actions to fit the customer.	**Being a number** Customers are forced to identify themselves with a number. With no central system, customers are repeatedly asked for the same details by different service departments.
All present and correct The customer gets complete delivery of everything they need – whether it was explicitly requested or not.	**Something "missing from the box"** On delivery, customers find that part of what they needed to achieve their objective is missing. Think "batteries not included".
Choice Customers choose from a number of digital and non-digital channels – whichever works best for the end user in their current work context.	**Rigid** Communication is restricted to a much smaller set of options, supporting fewer customer needs/contexts.
Customer-Driven Innovation Customers are brought in to the process of design and improving products, services and support mechanisms.	**Chance-driven innovation** Everything is designed behind closed doors, to be unleashed on the customer with little or no attempt to validate the value before launch.
Can-do attitude IT staff make every reasonable attempt to accommodate customer demands.	**Inability to adapt** Rigid processes, inflexible policies, and disengaged staff prevent positive action.

Why end user experience is critical to the IT department

Customers are more promiscuous than ever – they switch brands frequently when they receive poor service. Organizations that deliver a superior customer experience retain customers longer – generating more revenue from repeat sales, up-selling and cross-selling.

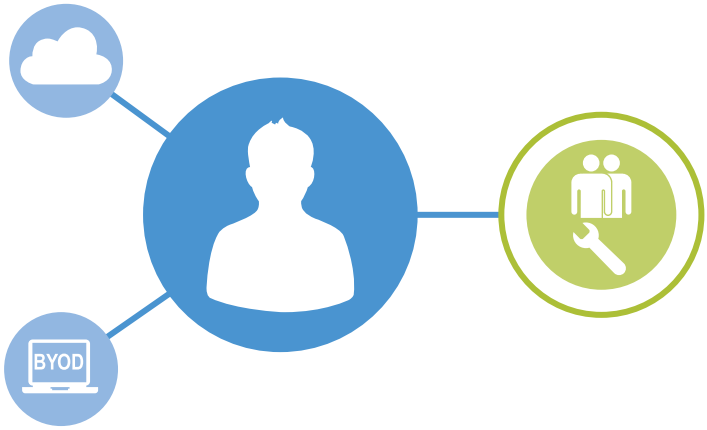
Likewise, when the IT department's customers don't get what they want, they look elsewhere for solutions to business problems. This is the key driver for the rising BYOD and shadow IT trends. In an environment where consumer and cloud technologies are easily accessible to business people, corporate IT no longer has the monopoly on technology. The business is no longer tied to IT as the default provider of technology products and services. The cost of switching IT provider is no longer prohibitive, opening up competition.

It's an issue of trust and credibility: if business people see IT failing over what they perceive as minor issues, they will be reluctant to trust IT to deliver the transformational digital business initiatives that could potentially make or break the company. Trust, once lost, is difficult to regain. Loss of trust in IT forces business people to look elsewhere, erodes budget, and forces the IT department into a corner.

With a reduced budget and fewer resources to play with, the task of driving improvement, climbing the maturity ladder and regaining a position as a value-generator in the organization becomes more and more difficult.

Once a certain "tipping point" has been passed, a corporate IT department can be permanently relegated to the status of a support organization, managing commoditized IT services while other business leaders assume responsibility for driving the important innovations.

The time for IT to act – and turn the tide – is now. The objective is to rebuild trust by demonstrating IT's commitment to delivering value to the business, supported by capabilities that can compete with even the best external competitors.



Part Two:
How to improve the IT end user experience

Case study: improving satisfaction by 82%

Xentrall Shared Services
Delivering Excellence for All

Xentrall Shared Services ICT uses Axios Systems' IT Service Management (ITSM) solution, *assyst*, for all ICT Service Management. Originally, the main method of access to the ICT service was through telephone or email contact with the central service desk.

Faced with new challenges, Xentrall evaluated the self-service functionality available in the product and went live with the *assyst*NET self-service portal, rolled out to more than 5,000 business users throughout the Councils. In order to encourage uptake, a portal icon was placed on all desktops, proving invaluable in terms of awareness and access. In addition, all ICT email footers have a link to self-service and all ICT communications advise using the portal for info, updates and logging.

The Results

After a highly successful launch, Xentrall very quickly saw the benefits of the *assyst* self-service portal. Practically all electronic requests shifted from email to self-service within a year. Now, the ICT team only accepts incidents and guidance by phone. Service requests, changes, updates and projects are all done by self-service.

Key Benefits include:

- Reduced calls to the Service Desk due to self-service logging: Service users are now able to find info and solve issues themselves. Business customers can log, monitor and update their own incidents and service requests. Customers can log incidents based on assets or services, or can be prompted by a set of simple, non-technical questions to ensure the right information is captured to enable the most efficient resolution route and even possibly resolve the incident without assistance from the service desk. Within 2 years of launch the use of self-service as a contact method rose from 5.2 % to 47.1%. During the same period, the amount of monthly contacts by email fell an impressive 98% (from 41.5% of all calls to just 0.8%).
- Users can request status updates and monitor progress themselves. Real-time updates are available on issues currently logged.
- Increased end user productivity due to timely resolution and communications.
- Identification of frequently used solutions and elimination of root cause, reducing repeat incidents.
- Knowledge Management: Customers can search a broad set of non-technical resolution procedures to solve issues without reliance on the ICT service desk, through access to FAQs and guidance documentation.
- Password integration: Customer's passwords are integrated with active directory logon, reducing the need to log on separately or reset another password, reducing the number of calls to the service desk and maximizing productivity.
- Message Center: The site includes a real time message center to support the business customer services. Information pertaining to IT services can be targeted to relevant customer groups, for example the status of specific services, changes to the service delivered and outages due to planned maintenance.

The net effect of improving the service functionality is evident on satisfaction levels. In order to assess any effect on customer satisfaction, good or bad, Xentrall launched an online questionnaire. The results of the survey show a significant improvement in customer satisfaction in those that responded post go-live of the ICT self-service portal:

Improving the IT end user experience

Successful CXM programs are founded on six key disciplines – strategy, customer understanding, design, measurement, governance and culture. These disciplines are not frightening new concepts; they are adjustments to familiar organization concepts that will help you create an ecosystem where the quality of the customer experience matters.

Each key area sets out a handful of practices that help to improve outcomes for end users, or help to establish the cultural and governance aspects which stabilize Customer Experience Management to make it stick.

Key Disciplines	Description
Strategy	Defining and communicating a strategic approach that aligns with the overall IT strategy.
Customer understanding	Engaging with end users to develop effective feedback mechanisms to give the IT organization a deeper understanding of end user challenges and needs – and generate a continuous stream of actionable insights.
Design	Centering the design of services and experiences around the end user, based on the most up-to-date understanding of the customer, pro-active engagement with end users, and an agile, iterative approach to service prototyping.
Measurement	Measuring and analyzing experiences from the end user perspective to drive continual improvement of the customer experience.
Governance	Establishing policies, standards, roles, reviews and processes to embed experience-oriented thinking into the IT organization.
Culture	Establishing HR objectives, training programs, routines, rewards and regular communications to embed the experience-oriented mentality in IT's culture.

Strategy

Strategy is an essential starting point. Diving straight into small-scale pilot programs to improve the end user experience in problem areas (for example the service desk) can get you some quick wins, but a truly successful, sustainable CXM program starts with the high-level vision.

A well-considered, well communicated CXM strategy that is owned (not just sponsored) by the CIO will help you get people on board and move in the right direction.

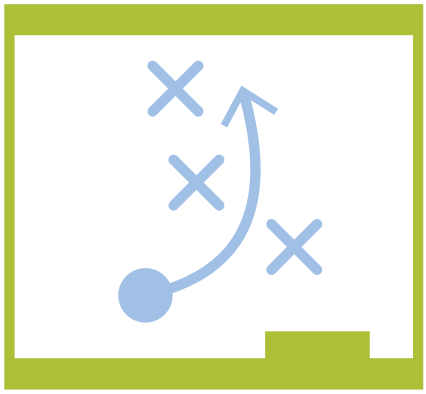
Define the strategic blueprint

Without going into too much detail, the strategy should define the type of customer experience you are looking to create. For many IT organizations, the most appropriate strategy is to put front-of-house IT into "retail mode": applying a multi-channel strategy that emulates the familiar consumer-world experience and presents choices to suit the end users current work context. This means looking at options like web self-service, a service catalog and mobile support apps. However, it is critical to overall success that these channels are integrated to provide a complete view of the end user across channels.

Whatever your strategy, be mindful of the need to adapt. End user expectations will change, driven by new experiences in their consumer-world lives. The mechanisms that support every aspect of the end user experience need to be built for adaptability. If you don't build in adaptability at an early stage, you can get stuck delivering a snapshot of what a good end user experience used to look like.

Share the strategy

Communicating strategy is about sharing the focus and priorities – to help IT people make informed decisions that line up with the overall strategy. Clarity of purpose among all the people who contribute to the customer experience is essential to success. An ambiguous strategy, poorly communicated will send people off in the wrong direction and waste valuable resources.



"Customer experience professionals identified the lack of clear strategy as the biggest obstacle to customer experience success."

Keith Coe, Forrester Research

Customer understanding

One reason IT often fails to provide the best user experience is the mismatch between what IT thinks is important and what really is important. Consequently, IT departments frequently assign resources to activities that do nothing to add real value.

To deliver the right user experience you must first understand the end user's challenges, needs, contexts and expectations. The objective of the customer understanding discipline is to gain insight, replace assumptions with data, and gain a better understanding of the mindset of the end user.
There are no short cuts. Industry-average statistics won't reflect the reality in your own organization. For example, the set of end user profiles, challenges, behaviors, preferences and expectations in a traditional law firm will differ from those in a high-tech startup. Studying your own end user community is an essential component of a CXM program.

Customer understanding is an ongoing discipline – not a one-off project. End user needs, contexts and expectations change over time, influenced by experiences in the consumer world. You will need to work continuously to update your understanding. Keeping an eye on consumer-world CX trends will give you some foresight on how end user expectations might change next.

Collect knowledge

Think about how you are going to stay in touch and in tune with your IT customers. Implement surveys that actively solicit feed as well as "listening posts" where end users can provide feedback at a time and place that works for them. Mining transaction data will also uncover insights and trends. Face-to-face research may involve conversations with end users and user-facing IT staff, or "camping out" with end users to observe them in their own environment. In ITIL®v3, this is where the Business Relationship Manager (BRM) fits in to the customer understanding discipline.

Analyze and organise

The raw data, taken from different sources needs to be collated and analyzed to derive insights. Beware that the end user community is not a homogenous group. They have different roles and challenges, so they have different needs, expectations, habits or behaviors. Expectations will vary by seniority, age, location, digital literacy and more.

Document

Trying to understand every possible permutation of end user profile is impossible, so it is necessary to create some general "personas" that describe the basic end user archetypes. For example, Geek Squad, a US based computer services company, defines a "Jill" as a suburban mom who sees technology like plumbing, and Geek Squad like a plumbing company she calls when she wants a leak fixed. A "Daryl" is a different type of animal: more technically ambitious and often needs the Geek Squad's help when he gets in trouble.

Your ITSM solution MUST be able to incorporate this ability to change service experience based on user profile or segment. Axios's solution, *assyst*, has this as standard via CSGs (Customer Service Groups).

Share

Customer understanding is an input for decision-making across the IT organization, so documented insight must be shared widely and supported by regular training.

" Your most unhappy customers are your greatest source of learning."

Bill Gates

Design

The design discipline is all about orchestrating the design of positive end user experiences, drawing on the body of customer understanding and working in close conjunction with the end users themselves to leverage their real-world perspectives and ensure objectives are met.

Process

Most IT departments have their own pre-existing service design processes (at varying degrees of maturity). The role of the design discipline of a CXM program is to integrate customer experience factors into the design process, elevating it from a technical perspective to a customer-oriented perspective. In the ITIL V3/2011 best practice guidelines, the Service Lifecycle volume encourages service design in conjunction with IT customers, but the CXM Design discipline takes this a step further, embedding deeper interaction with end users throughout the whole process.

Engagement

Involve IT customers and end users in the “fuzzy front end” of the design process to weed out the bad ideas early and co-envision the end user experience – so that IT does not waste time and resources on dead ends that deliver no value. Work with them to sharpen up requirements and iteratively prototype new services until end users get their desired experience and IT gets the desired user satisfaction ratings. We see the positive effects of bringing end users into the design process when we compare service catalogs that have been designed in close collaboration with IT customers, versus those that are launched unilaterally by the IT department in order to reduce operational costs. The latter invariably fail to gain end user adoption and, consequently, fail to reduce costs for IT.

Iteration

An iterative cycle of design, prototyping and end user validation helps IT to ensure the right quality of service and user experience is delivered every time, but it requires a more agile approach to service design. By discarding the waterfall model (which locks in IT’s perception of end user requirements at an early stage) and embracing short design-prototype-validation cycles that include user feedback, the IT department can ensure both the functional requirements and the more ethereal expectations are built in to the overall end user experience. To enable a more agile process, IT may combine existing tools, virtualization and rentable cloud components to accelerate prototyping and avoid making larger, more permanent investments until the solution has been fully validated and signed-off by IT customers.

Measurement

According to research from Forrester, IT teams are twice more likely to say they provide great IT support than the customers they support.

It's easy to see why: infrastructure monitoring tools show everything is OK - and when things go wrong, the vast majority of issues are resolved within the SLA. The problem is that neither the condition of the supporting infrastructure, nor the performance against SLAs are truly representative of the end user's level of satisfaction.

Where the selected set of performance metrics are viewed as a suitable measurement for the customer experience, the IT department may suffer from the "watermelon effect": green on the outside, red on the inside.

The metrics make things look good, but the customer is still unhappy. And if the metrics already look good, there is little motivation to work to improve performance; meaning IT slips further and further and behind the end user's advancing expectations. The CX Measurement discipline is about picking the right metrics to support the delivery of a high quality end user experience – as measured by end users themselves.

Define CX measurements

It is critical to define and agree (with end users) on a framework of metrics that will help you objectively track the quality of the end user experience. Without an experience-oriented view of performance, the whole CXM program will be at risk of veering off course. To support effective execution, the performance of teams, roles and individuals that contribute to the end user experience must also be measured in terms of the quality of the end user experience. Otherwise, they will be pulling in a different direction to influence a different set of metrics.

Measure

Experience-oriented metrics illustrate the human perspective in a way that no technical metric can. CX metrics such as Net Promoter Score (NPS), CSAT and Customer Effort Score (CES) are becoming increasingly popular as standard measurements to quantify performance from the end user's perspective. For the IT department they are easy to manage and analyze, and for end users they are simple to understand and take only a minute of their time.

Analyze

Simply collecting metrics isn't enough. You have to do something with them to drive improvement. CX metrics like Net Promoter Score help you measure the quality of the customer experience both generally and in relation to specific touchpoints. Tracker surveys, abstracted from any individual transaction between IT and the end user allow high-level tracking of end user sentiment towards IT. Transaction surveys pin a response to a specific interaction (like a call to the service desk) in order to uncover and target specific improvement that need to be made.

Share and act

Sharing CX performance metrics to everybody who is accountable for all or part of the end user experience is critical to maintaining ongoing commitment to improve. Reporting widgets that show performance against a baseline (and indicate direction of travel) should be the centerpiece of the CIOs personal dashboard. General CX performance reports should be distributed frequently to everybody who has a hand in delivering the end user experience.

67% of large organizations rate themselves as good at soliciting customer feedback, yet only 26% think they are good at acting on it.

Customer Experience Matters[10]

Governance

The governance discipline is about embedding accountability to make your CXM program stick. It is the glue that holds the whole program together.

Great customer experiences don't happen by accident: staff need to own tasks and be evaluated on those tasks; coordination must be carefully facilitated across the IT organization; new projects and changes must be evaluated for CX benefits; and performance must be continually reviewed to check alignment and progress towards goals.

Assigning and evaluating responsibilities

Ownership of the overall customer experience and the constituent parts is essential to success. Tasks that aren't owned, simply don't get done. Individual IT staff and IT teams should be assigned specific CX management tasks that are appropriate to their roles. Role-specific CX metrics should then be applied to evaluate them. With many people contributing to the overall customer experience, individuals will normally be evaluated on a sub-metric that tracks their own contribution at a more granular level. The CIO needs to own the overall CXM program as a priority. He or she is the head of the CX governing body and responsible for coordinating interaction.

Enforcing alignment

When new projects are evaluated, they should be evaluated and prioritized with an eye on their impact on the customer experience and the current CX performance. If the IT department is losing ground on performance, projects that remedy painful CX problems may be bumped up the list. Likewise, when any changes are made to policies, processes, systems and communication channels, the impact on the customer experience must be assessed and adjustments applied.

Regular review

A CX performance dashboard should be part of the CIO's daily digest, but regular review meetings should also be held to discuss performance, failures and any adjustments that need to be made to policies, responsibilities, rewards and resource allocations.

Culture

Culture is about values and behaviors; the “muscle memory” of your IT organization. When you take away the governance structures and performance metrics, culture is what remains.

The purpose behind cultural change is to build attitudes and behaviors into the staff DNA; to take pressure off your governance structures and institute good customer experience management practices as engrained philosophies that become self-directing (and thus flexible and responsive). Governance is the scaffolding that supports you customer experience management program, but what you are really building is a strong, agile CX-oriented culture.

Recruitment and training

Work with your HR department to recruit for customer-centric values and skills. Most of all, the attitudes of your IT staff must to be right. Where there are skills gaps, train for the specific skills that you need to deliver the customer experience strategy as an organization.

Communication

Communication is a key tool for developing culture, but simply telling your service desk staff that the customer experience is important and that they need to excel expectations will lead to confusion. Ideas of what end user expectations look like will vary wildly; as will the behaviors they need to exhibit to achieve this. Facilitating horizontal communication, led by “customer experience heroes” can help to spread positive cultural attributes into less productive corners of the IT organization.

Routines

Routines reinforce behavior and embed positive behaviors at a cultural level. An experience-oriented culture is – like many things - subject to the “use it or lose it” law. Employee turnover and continual change in the workplace makes it necessary to continually reinforce customer-oriented behaviors.

Rewards

Incentivize an experience-oriented mindset by evaluating all teams on the basis of their contribution to improving CX and your IT customer satisfaction measurements. For certain operational activities, gamification may be a good option for driving positive behaviors that translate to higher end user satisfaction.

“Customer experience is a reflection of your culture and processes”

Bruce Temkin, Temkin Group

Key takeaways

- √ **Delivering a great end user experience requires a pervasive experience-oriented culture**: It's not about forming a crack CX team. The quality of the end user experience is the responsibility of everybody within IT, crossing strategic, management, process and support roles.
- √ **Understanding the customer is critical**: There is a marketing mantra "Find out what the customer wants and give it to them". Market research is an important part of business planning. Customer experience management helps you apply the same principle to IT.
- √ **Employee engagement is a critical success factor**: Great CX doesn't happen without high employee engagement; staff must believe in the mission. Likewise, delivering an outstanding end user experience requires IT people who are engaged – and not just in the service desk.
- √ **Get a single view of customer interactions and execution processes in one system**: An advanced ITSM software suite will act as both an ERP and a CRM solution for IT, letting you manage interactions and processes from a central viewpoint.
- √ **Keep your promises**: Deliver the experience you say you're going to deliver. Act on the feedback you take – and be seen to act. And if you can't keep a promise: apologize, fix it fast and make 100% certain it doesn't happen again by adjusting processes and behaviors. People understand that mistakes happen, but they get frustrated when it happens again and again.
- √ **Benchmark the end user customer experience against the end customer experience**: The best way for the IT department to regain credibility and trust – and gain a seat at the top table – is to beat the business at its own game, lead from within and become an exemplary CX "role-model" with the Net Promoter Score to prove it.

Recommended reading

How to guide: *Improving ITSM by leveraging user feedback*

In this how-to guide, we look at how you can build a Voice-of-the-User (VoU) program to engage with the end user community, align services with user expectations and drive innovation to meet continually changing business demands.

More about *how you can improve IT service management*

A full list of service management resources — including whitepapers, videos, presentations and case studies — is available here: *http://www.axiossystems.com/resources*

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10. Customer Experience Matters, State of Voice of the Customer Programs, 2015

About Axios Systems

For more than 25 years, Axios Systems has been committed to innovation by providing rapid deployment of Service Management software. With an exclusive focus on Service Management, Axios is recognized as a world leader, by the leading analysts and their global client base.

Axios's enterprise software, *assyst*, is purpose-built, designed to transform IT departments from technology-focused cost centers into profitable business-focused customer service teams. *assyst* adds tangible value to each client's organization by building on the ITIL® framework to help solve their business challenges.

Axios is headquartered in the UK, with offices across Europe, the Americas, Middle East and Asia Pacific. For more information about Axios Systems, please visit us:


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