

THE UK CX REPORT 2024

IPSOS AND ENGAGE BUSINESS MEDIA

November 2024







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The UK CX Report 2024

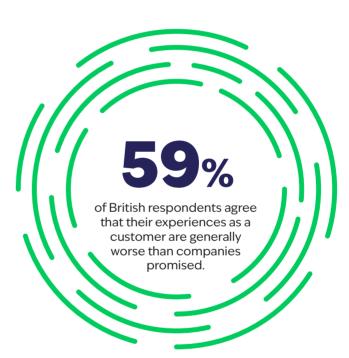
This year's headlines

In the world of UK customer experience, things aren't any better than they were in 2023.

Here's what the findings of our second year's report tell us.

- One in six experiences reported by customers has something negative about it.
 - That's a lot of poor customer experiences happening each and every day. We look at where companies need to focus to get the basics right.
- Half of all experiences are described by customers as containing 'nothing notable'.
 Brands are missing an opportunity to build the deep lasting relationships that drive business success. We look at where these experiences are falling short, and what can be done to elevate them.
- Personalisation can be used to transform mediocre and unmemorable experiences.
 - This is a key route to creating emotional engagement with customers, although our analysis shows how 'personalisation' is richer and more complex than is often assumed.
- Customers are concerned that AI will benefit brands rather than themselves.
 Many are sceptical or concerned about the impact it will have on their experiences, and we look at how brands need to tread carefully to avoid potential CX pitfalls.

Ipsos Global Trends 2024:



This places us fourteenth out of 50 countries: in the top half of a table that no CX professional wants to lead.

This report is a wakeup call for all brands.

Read on to find out more.

About the report

Engage Business Media and Ipsos worked in partnership to research how customers feel about their recent experiences with different brands and industries. The results provide customer experience teams with analysis and insight to help them focus their efforts on what matters most to the customer.

Our 2024 study covered:

- 9,600 experience evaluations
- 5,004 UK consumers
- 7 industries: automotive, mobile phone, insurance, current account, retail (bricks and mortar), retail (online), and restaurants
- **66** touchpoints

Each participant was asked to evaluate two different customer experiences that they'd had over the last 12 months. The responses we received have been analysed and summarised by Ipsos CX professionals to provide the insight and narrative found in this report.

Following a similar approach to last year, we also draw from and add to **The Forces** of Customer Experience, first published in May 2020, where Ipsos identified the six dimensions of human connection that are crucial to fostering stronger relationships with customers and driving competitive advantage. Together, the six Forces of CX form a human-centric framework that addresses fundamental customer needs.













Certainty

Customers feel that things feel that are clear, and working as expected

Fair Treatment Control

Customers there is a fair exchange taking place

Customers feel in control

Status

Customers feel valued. of the situation respected and worthy of special treatment

Belonging

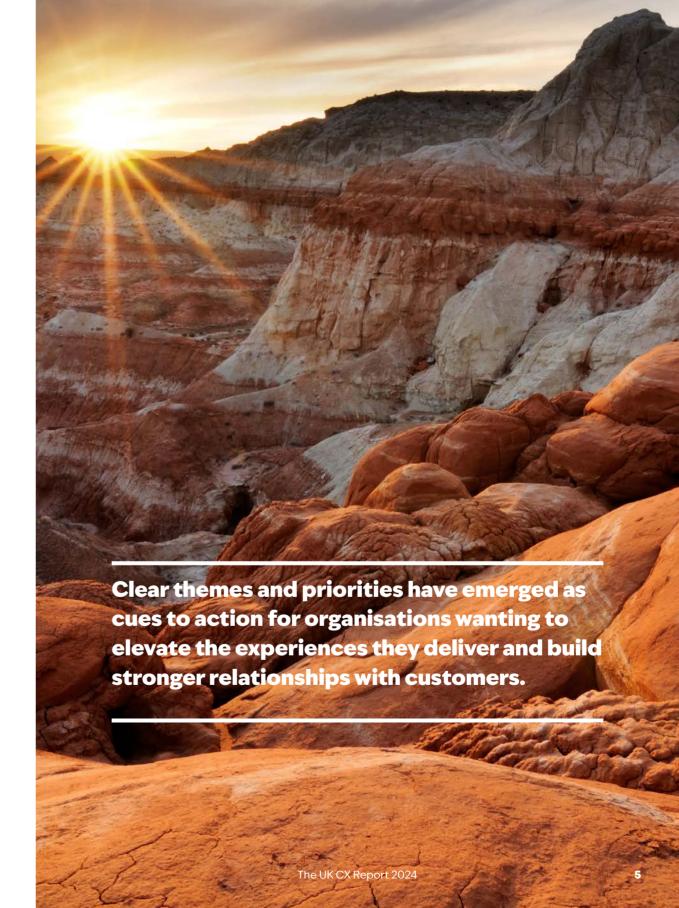
Customers feel a sense of affinity and that you care about the greater good

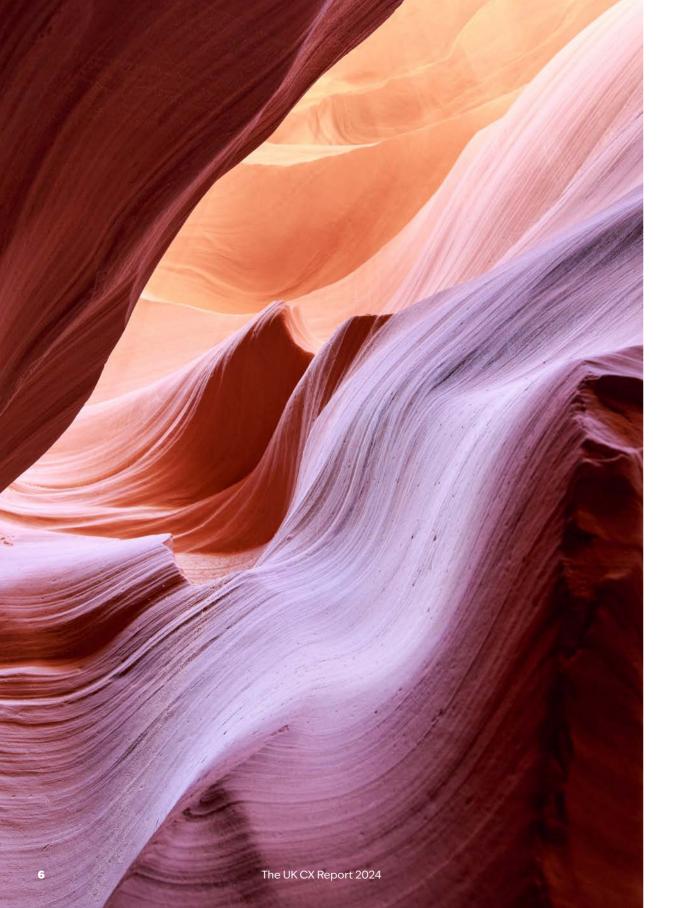
Enjoyment

Customers feel that their lives are being made easier and/or happier

Hygiene Factors Minimum viable experience **Differentiators**

Adding value, creating meaningful connection



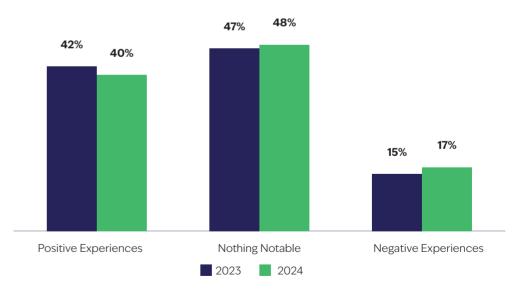


Top line findings in 2024

The UK CX landscape is still dominated by unremarkable experiences

In terms of customer satisfaction, little has changed since last year.

- One in six experiences (17%) are described negatively, involving either a minor problem or major disappointment.
- Almost half (48%) said their interaction involving 'nothing notable', meaning that nearly half of UK customers aren't seeing anything special in these interactions.
- Overall, two-thirds of all experiences are failing to deliver the moments that build positive memories that are the foundations of deep, long-lasting relationships.



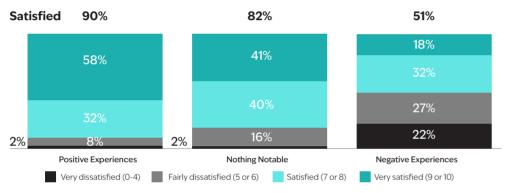
Total responses: 9600

Customers were able to select more than one option if elements within the same experience could be rated differently, so numbers will not always total 100%.

Mediocre, meh, average, ho-hum... does it matter?

One of the most striking top line findings for 2024 is the stubborn persistence of unremarkable experiences, despite minor improvements in traditional CX metrics. Whatever you call them, the 48% of 'nothing notable' customer experiences being delivered means that nearly half of UK customers aren't seeing anything special in their interactions.

Yet this doesn't necessarily mean they are dissatisfied with what's happening. Only 18% of customers are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with *meh* experiences. The other 82% are satisfied or very satisfied.



Total responses (excluding 'Don't know'): 9471

Customers may not be generally unhappy, but they seem rather underwhelmed. Of those who report a poor experience, 18% say they are very satisfied - their expectations must have been low!

	Positive experience	Nothing notable	Negative experience
Exceeded expectations	35%	5%	10%
Met expectations	63%	92%	53%
Below expectations	2%	4%	36%

Total responses: 9600

In most cases, expectations are actually being met. Only 4% of those who had a *meh* experience said it delivered below their expectations. This tells us that many customers are approaching these experiences from a functional perspective.

Overall, customers more often than not say that there's nothing the company could have done to improve their experience (percentages vary by sector, ranging from 60% to 78% of the time).

"I don't want basic interactions to be notable or memorable. It isn't a wedding, just a transaction."

"I don't need this experience to be notable, I just needed it to be straightforward."

"It's just checking my account and moving some money around. I don't want or need to be delighted - I just want everything to work!"

Customers may not be able to identify opportunities for elevating experiences, but brands should be able to, and there is a clear benefit to them doing so. We can see this in the impact on the Net Promoter Score® when companies get things right. Even inserting a few small positive elements to an experience adds 11 points to NPS over 'nothing notable' experiences.

Impact of customer experience on average NPS®

Major problem or disappointment	Minor issue or problem	Nothing notable	A few small things that please me	Something that delighted me
-54	-23	+15	+26	+63

Total responses: 9600

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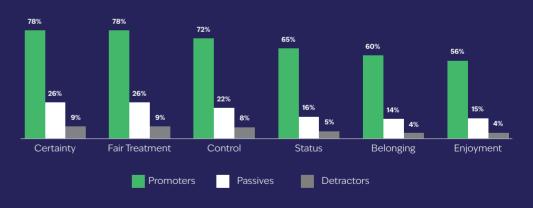
Focus on the six Forces of Customer Experience

The bedrock of great customer relationships

To elevate unremarkable experiences, you need to make changes that create a shift in customer perception.

This year's findings drive home just how closely the Ipsos Forces of CX are linked to advocacy and building stronger engagement with your brand.

% strongly agreeing they experienced each Force in their experience



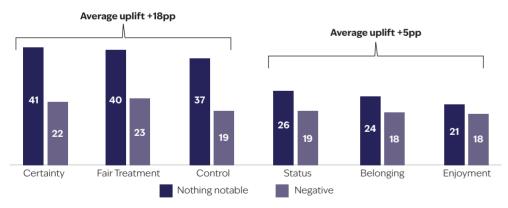
Total responses (excluding 'Don't know'): Certainty 9363, Control 9364, Fair Treatment 9255, Status 9118, Belonging 8253, Enjoyment 8612.



Unsurprisingly, all six Forces are felt much more strongly during positive experiences than during either negative experiences or those customers describe as 'nothing notable'.

We've already seen that customers are often satisfied with 'nothing notable' experiences. Looking at how those experiences differ from negative ones, there is a much greater sense of Certainty, Fair Treatment and Control - the 'hygiene factor' Forces that are associated with functional delivery.

Uplift in each of the six Forces of CX by experience Nothing notable vs negative

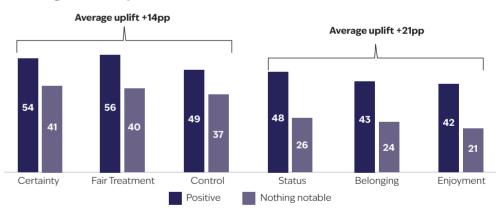


Total responses (excluding 'Don't know'): Certainty 9363, Control 9364, Fair Treatment 9255, Status 9118, Belonging 8253, Enjoyment 8612.

While working functionally, delivering meh experiences means that brands are still missing opportunities to create memories and emotions that deepen relationships, evidenced by the low uplift in Status, Belonging and Enjoyment.

When we look at positive experiences compared to those that are nothing notable, the customer's experience of all the Forces increases, but this time the biggest uplift is in feelings of Status, Belonging and Enjoyment. These are the three differentiating Forces that elevate experiences, and help to build strong relationships leading to loyalty.

Uplift in each of the six Forces of CX by experience Nothing notable vs positive



Total responses (excluding 'Don't know'): Certainty 9363, Control 9364, Fair Treatment 9255, Status 9118, Belonging 8253, Enjoyment 8612.

What this means for brands is that:

- To mitigate the negative, they should focus on ensuring customers feel they know what is going to happen, that they are being treated fairly, and where possible that they have options to exercise control.
- To elevate the mediocre, they should focus on creating moments that make the customer feel special, make them feel that they are dealing with an organisation whose values they share, and that the experience is fulfilling and enjoyable.



Pull the right levers to shape customer perception

The attributes of customer service

To help brands understand what they need to do to build stronger relationships, we have explored eleven different areas where organisations can take action to move the needle on the Forces of CX. These cover the brand promise, service delivery, price, people and communications.

The attributes of customer service

Brand promise

My experience of the company's products and service matched what they promised to deliver

Service delivery

They were an easy company to deal with

My interactions with

My interactions with them felt tailored to my individual needs

They provided the same level of service, regardless of the way (e.g. online, telephone, face to face) that I interacted with them

They understood my personal situation and circumstances

Price

Their prices were competitive

They offered good value for money

speak to one of their people if I needed to

People

Their employees

were friendly and

knowledgeable

I felt I could easily

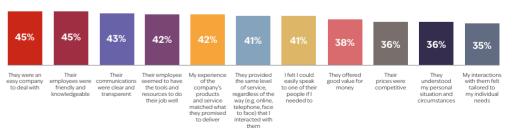
Their employees seemed to have the tools and resources to do their job well

Communications

Their communications were clear and transparent

Looking at how customers rate their experiences across all these attributes, fewer than half of them strongly agree that they experience each one. Brands perform best on being easy to deal with and having friendly, knowledgeable employees. They perform least well on tailoring interactions to individual needs and understanding personal circumstances. For all the talk of an era of hyper-personalisation, customers are much less likely to be feeling that in their interactions with brands.

% strongly agreeing with each statement about their experience

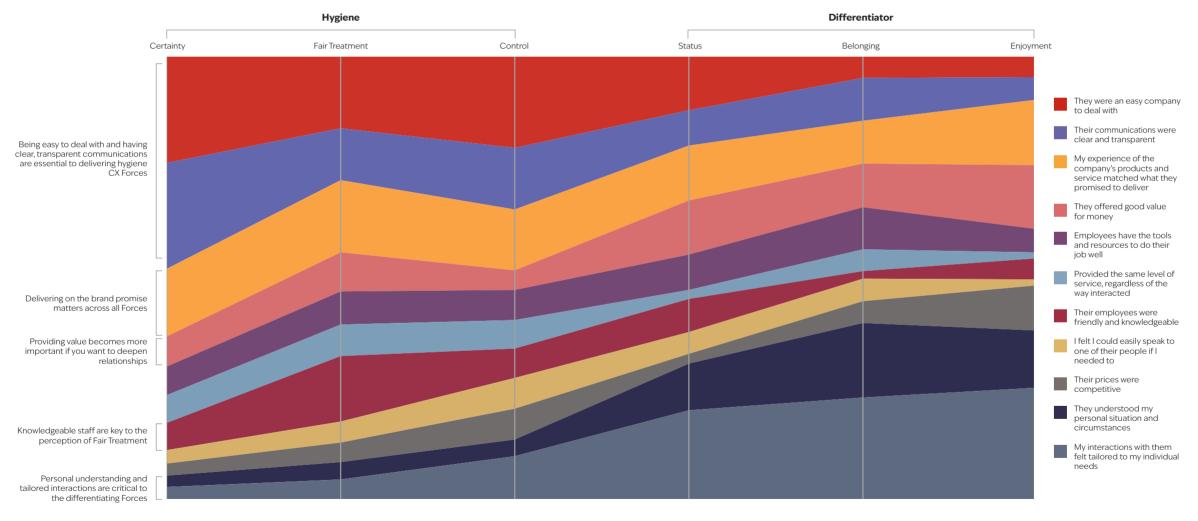


Total responses: 9600

The real value for CX professionals lies in understanding how these attributes contribute to the overall customer experience.

How these attributes influence the Forces of CX

Our analysis has identified some clear patterns in how the attributes of CX (what brands do) impact on how customers feel (the Forces of CX). Once again, we can see a clear split between the hygiene Forces of Certainty, Fair Treatment and Control, and the differentiating Forces of Status, Belonging and Enjoyment.



The size of each band in the chart shows how much an individual attribute impacts on the customer's perception of the six Forces of CX.

All responses (9600 Source: Ipsos, 2024

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What the analysis tells us

Making experiences easy and communicating transparently are key to delivering brilliant basics.

Alongside delivering brand promises, these are the priorities when trying to build feelings of Certainty, Fair Treatment, and Control.

Personalisation is an essential part of building the differentiators of Status, Belonging and Enjoyment.

When you want to push on building stronger relationships with customers, find ways to demonstrate an understanding of their personal situations and circumstances and use that to deliver a tailored interaction.

Your people play a vital role in ensuring customers feel fairly treated.

If you have difficult messages to land, your people are your greatest asset.

Value for money becomes more important when building deeper relationships with customers.

As brands try to add features or options to build a sense of status or enjoyment or belonging, customers will be looking at the value they get from those. Fundamentally, is it worth their while to have a deeper relationship with your brand?

Delivering on the brand promise is critical to delivering on all the Forces of CX.

Aligning your brand, marketing and communications activity with customer experience delivery is an imperative for all brands.



Using personalisation to make the unremarkable more memorable

So where does this leave us with the *meh* experiences? How do brands elevate them to create the memories and moments that build strong, long-lasting relationships with customers. The answer lies in building personalisation into the experience, recognising the customer's situation and tailoring the experience accordingly.



Understand what personalisation means to customers

It's not just what you do, it's when and how you do it that matters

Only once all the basics are being delivered and promises fulfilled, personalisation becomes a key driver for brands looking to take their relationships with customers to the next level - beyond the merely functional.

Our analysis of CX attributes has shown that personalisation and responding to the customer's personal circumstances are critical to effectively delivering on the three differentiating Forces of Status, Belonging and Enjoyment. These are the areas where, in general, customers are currently less satisfied.

What does personalisation look like to customers?

Years ago, 'personalisation' used to refer to adding someone's name to the top of a letter or email. The concept has come a long way since then, but there is still a tendency to associate it with using what you know about a customer (such as previous purchases) to shape interactions, such as to customise an on-screen experience once they're logged into a website.

However, customers suggest that personalisation is much more about the way they are treated. It's not what you do, it's how you do it that matters most. We asked people who had received a tailored interaction to describe what that looked like to them, and eight key traits emerge:

- 1. Actively listening to what they are saying
- 2. Understanding their needs
- 3. Communicating effectively back to them
- 4. Showing empathy and respect
- 5. Resolving their problem
- 6. Making it convenient, flexible and accommodating
- 7. Demonstrating attention to detail
- 8. Doing it knowledgeably and competently



Know me, hear me, value me

Customers know that brands collect their data, and they expect it to be used to deliver a personalised and relevant experience. They want to be heard, and know that what they say matters - that brands and their teams will take notice and take action. They also want to see some kind of demonstration that the relationship is valued.

By actively listening to customers, offering choices, and being willing to adapt to individual circumstances, companies can create positive experiences that foster long-term customer satisfaction.

TRAIT	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLE COMMENTS
Actively listening to what they are saying	Many comments highlighted the importance of employees listening carefully to customer needs, concerns, and preferences. This made customers feel valued and understood.	Listened to me - simple! Understood and acknowledged. felt they were focused on just me and no distractions and not in a hurry to finish with me. Insurance
Understanding their needs	Customers appreciated when businesses tailored their services or products to meet individual needs and preferences. This includes providing personalised recommendations, adjusting services based on specific requirements, and acknowledging personal circumstances.	The employee took their time to understand what I needed from my mobile phone contract and made the necessary adjustments without trying to push added extras on, which I did not want. Mobile Phone
Communicating effectively back to them	Clear, transparent, and frequent communication was a recurring theme. Customers valued being kept informed about processes, options, and any changes affecting them.	They always communicate well and when needed, and never assume. They always ring to check before carrying out any work. Automotive
Showing empathy and respect	Demonstrating empathy and respect towards customers, particularly in challenging situations, helped build trust and rapport. This included understanding financial constraints, health issues, and other personal circumstances.	Knowing that my partner is unwell, the garage owner went to the extra effort of picking up the car and delivering it back afterwards, to save us the trouble. Automotive
Resolving their problem	Quick and effective resolution of issues, often tailored to the customer's specific context, was frequently mentioned. Customers appreciated when companies went the extra mile to solve problems efficiently.	Always a no-hassle interaction when I need to contact their staff. Always polite, friendly, and no buck-passing. Problems get resolved promptly. Current Account
Making it convenient, flexible and accommodating	Offering convenient and flexible options, such as adjusting appointment times, providing courtesy cars, or customising plans, resonated strongly with customers.	I had a service plan and my car was due for an oil service. They booked me in around my work hours, so it best fit my needs. Automotive
Demonstrating attention to detail	Personalised touches, such as remembering customer names and preferences, offering relevant promotions, and providing tailored recommendations based on past interactions, were highly valued.	They have helped me package my purchase so it wouldn't get damaged in the rain. Retail (bricks and mortar)
Doing it knowledgeably and competently	Staff demonstrating thorough knowledge of products, services, and the customer's specific situation helped build confidence and trust in the company.	They asked about dietary requirements; they were able to answer questions about the menu. Restaurant

Al and the personalisation challenge

80% of British respondents agree with the statement 'Customer service is getting too automated and impersonal'.

Ipsos Global Trends 2024

46% of CX leaders said 'making the best use of Al' is a priority for them over the next 12 months.

Ipsos Global Voices of Experience 2024

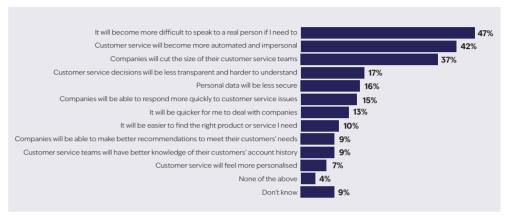
The AI paradox: high hopes, low trust

Personalisation requires a huge amount of effort and, on the surface, the capabilities of Al-driven tools could make them a potential solution. However, our research shows that there is currently substantial customer distrust and scepticism around real-world implementation of Al in customer service.

- A third (34%) of customers say they know either a great deal or a fair amount about Al.
- Four in ten (44%) say they have directly encountered AI in a recent service interaction (with the caveat that customers may think that some processes, such as automated chatbots, are AI-driven when they are not).
- A third (31%) say AI made their experience better, 38% say it made their experience worse.

When offered different potential scenarios where AI might make a difference to customer service (positive and negative), it is clear that many consumers assume that AI will have negative consequences.

Which, if any, of the following are most likely to be consequences of the greater use of Al in customer service?



Total responses: 5004

Overall, perception of the impact of AI in CX is negative, with consumers feeling that organisations will benefit from using it, rather than employees or customers. There is a fear that interactions will become less personalised and less human.



Customer/company effort ratio

Fifty-six percent of customers believe that companies will be the main beneficiaries of the introduction of Al. Only 7% believe customers would benefit most. This is another risk for brands, because the relative perceptions of effort have a big impact on outcomes. Feeling that they are having to put in more effort than a company impacts on a customer's sense of Fair Treatment.

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The challenge for brands will be to clearly demonstrate that their use of Al is making life easier for the customer.

The Ipsos CX research report Putting in the Effort shows how, on average, half of customers interviewed believe they worked harder than companies to resolve an issue.

When customers perceive that they have had to put more effort than a company into sorting out a situation, they are:

Over 4 x as likely to stop using them

3 x more likely to share their negative experience on social media

2 x as likely to tell friends and family about it

Al is a potential solution, but no silver bullet

While Al is often seen as a solution to delivering personalisation, our survey findings suggest that it should first be used to help deliver the basics. It needs to be embedded into operations in a way that works for the consumer, which may well be about using it to solve problems behind the scenes rather than on the front line of customer service.

The mantra for using AI in consumer-facing situations should be 'apply with caution'. This will help customers to see it as part of the solution, not part of the problem, particularly when considering how to deliver the all-important hygiene factors of Certainty, Fair Treatment and Control.

While the technology has immense potential to streamline operations and enable innovative new service models, it will not be a panacea for today's CX shortcomings. Deployed without thoughtful experience design and customer communication, AI is far more likely to be viewed as a cost-cutting mechanism than a true source of enhanced value.

People like dealing with people, and using AI agents creates a risk of alienating customers and undermining brand relationships if expectations are not carefully managed. Success will require keeping empathy, ease and problem resolution at the heart of all AI applications, and being fully transparent about when and how the technology is being used.

For organisations contemplating major Al initiatives, transparency and human-centric design are key.

Customer priorities for CX

Where customers want brands to focus

When we asked customers to tell us what they thought brands should focus on over the next few years, over a third said reducing prices and ensuring the security of personal data.

% selecting each priority



Q/ Which of the following, if any, should be the highest priorities for companies when dealing with their customers over the next few years?

Total responses: 5004

It's unsurprising that a third of consumers list reducing prices as their top priority for companies, swiftly followed by personal data security - these are at least eight points higher than any other CX improvement areas.

56% of British respondents are prepared to pay more for a better customer experience - but 36% are not.

Ipsos Global Trends 2024

Customers' next-level priorities for the brands they interact with are:

- Reducing time to resolve customer service issues
- Providing better quality products and services
- Delivering a consistent service regardless of how customers contact them

This emphasises how important it is to customers that brands deliver on their promises.

"I have to ring them to check if my car is ready. It would be nice for them to contact me and would save me having to call several times."

"They were very busy when I attended, so having more staff at key times could help a little."

"I have been with them for 6 years. I had to call to try and get a lower price as they had increased it a lot."

Recommendations

Keep fixing the basics: don't get distracted by shiny, new things until you're sure you're delivering all the necessary hygiene factors.

Then you can move your focus to personalisation.

- **Refocus on the basics** easy processes and clear communications to build certainty, a sense of control and ensure people feel treated fairly. Nailing basic execution should always be the number one priority.
- Evaluate every stage of CX delivery against the brand promise regularly audit your customer journeys to identify and eliminate persistent pain points, and ensure employee training and feedback loops are in place to drive continuous improvement.
- Ensure value for money is embedded in any service development customers don't want to feel they are paying disproportionately for 'enhanced' service.
- Personalisation is about recognising individuals and their specific needs and responding effectively in a way that elevates and differentiates the experiences you deliver.
- Use Al to augment not replace human interaction keeping empathy, ease and problem resolution at the heart of all Al applications, and being transparent about when and how you use it.

Use AI to make service seamless and reduce the effort required by the customer.

Look at the opportunities for personalisation in your customer journeys. What could you do better to deliver truly tailored experiences and meet real human needs?

Go where the Forces of CX take you.



Next steps with Ipsos CX

If some of this seems horribly familiar

Now may be the time to refresh your **customer journey map**, particularly if you feel that it's too company-centric and process-orientated.

We can help you flip the perspective to make it customer-centric, and lean into the Forces of CX framework to drive more positive outcomes and improve those KPIs.

As well as buckets of CX expertise, we can offer you complete objectivity as well as valuable cross-industry learnings and insight.

If you have a powerful urge to move detractors up the scale

We're with you, all the way.

Closing the loop for every customer can potentially be costly and resource-heavy.

We can show you how to prioritise action and respond to customer issues in a way that combines operations, strategy and the human-centric Forces of CX.

The result isn't just happier customers and more positive outcomes, it's also business improvements that help you increase your organisation's CX maturity.

If you need to evidence a compelling case for change

Everyone 'knows' the benefits of CX (retention, share of spend, advocacy, efficiency), but winning budget and buy-in for your CX programme can still be hard work. And when you do secure budget, you'll want to be sure of how and where to spend it to get the best ROI.

Our **Return on CX Investment (ROCXI)** modelling helps you evaluate the impact that different CX initiatives will have on commercial goals. We use predictive analytics to evidence the case for expenditure and help you make customer experience a higher priority in your organisation. Just ask, and we'll show you how it works.

Or, if you don't know where to start

Talk to us about **CX Maturity Assessment**. It shows you how your brand is performing against best-in-class core competencies, and provides you with cross-industry benchmarking. Interesting!

Through the assessment, you'll establish a baseline, identify gaps that need closing, and be able to leverage quick wins. As well as identifying priorities and informing your strategic planning, it can also be the basis for developing your CX roadmap.

About the study

Ipsos interviewed 5,004 customers online through the Ipsos Interactive Services research panel between 22 July 2024 and 9 August 2024. Quotas were set for age, gender and region to match the population profile of UK adults aged 18+.

Each respondent provided up to two evaluations of their individual customer experiences (9,600 experiences in total) that had taken place within one or more of seven industries, covering a total of 66 individual touchpoints across different customer journeys.



We conducted in depth analysis of the data to explore the differences across industries and different touchpoints along the customer journey. This included key driver analysis to assess the links between the Ipsos Forces of Customer Experience and CX attributes.

The data reported has been weighted to the population profile of UK adults aged 18+ where quotas were not achieved.

Results of the research have been reviewed by Ipsos CX industry experts.

Further reading



Al and the Future of CX



Going all in with Al



Get fair or fail



Rewiring your CX DNA



The Forces of Customer Experience



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The global research professionals specialising in customer experience.

Working across multiple sectors and geographies, Ipsos CX delivers a return on customer experience investment by helping organisations at all stages of their CX measurement and management journey.

Ipsos CX designs and delivers end-toend CX programmes using best-in-class software (Medallia and Qualtrics). Their multidisciplinary team of CX experts provides brands with information, insight and activation tools to embed sustainable change and support continuous improvement.

Using proprietary techniques and frameworks (such as Maturity Assessment, the Forces of Customer Experience, and Return on CX Investment - ROCXI - analyses) their highly experienced CX practitioners and researchers enable clients to supercharge the customer experience and make faster, smarter, bolder decisions.

www.ipsos.com/en-uk/customer-experience-research



An award-winning, vibrant and fast-growing multiplatform business media and events company that focuses on improving the human experience (HX) to drive client performance and profitability.

Since 2009, Engage Business Media has helped a global community of over 120,000 leaders in Customer Experience, Human Resources, Marketing, and Sales devise and implement winning strategies that appeal to the emotions, needs and desires of their consumers.

They help some of the world's biggest brands engage with target customers at an emotional level, enabling them to go beyond the transactional and forge deep relationships that are rooted in connection and affinity.

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