CXaaS: Delivering on the promise of customer experience

Customer Experience (CX) refers to the way people see, interact with and feel about the services they receive from an organization. It reflects the ongoing relationship between a company’s brand and individuals as they search for information, goods, services and ultimately, satisfaction. In the post-pandemic age, consumers and workers alike will interact digitally more than ever. Since the quality of those interactions are directly connected to building business success, enterprises need to align their digital experience with customer needs to drive their bottom lines.

This whitepaper examines the impact customer experience has on business success and the ways customer expectations are evolving.

Growing revenue and margins is not easy. This task is made more difficult when hard-won customers leave due to a poor brand experience. Companies today need to be proactive when seeking to attract new customers and deliver a positive CX at every touchpoint—keeping customers engaged and, ideally, loyal. After all, loyalty pays dividends. By some estimates, acquiring a new customer costs 5x more than retaining an existing customer.¹

Executive summary

Here’s what you’ll learn from this whitepaper:

1. The impact of customer experience as a business differentiator
2. Key factors in delivering a positive customer experience
3. Shifting trends in customer communications preferences and the touchpoints they drive
4. The impact digital transformation has on CX

¹ Acquiring a new customer costs 5x more than retaining an existing customer.
The remote working explosion

As a natural outcome of physical distancing, COVID-19 also fueled the current boom in remote working. Before the pandemic, 5.2% of U.S. employees were telecommuting most of the time, while 43% worked from home some of the time. By the end of 2021, it’s estimated that 25-30% of the workforce will be working from home multiple days a week.

The rise of the touchless customer experience

Few enterprise leaders in 2020 could have imagined the sudden, unexpected pivot of their business models. Since then, virtually every industry has been forced to reimagine how they operate and serve their customers.

In healthcare, virtual medical and therapy appointments are now common. Supply chains for all kinds of deliveries have been fortified and streamlined. Retail services that were once considered nice-to-haves—such as pick up in-store, curbside pickup, food delivery, contactless payment and self-checkout—have become must-haves. And professional services such as banking and finance have scaled up their call centers to handle loan refinancing, credit extensions and day-to-day banking via phone, email and chat.

The touchless customer experience is here, and it’s here to stay. The technologies that now enable commerce under physical distancing will, post-pandemic, become the consumer’s default mode of shopping. According to Forrester, 30% of consumers plan to shop more online in the future.

The challenge: creating meaningful, relevant customer experiences

Traditionally, enterprises looked at technology as a way to maximize efficiencies and reduce costs. While those are still important goals, enterprises now need to view technology with the aim of creating a CX that anticipates a customer’s wants and needs at each brand touchpoint. If more consumers will be shopping online, digital experience needs to become the best place for the customer to be, not “the next best thing to being there.”
Great CX is what customers really want (and really pay for)

Though customers may engage with businesses to acquire products or make use of services, what they’re really after is a great customer experience. The CX represents the relationship that endures and (hopefully) improves over multiple engagements, purchases and interactions.

Great products vs. great customer experiences: What matters most?

84% of companies that work to improve their customer experience report an increase in their revenue.5

96% of customers say customer service is important in their choice of loyalty to a brand.5

American consumers will pay 17% more to purchase from a company with a reputation for great service.5

Customer knowledge and timely responses make the CX

While every customer has different priorities, delivering a great customer experience comes down to focus (understand your customer) and speed (don’t waste their time). Customers who were surveyed about their interactions expected businesses to respond quickly and understand their needs, likes, preferences and history during their interactions. Growing and building a relationship comes down, in large part, to building a great CX.

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50% A quick response via email
45% A short hold time when calling
38% Being directed straight to a call center agent with expertise on my query
37% A call center agent who understands my issue
28% Being given the option for a call back rather than queue

A common theme shared by companies that deliver a great CX is speed driven by a great understanding of the customer. CX shines when it’s enabled through efficient processes, on systems purposefully geared towards speedy access and useful customer knowledge.
DELIVERING ON THE PROMISE OF CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Understanding your customer’s journey

Delivering a great CX requires a targeted, focused approach. It starts with understanding the customer. This should be more than basic customer records. Data from internal and external sources is key—the more, the merrier. Mining customer interactions across channels and combining these with firmographics, technographics and intent data to create advanced analytics and predictive models will yield actionable business intelligence to design interactions, improve business processes and provide better decisions. This understanding will lead to reduced churn and increased upsell and cross-sell opportunities.

Meeting customers on their own terms

As customer interactions shift away from legacy voice-centric communications, successful businesses need to shift with them and meet customers in their preferred channel. That means developing a holistic view of the customer buying journey, from initial query to final resolution. Telephone interactions, video conferencing, emails, text messages, online chats, social media and chatbots can all be steps along a single customer’s transactional path. In this context, delivering a superior CX means more than accommodating these channels. A business must have the ability to hand off interactions between and among them as customers’ preferences dictate.

Achieving that level of integration means rising above silos within the organization and aligning with the support and sales organizations (for skills-based queues), business processes (for customer tiering and prioritization, and contact center structure) and systems (for business rules and automation support).

The ultimate goal is to deliver deeply satisfying customer interactions. It’s not about owning or managing infrastructure, it’s about putting the right pieces in place to deliver a great CX to yield a competitive advantage.

Digital transformation:
The bedrock of CX

As businesses scrambled to expand their customer care centers during the rise of the pandemic, they exposed the weaknesses of their legacy networks and workforce solutions to reveal poor, disjointed customer experiences. Digital transformation is key to powering multiple interaction channels and allowing businesses to connect with customers how and where they want to connect. Delivering those seamless interactions requires new CX applications—and new digital platforms to support them. Companies that drive enterprise-wide transformation and build digital innovations are 26% more profitable than their peers.5

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Transformative technologies

Technologies that can drive CX incorporate resilient connectivity and agile communications that are encompassed by robust security and supported by specialized expertise. These technologies can include:

SD-WAN delivers network and application visibility and control over any access type for distributed businesses to ensure optimal application performance and uptime through intent-based network traffic routing and prioritization. As a result, locations enjoy optimal quality communications and rock solid cloud connectivity for mission-critical applications.

Unified Communications as a Service (UCaaS) enables remote working with email, voice, secure video conferencing and other communications channels under a single, unified umbrella. Texts can transition to calls, social media can transition to web chat and more, seamlessly—so employees gain robust communications to deliver a robust CX.

Contact Center as a Service (CCaaS) handles all touchpoints of the customer journey with multi-channel and omni-channel capabilities. It can be leveraged for sales and support interactions within a single data environment to engage with customers and prospects. Account history, prior interactions, customer data and preferences can be accessed intuitively.

High-speed transport and hybrid network connectivity provides reliable access to headquarters, datacenters, large corporate offices and call centers. It provides real-time communications, cloud connectivity for CRM and seamless back-office support. Only the best network quality will deliver the best CX.

Security services deliver managed network security solutions leveraging industry leading technology platforms—with deployment options for premises, cloud, or virtual solutions—that provide next generation firewall services to detect, identify and mitigate unwanted traffic, provide secure remote access to networks, filer web traffic, and protect against Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attacks.

Professional services help ensure your networks, communication solutions and collaborative platforms are capable of supporting your business strategies.

Building blocks of CXaaS

These service offerings collectively empower organizations to deliver the CX they want for their customers, with the speed, reliability and efficiency that those customers expect.

SD-WAN
UCaaS
CCaaS
SIP Trunking
Hybrid Networks
Switched Ethernet
Wavelength Services
Managed Network Security
DDoS Mitigation
Professional Services
Planning for optimal CX in your business

A great CX is the outcome of a complex set of inputs that spans your whole organization. We believe your network services provider should understand the components that go into implementing a best-in-class CX and partner with you to deliver them. You deserve a provider who understands what drives your business and how you define success, not just a technology platform.

You’ll do best if you work with a single provider who can bundle appropriate solutions together, and help you plan out and implement a phased strategy. The results will be more efficient and more cost-effective. Better yet, by dealing with a single provider, you’ll avoid the finger-pointing, ducking and weaving that goes on in so many multi-vendor environments.

At the same time, it may make sense to leverage managed resources so your IT resources can focus on your business. If you choose an industry leader, you’ll be in good hands. Let them be the experts who deliver the infrastructure and services you need, while you concentrate on taking care of your customers, and focusing on the business that you do best.

The Windstream Enterprise advantage

From protecting your website against attackers, to optimizing your network quality, to helping you engage your customers across channels, Windstream Enterprise is your CX partner. Windstream Enterprise enables you to encounter a multi-layered experience with the potential to interact with several services, which together function as a kind of “Customer Experience as a Service.” In fact, think of us as your CXaaS provider—or PXaaS, GXaaS or MXaaS.


CASE STUDY

Goodwill Manasota outgrew their legacy network services. By collaborating with Windstream Enterprise, the nonprofit launched a tailor-made solution that delivers 100% uptime to keep systems connected. This means cashiers now spend less time calling the help desk and more time serving customers. The new solution helps the organization fulfill its mission of maximizing people’s potential through the power of work and sets the technology standard for other Goodwills across the country.

About Windstream Enterprise

Windstream Enterprise collaborates with businesses across the U.S. to drive digital transformation by delivering solutions that solve today’s most complex networking and communication challenges.

To learn more about Windstream Enterprise, visit windstreamenterprise.com