

A trust-defined customer experience journey will dominate 2021

By [Reynhardt Uys](#)

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Gaining brand trust has taken on a much deeper meaning since the Covid-19 pandemic ordeal when consumers experienced first hand which companies could provide evidence of their legitimate concern for customers. It has become very clear that trust goes way beyond just the idea of a brand and is now much more focused on showing and not simply telling.



Source: www.pexels.com

As a result of the trust-led consumer demands, 2021 will see a greater focus placed on gaining deeper insights into the customer and a better understanding of what their needs look like post the pandemic panic.

The year ahead will also emphasize that the customer experience journey stems from a great employee experience, all of which has to be digitally lead. The reality is that the pandemic will continue to impact customer experience in 2021, if not more so, based on the desire for an increased sense of trust. This will be coupled with consumers wanting more in-person experiences but only from brands they trust.

Forrester, in a recent survey, found that trust in business was low, but the drive for more in-person contact was growing. This places greater pressure on organisations to ensure that they focus on developing a trust-based customer experience (CX).

Having a robust understanding of the customer will become a fundamental business requirement. There is a vital need to deeply understand who your customers are and what drives them. A genuine care for the customer has to be evident as services go beyond functionality and consistency, to form an emotional connection with customers.



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To achieve this requires a CX focused strategy with a dedicated team who research and focus on gaining a deeper understanding of the customer. This team will look at the products and services offered from a human perspective and consider how to make it a more connected, emotional journey for both parties.

Differentiating your brand will also come from a smarter use of technology such as artificial intelligence. Businesses need to consider what technologies and processes will enable them to better understand the customer, but also, what of these tools will make the journey easier for customers? It will also be important for employees to know what technologies will help them interact better. Of course, measuring the impact of the programmes implemented is vital, making analytics and other CX software important to capture feedback in an ongoing and meaningful way.

Locally, good CX journeys are starting to feature more prominently in sectors such as financial services, telecommunications and often within the general ICT market. An explosion of CX campaigns is expected in the retail sector, while the medical profession has started to realise the benefits of a technology-driven CX approach: “The timeframes are not the same which means that sectors are all at different stages of CX adoption. The speed at which each market reacts also differs but the macro-trend of increased CX remains bilateral.”

While a global trend of ‘zero UI’ continues building within connected homes and South Africa is not close yet. With much more pressing issues to address, establishing connected homes remains cost prohibitive aside from being infrastructurally difficult.

The telco sector will play a leading role in the adoption of connected homes, and if they move to develop these people may start to engage. Research in the United States tells us that 16% of Americans own a smart speaker, while 4 % own a Google home product. This tells us that smart home functionality is on the rise and in the minds of a large proportion of the population. South Africa is a long way from this scenario, but we have no doubt that one day this will become our reality too.

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