

THE FUTURE OF CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Your customer is precious about how she spends her attention. Are you saving or seizing it?

The Customer Experience Wars

A clash of tech-fueled convenience, free flowing media, experimentalism and relentless distraction.

Perhaps it dawned on you while you were sitting in traffic, stuck behind a car using Adaptive Cruise Control. You saw its driver sitting dozily at the wheel – probably tuned into a mindfulness podcast – and realised: these are different times. Traffic moves at a crawl, but information moves so fast a Kickstarter product is **plagiarized** and produced in Shenzhen before its campaign has funded. Meanwhile, Vice makes **meal kits** and brews **beer**, breweries open **hotels**, hotels launch designer **apparel**, and apparel brands sell **bricks, stones** and **metrocards**. Verticals are artifacts from a more timid time. One of long corporate lifespans and easily impressed customers.

You can't sit out the 21st Century Customer Experience Wars. Shots are fired every second. From Oslo to Ottawa, from Seattle to Santiago. No brand is safe. No wonder, then, that 86% of business leaders agree that customer experience is vital for success (Harvard Business Review, January 2017). Time to get to know the rules of engagement...

The Fundamental Question

When attention is your customer's most precious resource, are you saving or seizing it?

In a hyper-competitive Experience Economy where consumers are digitally empowered, yet feel forever time-starved, there's a fundamental choice to make with your Customer Experience strategy. At any particular moment, you must decide if your brand's offering is a stepping stone on the way to

experiences or if you are providing the experience itself. At every interaction or encounter you must ask: is your brand saving the customer's attention or seizing it?

The answer to that question may change over the course of the customer journey, yet the challenge remains constant. Fail to *save* or *seize* attention and you'll end up *wasting* it. And wasted attention is unforgivable.

The Fork in the Road

Why is this Customer Experience dichotomy so urgent?

Customers today are beyond fortunate, yet they often feel that 'paying' for anything - with time and attention - is an almost intolerable cost. And while the question, "are you functional or delightful?" is as old as commerce itself, it's more relevant than ever. Here are just four shifts that have brought us here:

- Digitally-supercharged business models deliver everything, from baby food to life advice on-demand, and battle to maximize efficiency.
- Connected devices (with image and voice recognition and more built in) actually work. Meanwhile machine learning and massive data trails empower brands to better decisions on the customer's behalf.
- The switch to ephemeral social sharing via *Snapchat* and *the Copycats* is pouring gasoline on the Experience Economy.
- A chorus of purpose-driven brands, big and small, promise (and increasingly deliver) a path to self-actualization.

In response to the above shifts, many brands will specialize and either seize or save attention. Others are a hybrid, varying at each touchpoint. The core truth to absorb? You must know exactly where you stand in this dichotomy or you will suffer the consequences.



2019 TREND EVENT

Our first series of 2019 trend events will take place in Amsterdam, London, New York, and Singapore.

This time we'll be exploring The Future of Experiences, specifically in-person experiences and the consumer trends placing them at the center of B2C brand and marketing strategies worldwide.

[Find out more here](#)

ATTENTION SAVING

Automated, data-powered, seamless and happily forgotten. A CX strategy for the future.

In the 2017 customer journey, attention saving moments are frequently invisible. And the customer will only appreciate them the first time round. Delightful solutions quickly become routine, noticed only when broken. Competitors (within and outside your industry) are working around the clock to reduce friction through incremental improvements and radical shortcuts. If you're not up to speed on changing expectations you will trigger disappointment, frustration and even a little rage. Yikes.

Why Now

What has driven customer expectations around attention saving so high?

The On-Demand Decade: No category has remained untouched by on-demand expectations. The decade where mobile-wielding masses have embraced everything from Narcos to narcotics on-demand. Didi Chuxing's platform can provide 20 million trips a day (yep, more than Uber!), while as of April 2017, Amazon Dash button orders were being placed four times a minute.

Verbal Intelligence: Alexa, Siri, Google Assistant and other virtual assistants harnessed developments in voice recognition, natural language processing and cloud-based intelligence and leapt from novelty to revolutionary. 76% of all regular voice users say that "using voice technology feels really natural now

and I don't even think about it." (JWT Intelligence, February 2017). As platforms, they offer a growing range of access to third party services. Along with their awkward cousins, chatbots, they are rewriting expectations around brand interactions: from complex to casual.

Status via Busyness: With connected lifestyles the office never closes, as any modern knowledge worker knows. Research published in the Journal of Consumer Research found: "status inferences are driven by the belief that the busy individual has higher human capital characteristics and is scarcer and more in demand." In plain English: an epic cultural shift has occurred, whereby leisure time isn't always the status symbol it once was. On the contrary, being so busy one needs time-saving apps, within-the-hour services (and **not-so-smart juicers**) to survive is a sign that the individual is a *very* big deal.

3 Ways to Save Attention

Thinking: Outsourced

Your customer is already benefiting from brands that utilize relevant data to deploy hidden intelligence and recommend (or make) decisions on their behalf. This frees up attention in the customer journey, from discovery to chase, to maintenance and beyond.



Amazon - Echo Look takes hands-free selfies and uses AI to recommend outfits for users

Pirelli - Smart tires provide real-time data and automatically book maintenance when needed

Digit / Nea
automatec

Customer Journeys: Shortened

Brands will continue to look at the customer journey and ask how they might incrementally improve the experience at each step. The boldest will work to eradicate steps all together and redefine expectations in the process.



ICA, PostNord and Glue - Smart lock enables groceries to be delivered direct to buyer's fridge SITA - Autonomous, roving robots reduce flight check-in wait times Air Bank -

Pain Points: Eradicated

Considerate brands now strive to eliminate attention-hogging pain points in their customer's lives, even if they are outside the brand's 'responsibility'. Meanwhile, a wave of entrepreneurial startups continues to launch new solutions for old problems.



Qatar Airways - Airlines offer free loaner laptops on flights in response to US ban

L'Oréal - Chatbot-middleman makes finding the right gift for a friend easier BBVA Bank - don't cons

Where Next

How can your Customer Experience outpace expectations around attention saving?

Go Off The Map: When asking which parts of the customer experience to make disappear, think beyond the typical route of your customer's journey with your brand. What experiences, outside that journey, in daily life would do well to just disappear?

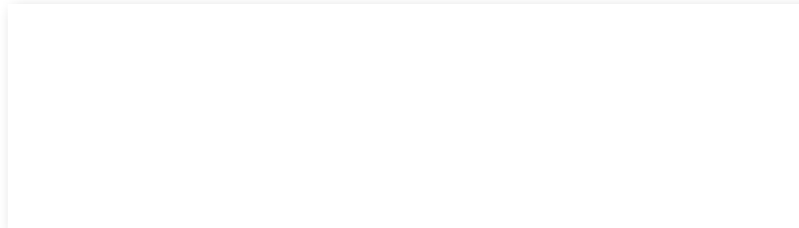
Make Multitasking Easy: Attention maximizers love to layer hands-free, eyeball-free escapism or education on to otherwise lost time (see how sales of **audiobooks** boom while ebooks flicker). How might you empower

customers to cram in additional experiences?

Guilt: Outsourced: Even the world's most conscious customer doesn't want to idle in the supermarket aisle weighing up which eggs came from the happiest chickens. Free up their attention by assuring negative eco or social impacts are minimized.

Don't Be Evil: The dark side of easy and invisible experiences is they can encourage customers to overindulge or pursue harmful behavior (such as driving for **longer hours** with Uber) in pursuit of profit. Make sure your nudging is not nefarious.

WANT MORE?



Read the full PDF, packed with even more insights.

[Read More](#)

ATTENTION SEIZING

Your customers are masters at collecting experiences. Only the best deserve their attention.

Attracting and maintaining customer attention gets harder by the microsecond. Some days it's the major players (mammoth marketing budgets, distribution and all the product trimmings) with an unfair advantage. Other days it's the niche and the nimble, the upstart startups. The truth? No brand

has it easy. If your products, services and experiences don't reward attention with one-of-a-kind stories, self-actualization, redemption, connection to others, or the uniquely powerful feeling of being understood and served as an individual, they will flop.

Why Now

What has driven customer expectations around attention seizing so high?

Broken Rules of Engagement: With skyrocketing digital media consumption and growing choice in (almost) every marketplace, attention is scarce. To get consumers to engage, brands have been breaking loose from their vertical to pop up in surprising places and delight new customers. Today there are few remaining B2C categories (tweet [@maxluthy](#) if you can think of *any*) that haven't had their toes stepped on by a startup, or multinational, from 'outside' their space.

Status Sandcastles: The shift towards an Experience Economy began at the tail end of the 20th century. This was supercharged by social media, the perfect platform to share and show off experiences in pursuit of likes. Yet in 2017, carefully curated photo albums of a once-in-a-lifetime vacation are about as valuable as your MySpace friend count. The shift towards ephemeral (read: more authentic) 'stories' means exploits-Status Sandcastles-must be rebuilt daily. And livestreaming will only push this further as people flaunt how amazing their lives are, *right now*.

Connoisseur Masses: In a marketplace with endless choices to make, customers flip from purchasing the cheapest/fastest/easiest option in one category, to fussing over every little detail (whether it's the discovery, the packaging, the delivery, the consumption or something else) in another. It's the latter where they want to spend their attention and be seen doing it. Is your brand instant coffee or AeroPress? Are you Apple Music or Amoeba Music? Are you Kraft or [MAST](#)?

3 Ways to Seize Attention

Shock and Awe

While few businesses can build a meaningful brand with puppies, pop-ups, pyrotechnics and PR stunts alone, the desire for playful, one of a kind, unexpected experiences is real. Brave brands will experiment at every touchpoint and redefine expectations.

Various - Instagram-friendly food creations offer the status-hungry a taste of the rainbow

Mexican Tourist Board - Tourist board's installation makes Air France it rain... tequila kids travel

Self-Improvement Stories

Once they've met lower level needs, humans crave self-improvement. This urge spread across the emerging global middle class and collided with the Experience Economy. Today, hard-to-impress clientele seek self-actualization and a colorful story to share with peers.



ChromaYoga - Chromatherapy yoga classes use color, scent and sound to induce trance-like state

The Met - Museum hosts guided workout tours of the gallery before regular opening hours

Kemet - 6-Cairo's suk

Experience Theaters

Customer-obsessed brands know that digital disruption does not call for a retreat from all physical infrastructure. Innovative, brand-driven venues for performance, education, work, and great coffee - with longer lifespans than 'pop-ups' - can bring people together and seize attention.



Hyundai Card - Credit card company opens dedicated 10,000 book cookery library and event space

Mini - 23,000 sq. ft. creative hub in Greenpoint provides coworking and maker spaces for designers

Apple - Ap
495 global

Where Next

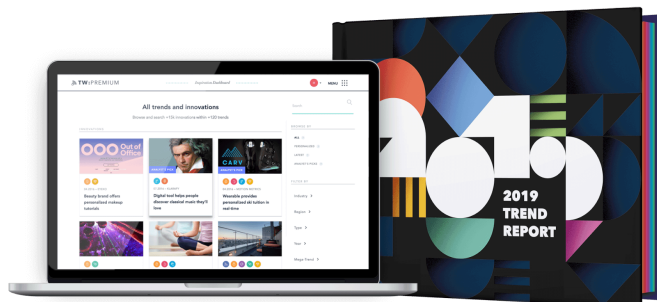
How can your Customer Experience outpace expectations around attention seizing?

Personal, Contextual, Unforgettable: The best way to capture a customer's attention at any given moment? Harness their unique data and circumstance to prove to them that you understand their exact needs at that point in time. Mass marketing/design/pricing/delivery won't capture attention forever.

Less Fuss, More Attention: Don't assume this side of Customer Experience is purely about maximalism and cramming bells and whistles into your CX. Of course that can seize attention! But there are whole strands of product or service design where minimalism still rules the day (and we're not *just* talking about Apple!).

Seize With Substance: Consider how you can facilitate self-improvement, not just in a physical manner, but at a deeper, perhaps even spiritual, level. Yesterday's brands were for profit. Today they have purpose. Tomorrow's brands, through everything from pricing to production, to packaging, will help the customer pursue their own purpose.

Questification: Do you really believe there are *only* 2.6 billion gamers out there? Beyond gamification (with its progress bars and cutesy badges), what would it look like if you accompanied the customer on a *quest*? Design an adventure that makes your CX unforgettable and your competitor's look like Pac-Man.



PREMIUM SERVICE

Consumer-focused professionals from adidas, Netflix, Nissan, Virgin, Samsung, Sephora, ING, Orange, Fujitsu, Spotify and many, many more have gained 2019 access to our Premium Service.

In the coming weeks and months, they'll be using the platform to ensure their plans remain deeply aligned with what their customers want next.

[Find out more here](#)

Hybrid Theory

We said right at the start that your brand's role would vary. It's unlikely your optimal strategy is to be a saver at every step in the customer journey, or a seizer throughout.

Consider Netflix, the media and entertainment giant wants to seize users attention with as much compelling content as it can, hence the USD 6 billion it is investing in original programming in 2017. Yet Netflix was able to celebrate (with a **steak dinner**, no less) reaching 100 million subscribers because it endeavors to make trials, purchasing, logging in, refunds, updates, discovery, cross-device access and more as seamless as possible.

Meal kit subscriptions are another compelling hybrid solution for millions of customers. Even if Blue Apron goes belly up before its impending IPO, the expectation it has created won't go anywhere. The value-add (versus takeout and home cooking) is that they involve just the right amount of convenient-yet-rewarding preparation. Blue Apron is approaching USD 1 billion in annual revenue by expertly walking the CX tightrope.

So the answer may vary from touchpoint to touchpoint. From your pricing to your packaging to your return policy. The optimal strategy may even vary from one customer segment to another. What is absolutely vital is that you ask the question.

Before You Go! Go! Go!

We'd like to take this moment to THANK YOU for giving us your in-demand attention. We cherish it. Now go grab your team and ask them how your

brand can be the best in class at seizing or saving attention at every 🙌 single 🙌 encounter 🙌 with the customer. Your customer deserves it.

Wait... you're still here?

You want to spend *more* attention on this? ;) Then sign up below to download the complete free report on The Future of Customer Experience. More examples, insights and opportunities are waiting to inspire your winning CX strategy!









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It takes a team:

This Trend Briefing has many hands on it. A huge thanks to the team that pulled this together with such positivity and enthusiasm, especially: Acacia Leroy, Alida Urban, Anton Bjorklund, Chris Class, Daniela Moya, David Mattin, Denis Rasia, Francesca Coppola, Gillian Harris, Harry Metzger, Harvey Gomez, Henry Mason, Jack Saunders, James Treacher, Jessica Tindle, Jonathan Herbst, Laura Varetto, Laurie Roxby, Lola Pedro, Luciana Stein, Lyubo Popov, Nikki Ritmeijer, Vicki Loomes, Vicky Kim and Xander van Baarsen. THANK YOU!

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