**Infographic Video (Script)**

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Please do not read the headings or anything underlined, and aim for a time close to what’s indicated.

**Problem Representation (2mins) - Edison**

There have been significant changes in the past few years for both customers and marketplaces. Supply chain shortages and changes in the customer’s preferred channels for interaction have forced businesses to adapt to these changes or fall behind. Recent disruptions, such as natural disasters and the Covid-19 pandemic have caused systemic changes in how businesses function. Numerous lockdowns in response to Covid-19 occurred in Australia over the course of 2 years, severely impacting the customer’s ability to interact with business by traditional means. The Australian Bureau of Statistics found 75% of Australians were avoiding public spaces and 95% were social distancing at the peak of the pandemic.

But through these events, technological innovations have been pushed to the forefront to meet customer demands in new ways, such as through self-service systems and online shopping. Following the pandemic in the US, research by McKinsey found that 79% of customers intended to continue using self-service checkouts in stores, and that there was a 30% increase in the number of consumers purchasing goods online.

Companies have a requirement to keep up with such changes and disruptions in order to stay relevant in the market, and so continue to develop new technology. However, as a result of this push for more automation and technological advancement, companies have lost sight of one of the most important aspects of running a business, the customer experience.

Many companies start by developing technology, focusing on automation and efficiency, before considering customer empathy, which leads to a very poor understanding of their customers, and in turn the customer experience suffers. Without a proper understanding of customer needs and desires, there is no compelling digital experience for customers. Many leaders admit that customer understanding is a clear weakness in their strategy. A recent CMO Spend survey by Gartner revealed that marketing leaders believe that customer understanding and customer experience management represent the largest gap in their capabilities.

**Knowledge Representation (2mins 30s) - Layan**

In order to create a compelling digital experience for customers, a business must start with establishing what the customer intends to achieve. Customer understanding can be utilised to create experiences that give the customer a greater sense of control and self-confidence, and drive long-term satisfaction, loyalty and retention.

Simply advertising products or services to customers through a digital platform has become a standard formula that customers are not interested in. Instead, an approach where the focus is on how to elevate a customer’s sense of self allows the customer to understand themself through their interaction with the digital experience. Such an experience will allow for customers to more easily achieve their goals.

The digital experience does not need to be frictionless. There are times where the better experience generates some friction to enable customers to reflect on their choices and deepen their understanding of what they hope to achieve. The value of a unique experience has a lasting impact on customers as opposed to traditional approaches such as familiarity or brand distinctiveness. Customer experience should also go beyond simply purchasing a product, but also demonstrate how to maximise the value of the product or service the customer owns. These kinds of experiences lead to more sales and customer loyalty and retention, but require an understanding of customer personas to function.

To create a compelling customer experience, companies must cultivate an in-depth customer understanding. Through various customer listening approaches, defining customer personas and developing customer journey maps, making customer-centric decisions with this information will help adapt to customer needs in designing a digital experience. Customer empathy through proper understanding can be just as powerful as the most advanced digital capabilities in the customer experience. The experience of employees also has an impact on customers, so a compelling digital encounter should take into account the total experience of all stakeholders involved. By designing a solution that also improves the employee experience, smoother interactions between employees and customers are possible, leading to an overall improved experience.

Measurement tools are vital in understanding the effectiveness of a customer experience. These measurements should reflect both the company’s and customer’s goals. By using a variety of different customer experience metrics, a company can properly evaluate their customer experience and identify areas of improvement or immediate problems, as well as justify the investment in implementing a new customer experience strategy. Metrics such as Customer Satisfaction and Customer Loyalty Program Participation provide key indicators of the customer’s experience with the company, while Employee Engagement metrics recognise the importance of the employee experience. There are a wide variety of customer experience metrics, and no single metric is sufficient to accurately evaluate a customer experience strategy. Multiple metrics that align with different key roles in marketing, IT, customer service and product development will enable companies to make the appropriate changes to meet their customer needs.

**Conclusion (1min)**

With changes in customer preference and marketplaces in recent years, a push for new technology to adapt to a more digital experience has led to a decline in the customer experience. But the customer experience cannot be neglected, as it is a powerful tool in creating engagement and retaining loyal customers. A compelling customer experience, whether it be digital or physical, or both, always starts with proper customer understanding. With proper customer understanding, customer empathy can be found, and with appropriate customer empathy, a customer-centric strategy to the digital experience can be created.

The customer experience should be an opportunity for the customer to self-reflect, learn about themselves, and grow as a person, not simply another means to blindly advertise a product or service. By considering the customer’s and employee’s needs and desires, through various customer listening tools and customer experience metrics, a transformative customer experience that meets the goals of the company and customers can be achieved.