CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE STRATEGY

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# 1. Introduction

This study highlights and discusses the customer experience journey of APPLE’s Macbook. The importance of customer experience in regard to the Macbook will be discussed in the study. The study further discusses the importance of a journey in order to enhance customer experience. Moreover, this discusses the omnichannel marketing strategies of Apple and the CX performance metrics will be illuminated in this study. In addition, this study will present a comparative study of the CX processes of Apple and Amazon.

# 2. Importance of customer experience

According to the study of Bueno *et al*. (2019), customer experience is a critical driver for competitive advantage in the commercial market. Being a company with a significant legacy in the technological sector, Apple has maintained its loyal customer base by providing excellent customer experience including the quality of MacBook and customer support after the purchase is done as put by Thomke (2019).

Any business organisation’s credibility and sustainable growth factor, as per Keiningham *et al*. (2020), is dependent on business model innovation which is supported by positive customer experiences. Customer experience-driven business approaches usually end with a successful outcome and thus in the current trend of business, customer experience has become a significant factor. According to De Keyser *et al*. (2020), customer experience is a combination of emotional, cognitive, sensorial, physical and social responses that is primarily abstract in the context of measurement and can be evoked by several aspects of the market.

As per the study of Becker and Jaakkola (2020), a favourable customer experience is a basic necessity for business organisations to maintain a competitive advantage in the ever-changing market and to retain consumers. An efficient marketing manager focuses on the customer experience quality for long-term sustainability and stability. However, customer experience varies depending on the target market of the organisation and its macro-environmental factors. In the case of the UK, the management process of customer experience is valued highly for the betterment of business and successful implementation of strategies taken for favourable customer experience is often seen in the companies of the UK (Wetzels and Wetzels, 2023).

In a business process, customer engagement defines the preference of the customers for a particular company or brand and that can only be supported by appropriate customer experience; thus, customer experience has a major role in the business process of any organisation and it also has an impact on the value cocreation by a company (Rather and Hollebeek, 2021).

# 3. Consumer persona creation

The creation of a consumer persona refers to the process of fictionalising a profile that best represents the target audience of a company. Consumer persona varies from company to company and also from one product to the other. To exemplify, Apple’s consumer persona for iPhone and Macbook is different. A consumer persona has to be CX focused in the sense that CX strategies can be planned more effectively with a concrete understanding of the consumer persona. Consumer persona has helped Apple to develop strategies to enhance customer experience. Apple’s marketing strategies are simple, they are directed towards acquiring the trust and loyalty of the consumers. Apple's consumer persona for Macbook is determined and the target consumers have middle to high economic status and are keen to experience luxury. Therefore, Apple through its marketing strategies communicates with consumers regarding the luxuries that Macbook can offer them.

| **Demographic** | People aged between 18 to 45, having middle to high economic background |
| --- | --- |
| **Profile** | Consumers who like to enjoy and appreciate technology and are inclined towards small luxuries in life |
| **Motivations to use Macbook** | Reliable, user-friendly, durable, and design |
| **Goals of using Macbook** | Marathon battery life, high quality, powerful CPU, Eye-catching display, luxurious feeling |
| **Solutions that Macbook provides** | Relatively lightweight, high privacy security, integration of the APPLE devices |

**Table 1: Consumer Persona Apple**

(Source: Self-Created)

# 4. Mapping the customer journey

A customer journey map is a storytelling tool, which is used to have a comprehensive understanding of consumers' motivation, needs and hesitations related to a particular product. The purpose of a customer journey map is to delve deeper and obtain critical insights into consumer feelings, which subsequently helps to develop strategies to improve customer experience. Apple aims to build a strong and firm relationship with customers. The employees at Apple stores do not have a sales target rather they are trained on how to build customer relationships. This strategy of Apple has proven to be beneficial for the company. Customers of Apple have high loyalty and trust and Macbook is just not a product for them, it has become an integral part of their lifestyle.

| **Stages of journey** | Awareness - ingenious ad campaigns, word of mouth  Consideration - UVP, sleek design  Acquisition - high quality, build quality , design  Retention - a cult of loyalty due to outstanding product quality  Advocacy - Apple’s customers become fans of the Macbook and they do not wish to deviate from Macbook |
| --- | --- |
| **Activities** | * Long-lasting relationship * Brand loyalty and trust |
| **Feelings and needs** | * High quality * Luxury * Sense of aristocracy * Extra features * High privacy |
| **Potential opportunities for improvement** | * Personalisation * Resolving issues quickly |

**Table 2: Customer Journey Map**

(Source: Self-Created)

# 5. Omnichannel marketing 430

Omnichannel marketing is a holistic approach, adopted by companies in order to provide a unified and seamless experience to customers regardless of channels. It has been argued by Lee  *et al.* (2019) that Omnichannel marketing is an integrated and cooperative medium that helps to connect all the channels, used by companies to interact with customers. Omnichannel marketing is an effective tool to ensure maximum customer satisfaction. Through omnichannel marketing, companies can gather information regarding consumer needs and demands from various channels like offline and online stores, social media etc. Thus, omnichannel marketing by supplying adequate and necessary information also contributes to the processes of product customisation.



**Figure 1: Omnichannel marketing of Apple**

(Source: Self-Created)

***Figure 1*** here refers to the various forms of channels through which Apple sells its products and promotes the products at the same time. From the above figure, it can be seen that Apple has different channels like online stores, retail stores, “Shop with a specialist”, “Apple Pick up”, Special Carrier offers, “Apple trade-in”, and financing and credit. All these aforementioned channels are integrated and ensure an engaging and optimum customer experience Apple specialists are available across all the channels to assist and help the customers in the buying process by sharing advice and tips. Due to this omnichannel strategy Apple’s revenue and growth have been boosted significantly. ***[Refer to Appendix 1]***

Apple with the help of its omnichannel strategy has created an Apple ecosystem, where Apple products are well-synched with products offered by Apple only. For example, an iPhone user is more likely to buy a Macbook over any other laptop because a Macbook can provide him with the best experience of the Apple ecosystem. Apple does not invest much in marketing, however, Apple’s marketing strategy is unique and extraordinary. Storytelling is the best feature of Apple’s marketing strategy. Via all the channels Apple attempts to communicate with the consumers and convince them of the changes Apple products can bring to their life by relating the products to their needs. Apple has put Macbook across all the channels and included Macbook as one of the essential products of Apple’s ecosystem. Apple has successfully aroused a sense of need for the Macbook in the mind of users, and Macbook users do not think of switching to other brands, thus Apple is retaining existing customers of Macbook while attracting new customers actively.

# 6. CX performance metrics

Today Apple is widely known as a proponent of innovative technologies and an organisation that quickly addresses the needs and desires of consumers. Each and every action of the company are directed towards enhancing customer experience. APPLE is the very first organisation that provides employees with the training to not sell the products but to sell the brand and earn the loyalty of the consumers.



**Figure 2: CX performance Metrics of APPLE**

(Source: Self-Created)

***Figure 2*** refers to the four major CX performance metrics of APPLE and from the above figure it has been revealed that optimising CX is at the heart of this organisation.

***Experience working with clients***

The founder of APPLE Steve Jobs has stated that each and every product of APPLE will be developed and improved considering the needs and desires of the consumers. APPLE before developing a new technology looks back to the customer experience and makes changes accordingly. Reports suggest that the retail stores of Apple have been visited by over 365 million people and this figure reinforces the personalised experience that all the retail stores of APPLE provide to visitors, starting from a warm welcome to a goodbye farewell.

***Listen to customers***

APPLE collects and analyses the feedback of the customers and utilises those feedback to enhance customer experience. After buying a product from APPLE, customers receive a survey, where the purchasers can record their rate of satisfaction (APPLE. 2023). Moreover, by analysing the feedback, Apple is capable of predicting the changes in recommendation of Apple products by the purchasers to their friends and family.

***Quickly close cycles***

APPPLE is quick to respond to the feedback of the customers because it has been seen that after receiving negative feedback APPLE responds back to the discontent customers within 24 hours. This strategy of APPLE has proven to be extremely beneficial to maintain brand value. Moreover, it suggests that APPLE is not afraid of negative feedback, rather APPLE learns from the negative feedback and develops strategies to improve the areas that cause dissatisfaction among customers.

***Engage all employees to enhance CX***

Buying Macbook from any channel giving an optimised and personalised experience to the buyers. It has been observed by Trivedi (2019) that employees at APPLE are well-trained to ensure maximum customer satisfaction. The employees at APPLE represent the brand and its values not just products. This strategy of APPLE has enabled this company to ensure a highly satisfactory customer experience.

***Recommendation***

* APPLE can enhance its interaction with customers by utilising different online platforms.
* Apple do not invest much in marketing, but by investing more in marketing APPLE can increase its customer base.

# 7. CSFs and comparative study of APPLE and Amazon’s CX process

“Five CX critical success factors” refers to the factors that determine maximum customer satisfaction and organisational growth. The following are the five factors of CX processes -

* Strategic focus

This refers to the leadership, planning and management capabilities of an organisation. According to the comments of Feng *et al.* (2019), a customer-oriented company is driven by regular surveys on customer experience. Moreover, leaders at a customer-driven company focus on gaining competitive and sustainable advantages while enhancing customer experience at the same time.

* People

People here refers to the employees of organisations and staff should be chosen best on their talent and interpersonal skills. It has been observed by Reddy and Gupta (2020) that employees should know the art of effective communication so that they can engage the customers and enhance their shopping experience.

* Operations

Business operations of an organisation need to be aligned and optimised for delivering the best customer experience. Moreover, business operations and strategies need to be well communicated among the staff so that they can add more value to the goals and aims of the business operations.

* Marketing

Marketing is a key component of enhancing customer experience and it is essential to increase sales as well. It has been argued by Storbacka and Moser (2020) that through marketing an organisation has to monitor the needs, values, feedback and satisfaction levels of consumers. The primary purpose of marketing is to promote services or products but focusing on the aforesaid aspects of customer experience can be optimised through marketing.

* Finances

Profitability is the major goal of corporate organisations and through efficient financial processes a company has to maintain its profitability. However, to enhance customer experience, it is important to have competitive pricing of products.

Both APPLE and Amazon are international companies, however, their CX processes are radically different from each other. Amazon is a retail company and Amazon has adopted a strategy to provide maximum options to choose from. Even while buying a product, purchasers can see that Amazon is recommending another type of similar products. Amazon focuses on proving the best value products to its customers. The major cause of customer satisfaction at Amazon is that people get plenty of options to choose from (Amazon, 2023). Therefore, it can be stated here that Amazon’s primary CX process is to provide them with quality products at affordable pricing. On the other hand, Apple follows a completely different strategy in its CX process. Apple to not focus on providing products at affordable pricing, rather APPLE is quite assertive that the target customers of APPLE are financially well off. However, this strategy of APPLE has helped the company to maintain a high brand value. Rather, APPLE focuses on producing high-quality products that meet customer demands and needs.

# 8. Conclusion

To, conclude, it can be noted here that here the customer experience needs to be optimised because it ensures sustainable growth of an organisation. Without maintaining optimum customer experience, it is not possible to gain a competitive advantage. APPLE gives high priority to CX and therefore APPLE follows strategies like trained employees, omnichannel marketing, and high product quality to provide the best buying experience to the customers. By focusing on CX, Apple has been successful to acquire a loyal customer base. However, this study indicates the CX processes may differ from one company to the other, as Amazon focuses on affordability, unlike APPLE. Therefore, CX processes should be included with the goals and aims of organisations as well.

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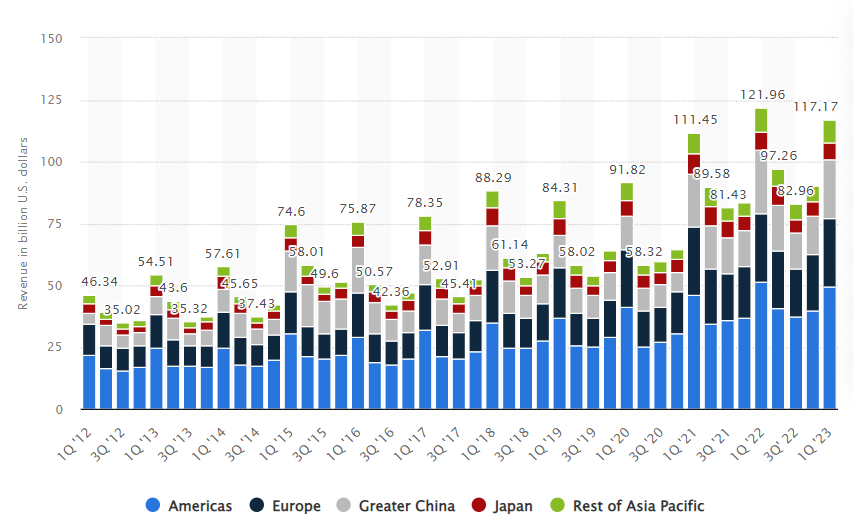
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# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Revenue of Apple



(Source: https://www.statista.com/statistics/382175/quarterly-revenue-of-apple-by-geograhical-region/)