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What Exactly Do Customers Want?

4 Ways to Humanize the Digital Customer Experience

Why Should You Care About Humanizing Your Digital CX?

Fifty-four percent of customers say they get annoyed if they are targeted with an ad for something they've already bought. With 71% of customers having used multiple channels to start and complete a single transaction, marketers face a vexing challenge.[1]

But what exactly do customers want?

In just a few words, customers want to be heard, appreciated, and understood. They want brands to combine the best of humans and the latest technologies available to make their experience more empathetic and fluid across touchpoints.

Nearly 80% of American consumers point to speed, convenience, knowledgeable help, and friendly service as the most important elements of a positive customer experience.

Fifty-four percent of U.S. consumers say customer experience at most companies needs improvement.

Only 38% of U.S. consumers say the employees they interact with understand their needs.

Sixty-three percent of consumers are ready to share information with a company that offers a great experience.

- PWC, *The Future of CX, 2018*

What companies need today is a greater connection with customers—but how can you deliver a more human-feeling, connected interaction when so many customer experiences today are digital in nature?

Just because the experience is digital doesn't mean it can't be humanized. Take extra effort to make your digital CX not feel robotic, and you'll be rewarded with a happy, growing customer base.

4 Ways to Humanize Your Digital CX

1. Make your digital CX feel conversational.

Customers want to be able to interact in digital channels in a conversational manner, speaking naturally en route to getting the answers they seek.

It used to be that getting accurate results from a digital interaction depended upon the customer knowing the precise keywords to enter into a web search. The experience was mechanical and anything but natural.

But today, site search is being replaced by virtual agent technology, which allows a customer to visit your digital channel, ask any question in natural language, and immediately receive the right answer.

This "Natural Language Processing" humanizes the customer's experience by making it easier for customers to ask their questions in their own words, the same way they would in a human conversation.

Entering questions (or even partial phrases) in natural language and getting an accurate answer drives a more familiar, comfortable, and satisfying customer experience—one that feels human.

And just how accurate and efficient can virtual agents be?

A leading global hospitality company serving 34 million guests annually combines [24]7.ai Engagement Cloud with AIVA conversational AI to deliver exceptional guest experiences. Beyond making it easier to engage with the hotel, the technology contributed to more guests booking directly through the hotel's website, rather than third-party travel sites. To date, the hotel has achieved three times the conversion rate, and their agents have given [24]7.ai Engagement Cloud a 97% CSAT rating. Monthly, over 112K guests engage with the virtual agent leading to an 18% containment rate that is continually growing and helping to deflect email and voice call volume.

2. Make customer journeys feel more personalized at moments along the journey where most companies drop the ball.

Personalization ranks as the number one capability that will be most important to a company's marketing strategy as businesses now compete on customer experience. Nearly all consumers (91 percent) say they are more likely to shop with brands who recognize, remember, and provide them with relevant offers and recommendations.[2]

One sure-fire way to help a customer feel as though their journey is personalized to their needs is to ensure that the context of a customer's conversation is preserved when they switch channels.

Most companies squander this opportunity, effectively forcing customers to start their journey over, and re-enter information when they switch from one channel to another.

Consider a customer who is looking for information or trying to solve a billing problem on your website, and then escalates to the phone channel. If your customer's web activity is shared with your IVR technology, then the point of transition into the new channel can be customized to this specific top-of-mind intention. An IVR can greet them with, "Are you calling about a billing issue?" And route them directly to a menu, or an agent, that is prepared to handle that specific inquiry.

This delivery of a personalized path to resolution stands in stark contrast to the commonplace experience of an IVR menu that greets every customer with the same, generic script and feels anything but personalized.

3. **Like every great conversationalist, anticipate where the conversation is going.**

    It's no longer good enough to simply respond to needs; customers today want companies to anticipate their needs.

    It's no secret that lowering customer effort drives higher loyalty. It's interesting to note that customers gauge the effort they expend "not just in terms of how an individual call is handled, but also according to how the company manages evolving service events."

    That means it's vitally important now to use predictive models to anticipate and make data-driven, personal options and recommendations for each customer's journey. Some examples of how this can be done:

- When a customer asks a question using your virtual agent, offer one-click access to the next-most-likely questions that he or she will have, based on your aggregate customer data when it comes to a given journey.

- Present marketing offers that are relevant and matched perfectly to the topic your customers are seeking service about. Relevant marketing offers are welcomed by customers, whereas generic ones are seen as interruptive.

- Head off problems before they start. For example, provide customers who are logged into their account with advanced warning of soon-to-be late account payments.

- When customers are searching for answers or information on your website, use chat technology to proactively engage customers based on specific web activity or keyword or phrase usage. We explore this idea more in the next tip.

4. **Inspire feelings of confidence by making interactions consistent and seamless across channels.**

    To establish a feeling of comfort and familiarity with customers, it's important to ensure experiences remain consistent and seamless across all channels, no matter how your customers choose to contact you.

    Inconsistency, fragmented journeys, and contrary information are all jarring experiences that are detrimental to the relationship.

    Consider a scenario where a customer on your website begins the journey with a virtual agent but is having difficulty resolving their issue. Today's chat technology can determine when it's appropriate to offer a higher level of support and engagement with live chat.

The technology connects the customer with a chat agent quickly and seamlessly and allows the conversation to remain in the same window. The agent is informed of the customer's pre-chat activity and is therefore prepared to continue the discussion.

The agent already knows where the customer has been online and what problem he or she tried to solve. This allows the agent to offer immediate assistance.

Research shows that 70% of customers say connected processes — such as seamless handoffs or contextualized engagement based on earlier interactions — are very important to winning their business.[3] When your customers begin to attribute the qualities of consistency, reliability, and efficiency with your organization, you'll make it more natural for them to want to repeat interactions with your company in the future.

Let Us Help You Humanize the Digital Customer Experience

As customer relationships become increasingly digital in nature, don't let the human aspect of these interactions disappear. You need CX technologies that appeal to human nature and engage your customers in ways that leave them feeling valued and important. And [24]7.ai is the right partner to help.

1. Salesforce, *State of Marketing*, 2020
2. Accenture, *Making it Personal*, 2018
3. Salesforce, *State of the Connected Consumer*, 2018

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About [24]7.ai

[24]7.ai is redefining how artificial intelligence, human insight, and deep vertical expertise can produce personalized, satisfying customer experiences across all channels. Our advanced conversational AI platform predicts consumer intent and creates frictionless interactions that help the world's largest and most recognizable brands to strengthen customer relationships and increase brand loyalty. With more than two decades of contact center operations expertise, [24]7.ai empowers companies to deliver natural, consistent conversations that increase customer satisfaction while lowering costs.

For more information visit: www.247.ai