

# Customer experience is essential for your business

Organisations globally need to focus on customer experience in order to succeed. This is particularly true for industries where products and services are fast becoming commodified.



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“According to the 2016 Dimension Data Global Contact Centre Benchmarking Report, 83% of organisations surveyed already see customer experience, or CX, as a competitive differentiator. Interestingly, this figure sits at 91% when only the South African respondents are taken into account,” says Sandra Galer, consulting director of Merchants.

Launched recently in Johannesburg, the report also highlights that 78% of global respondents view CX as their most important strategic performance measure. The reason for this high percentage is clear when you see that 74% of global organisations see a clear link between CX and increased revenue and profits. “Again these figures are both higher among South African respondents, but the message is simple and very clear. Look after your customers, or cry,” she says.

And while digital engagement is on the increase and set to overtake phone interaction by the end of this year, customers are demanding digital transformation that does not eliminate the need for the human touch.

“Customers don’t necessarily want to talk to your organisation, they just want their interaction to be quick and easy and preferably something that they can do themselves. However, we believe that these digital channels could be even more powerful if they show a human touch,” says Galer. The rate at which technology is being adopted is holding organisations back, with two in every three organisations stating that their digital technology is not meeting business needs.

“We are also seeing a disconnect between the importance of digital channels and the measurement thereof, with less than half of the respondents measuring the quality of their digital interactions,” adds Galer. “When you compare that to almost 90% measuring the quality of telephonic interactions, it is no surprise that customer satisfaction levels continue to drop.”

Omnichannel continues to dominate as the top technology trend, but often the contact centre is not involved in the approval

stage of new technology systems. “This, along with the fact that analytics are not often shared between the contact centre and the broader business, means that organisations are not using the information at their disposal to improve their processes and procedures and ultimately, their overall customer experience,” says Galer.

“All of this has led to an increase in complexity in the contact centre, which means we expect more from our agents, yet we are seeing a decrease in induction training putting contact centres at risk of not being able to meet customers’ expectations.”

She adds that contact centres should consider going back to basics before trying to adopt the next big trend. “Put your customer at the centre of your business strategy and ensure that you have the tools and measurements in place to deliver on their expectations. Then you can start focusing on the next step and proactively find incremental ways of improving customer experience,” Galer concludes.

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