

Digital marketers are going beyond the traditional DX metrics

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Abstract

All over the world it is recognized that CX is the biggest driver of digital transformation. Terms like Digital Transformation, Digital Swag, True Digital Ownership, Digital Twins, and RPA, are more and more utilized. Significant opinions underline the real need of revolutionizing CX through process re-design, co-creation and digital transformation, not forgetting the importance of balancing automation and the human touch. Digital Customer Experience (DCX) reveals how important it is to have an issue resolved in a single interaction and to receive a speedy and timely response. If there is no doubt that CX is the brand differentiator, it's time to better understand why it is necessary to go beyond the traditional DX metrics.

Keywords: Digital Transformation; Digital Swag; True Digital Ownership; Digital Twins; RPA;

Blockchain; CRM; DCX; DX metrics

JEL Classification: D83; L86; M15; M31; M37; O33

“Today’s leaders need to step up by persuading their organizations that digital strategies may be tougher than other strategies but are potentially more rewarding – and well worth the bolder bets and cultural reforms required, first, to survive and, ultimately, to thrive.”

Tanguy Catlin, Laura LaBerge, and Shannon Varney

McKinsey & Company

Digital Transformation, Digital Swag, True Digital Ownership, Digital Twins, and RPA

There is no doubt that no matter where marketing teams are located, within their searching for ways to create better CX, they are enabled by digital transformation to work better together, ensuring faster delivery and getting the most from their people, processes and tools, trying to be more collaborative and to connect and align their tech stack for greater efficiency. (Mullen, 2018) There are major trends to be followed by marketers in 2019. “Digital swag makes big money”, for example, is one of the “14 Trends Shaping Tech 2019” identified by CB Insights that marketers can no longer ignore next year. As argued by CB Insights: “For individuals, digital collectibles open the door for personalized, immersive experiences. And for companies, digital collectibles are one way to offer a diverse range of experiences within their ecosystem. Most importantly, users are willing to shell out for digital swag.”

The crypto community, for instance, explored digital collectibles for years, a combination of competitive gameplay, IP from premium content providers and unique digital art being considered the Holy Grail in digital collectibles. (Tomaino, 2018) As shown this year, digital

collectibles represent a new industry trend, the interweaving of the combination between ownership, scarcity, and digital assets being now easily noticeable, (Shvartsman, 2018) while a driving force into a safer and more transparent way of dealing with assets digitally being waited to become blockchain. (Tomaino, 2018) More recently, in Forbes, the goal – underlined by the startup entrepreneur Dil-Dominé J. Leonares, Founder and CEO of Verified Collection – of building a world with so-called “True Digital Ownership” of the physical and digital goods collected by consumers (the owners) was revealed, in the blockchain community digital collectibles being known as non-fungible tokens (NFT, unique, housing data) having a smart contract assigned to them. (Fenech, 2018)

On the other hand, within the fourth industrial revolution defined by ubiquitous connectivity and driven by Industrial Internet of Things (IIoT), AI (and its subset Machine Learning), advanced robotics and 3D printing, it is considered (by Gartner) that one of the key strategic technology trends which will transform industries in only a few years will be the so-called “Digital Twins” – seen as digital replicas of physical assets built with AI algorithms allowing both improving assets performance management, and enabling the introduction of new business models and augmenting human skills. (Sherry, 2018) And as argued within this approach (exposed in the European Business Review) of the Senior Vice President and Chief Commercial Officer of GE Digital in Europe, the adoption of the above mentioned new technologies will re-innovate the relations between humans and machines.

In the opinion of Guy Kirkwood of UiPath, interviewed by the Process Excellence Network (PEX Network), in 12-18 months AI will be where Robotic Process Automation (RPA) is now. (Hawkins, 2018) Still a relatively new software-based technology, RPA (a common feature of RPA products being AI) can decide if a process should occur, and in order to emulate human execution of a business process it is utilizing software robots, which at their turn can utilize recognition (OCR), intelligent character recognition (ICR) screen scraping and AI. One of the most common RPA uses is, for example, updating a Customer Relationship Management (CRM; see the picture below), time being of the essence with regard to sales. (Muspratt, 2018)



Figure 1: Updating a CRM

Source: Muspratt, A. (2018). A guide to Robotic Process Automation (RPA), PEX Network, 10/11/2018 (work cited)

Revolutionizing CX through process re-design, co-creation and digital transformation, not forgetting the importance of balancing automation and the human touch

As the benchmarking report for the process industry, the PEX Report 2018 – Developed by in partnership with Global State of Process Excellence & Transformation 2018: Riding the storm of digital change – reconfirmed the focus of the Process Excellence Network (within peer to peer sharing) on improving their businesses (851 PEX Professionals have responded to this survey) through process and operational excellence, CX being one of the key elements of their reporting (alongside BPM, RPA, Lean, Change Management, Operational Excellence, Six Sigma & Quality, Performance Management, Information Technology Trends). That is why “revolutionizing CX through process re-design, co-creation and digital transformation” was identified as one of topical issues to be addressed in 2019. From the very beginning of this PEX Report 2018 the reputed Roop Singh and Ian Hawkins approached the topic of “how will blockchain revolutionize Business Process Management (BPM)”, showing among other aspects that through authenticity, decentralization, disintermediation, proof of ownership and authorship, automation, and transparency, blockchain, as BPM and Management, is really a system of formalizing the movement of data and trust between parties.

Within this framework of the above mentioned PEX Report 2018, Katherine Kostereva, CEO and Managing Partner at bpm’online, pledged for the real need of embracing digital transformation strategy and technology that focus on implementation, adoption, alignment, and change, seen as “4 accelerators essential to organization’s digital transformation”. While Debashis Sarkar, the managing partner of boutique consulting firm Proliferator Advisory & Consulting (Sarkar being recognized internationally for customer-centricity and lean management), approached the topic of “putting the customer at the heart of process transformation”, starting from the fact that today customers are impacting businesses much more than ever before, because of: the power of social media allowing a single bad experience to negatively impact a customer’s perception about a brand; more influencing customer’s buying decision by what other users say (and less influenced by forceful usage of advertisement); unexpected and unknown quarters impacting competition; customers’ expectations with regard to the necessary personalization and experiences in accordance with their unique wants and needs; the real need of nurturing existing customers facing many options by keeping the brand promise. And before automating interactions it is very important not to forget the role of balancing automation and the human touch, recommends Sarkar.

There is no doubt that in today’s digital age the connected customers are expecting, for example, an Omni channel approach to interactions, in other words they are looking not only for the convenience and accessibility offered by an online self-service (as for instance thanks to the chatbots which can rapidly answer simultaneous questions given the AI enhanced software), but also for talking with a human agent when facing more complex or less easy to understand problems, which involves a balance between digital service and human touch. That is why the industry’s worldwide leader in outsourced Omni channel CX management, Teleperformance,

came up with its new solution known as TP BOT, (Harvard Business Review, 2018) a customer service cognitive agent that can handle initial customer inquiries online, and if it is the case passes the chat to a human agent via an automated customer service process flow (this way human agent continues at an emotional level the started conversation). Just at the beginning of this year, a Harvard Business School's representative specialized in Service Management and CX attracted the attention that technology cannot be emotional, only the service, and customers still seeking out other humans when looking for creative solutions to their service problems. (Buell, 2018)

Digital Customer Experience (DCX): having an issue resolved in a single interaction and receiving a speedy and timely response. CX, the brand differentiator

Indeed, as we have also seen before, the ability to save time is one of the advantages brought by the modern CRM solutions, marketers having this way the opportunity of spending more time focusing on their strengths, benefitting of a better sales activity. (Gal, 2018) There is no doubt that both CRM matters and CX is improved (alongside increased revenues and netted cost reductions) by adequately addressing customers' issues and being responsive to their needs.(Ironpaper, 2016) As demonstrated by the Aberdeen Group, Customer Success Management (CSM) involves significant capabilities (establish visibility, enable employees with relevant and timely insights, execute flawlessly, manage for long-term goals), a critical role in CSM good work being played by the digital marketers capturing customer feedback and data through multiple channels, segmenting customers, and adequately organizing and sharing data with regard to CX across all the company.

A priority focus for customer interaction, loyalty and retention in today's digital era impacted by the so-called "always-on" generation (more mobile and digitally-driven) is to provide an instant digital customer care, key drivers of the brand longevity being digital innovation and channel adoption. (Gardiner, 2018) The second edition of the Conversocial's report, The State of Digital Care in 2018, confirmed the significant evolution of the customer service landscape (the natural evolution of the term "Digital Customer Service" given to the maturation of the social care) and the need of providing an efficient, in-the-moment and personalized digital service experience, within the context in which customers expect to receive anytime and anywhere service.

It shouldn't come as a surprise for instance, that 57% of the 2,000 people from the US and UK surveyed indicated that in the case of a poor digital customer service experience with a brand they would stop doing business with it, a must have for digital customer service being considerate by 100% of respondents the capability to resolve an issue in a single interaction. In today's connected world, customers expect to receive anytime and anywhere service. And when asked what they felt is the most important aspect of a good digital customer experience respondents indicated (rank in terms of importance) as follows: getting an issue resolved in a single interaction (38%); receiving a speedy and timely response (26%); having an issue resolved

in-channel, not being deflected to traditional service channel (17%); the brand engages with the customer in a personalized manner (11%). Other significant findings revealed by this second edition of the Conversocial's report were those showing that the chance to form a single view of each customer journey is offered by CRM integrations (the more seamless, efficient and personalized resolution being achieved by tracking customers and their communications across digital channels).

It is well-known that Microsoft Dynamics 365, launched in 2016, is defined as cloud-based business applications platform combining components of CRM and ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning), along with productivity applications and AI tools, its biggest benefit being the tight integration with other Microsoft business applications, ensuring users a connected view of data intelligence, necessary operational information and predictive insight tools for decision-makers. (SearchCRM – TechTarget, 2017) At the end of August 2018, a Senior Product Marketing Manager at Dynamics 365, while making comments on the 2018 Microsoft State of Global Customer Service Report, started from the fact that CX is rapidly becoming the number one brand differentiator, and showing, among other findings revealed by the above mentioned 2018 Microsoft report, that one significant is the trending AI-driven virtual agents, within this framework an intelligent, conversational and effortless customer service experience being provided by bots built using technology such as the subsets of AI: Natural Language Processing (NLP) and Machine Learning (ML). (Overland, 2018) It is worth mentioning that there were surveyed 5,000 consumers across Brazil, Germany, Japan, UK and US within this 2018 Microsoft Research, whose findings revealed, among other aspects, actionable data on how to offer an Omni channel experience (such as email, live chat, phone, and text messaging) based on customer preferences, and how to avoid common frustrations and provide tools for quick resolutions.

And coming back to Digital Twins, allow us to add that recent opinions highlighted their huge potential to impact the technical support domain not only by empowering field support organizations, but also by enhancing consumer interactions with their technology. (Shaham, 2018) By strengthening the bond between physical and virtual objects, this transformative concept empowers humans to have better control over their technology. Self-service, remote troubleshooting, and predictive analytics and maintenance are, for example, only some sample cases of this transformative concept gaining also by being networked to each other (not only by being linked together dynamically).

Conclusions: *Why it is necessary to go beyond the traditional DX metrics*

All over the world it is recognized both that CX is the biggest driver of digital transformation, (Fiera De Manila Philippines, 2018) and that the most important part of a company's approach to digital marketing strategy is to better understand the difference between multi-channel (strategic focus on maximizing the performance of each channel, physical, web and mobile) and Omni channel (strategic focus on providing a seamless integrated CX,

customers being enabled by mobile and social to rapidly use all channels simultaneously). As reconfirmed this summer by the International Customer Management Institute (ICMI), the next wave of digital transformations is driven by big data, cloud computing, and AI, these technologies providing the ability to satisfy expectations for a consistent customer journey by ensuring a seamless integrated CX. (Unitt, 2018) Companies have the opportunity, for example, to better understand where the customer's journey may lead, not only with regard to previous customers' interactions, and this given to a better integration between its CRM and contact center enabling all digital and voice channels to exploit the same data.

But as the reputed CX Leader Don Peppers argued at the beginning of October this year, in any evaluation of CX quality companies need to use both kinds of CX metrics, getting feedback directly from customers, and collecting and analyzing objective data based on their direct observation. (Peppers, 2018) Not later than the same month, together with Decibel's CEO Ben Harris, Don Peppers detailed (on the occasion of the webinar organized by Decibel on October 23, 2018) the challenging topic of "Measuring the Digital Customer Experience, Objectively," these keynote CX speakers highlighting, among other aspects, (Peppers and Harris, 2018) the three obstacles that companies must overcome to deliver a better CX (alignment, mindset, and capabilities), and the two kinds of data always necessary to be used when evaluating CX quality, also underlining that each CX is definitive and personal, but feelings are subjective, and that when analyzing the Digital Experience (DX) it is necessary to go beyond the traditional DX metrics (which include number of website visits, click-through rates, information downloads, keyword searches, email responses) and to objectively observe and quantify much more of the DX (such as mouse behaviour, scroll rates, navigation paths, page loading times, form completions etc.), also considering the so-called "digital" body language (when customer is facing a digital problem).

A few months ago, we showed that digital marketers are challenged to drive results within the connected world, (Negricea & Purcarea, 2018) better data analysis being critical in order to improve the digital customer experience (DCX) within the digitalization of the customer journey. Today we already understood why qualitative data can be available at quantitative scale on the basis of DX, in which, for instance, including higher user engagement can often be directly observed.

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