If I was to pinpoint the one thing that held the relationship between brand and customer together, I’d choose trust. It’s the crucial bond between partners in business and, after all, your customers are your partners. Easy to say, of course, and much harder to establish – reputations are built on trust and then destroyed by a lack of it.

This is the importance of customer experience. It’s a creator of trust. When your customers know that you create things for their benefit, they begin to trust what you do, implicitly. Great customer experience does this. A brand that delivers on its promises is a brand that can be trusted. And it’s technology that enables us to deliver those promises.

From the rise of the robots to stores that can deliver within the hour, the opportunity that technology affords to create the kind of intelligent customer experience that keeps them coming back for more has never been greater. At the leading edge are artificial intelligence and machine learning, swallowing and analyzing data in ways that 20 years ago would have been considered the realm of science fiction.

Consequently, data protection is about to get much tougher and we have to do much more to look after our customers’ data, but this, too, is an opportunity to build a new relationship with them – one based on trust. Protect their identity and their data and you gain their trust. It’s great for them and it’s good for you.

It’s this kind of original thinking that you’ll find in this magazine, backed up by new ideas that we hope will inspire you and your organization. And I hope you enjoy it.

Here’s to the future, and to happy customers.
YOU NEED THIS:
Eight big trends that will shape the future of customer experience

1 EMPLOYEES GETTING INVOLVED WITH CREATING CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE
Your staff know your customers inside out, so now’s the time to make sure they’re on board and involved with launching new tech, apps and products. The proof? This approach has helped Canadian bank ATB Financial become that rare thing – a bank that’s loved by its customers.

2 THE INFLUENCE OF CULT BRANDS
We list the six key traits shared by the best cult brands. From a single remarkable quality to the ability to truly relate to customers, they make the difference between a brand that’s loved and one that’s unnoticed. How many does your organization have?

3 CUSTOMERS GETTING MORE RIGHTS OVER THE DATA YOU HOLD ON THEM
The new GDPR data protection law gives your customers the power to access and control the data you hold about them. It will fundamentally change the relationship between brands and customers, but it also offers an opportunity to strengthen that relationship and to give them a better experience.
TECH HELPS THE CONTINUED RESURGENCE OF BRICKS AND MORTAR

Stores have the potential to offer a customer experience that takes personalization to a new level. Think robot assistants that know your name, localized one-hour delivery and staff with unparalleled product knowledge – so there’s still a place for humans.

WHEN TALKING REPLACES TYPING (AND SWIPING)

Conversing with chatbots is nothing new, but talking directly to a brand will change the face of retail in a manner comparable to the impact of the smartphone. Conversational commerce is maturing fast, and cannot be ignored.

ROBOTS, ROBOTS, EVERYWHERE

They’re already here, but you’re going to see more of them in stores, at train stations and even in hospitals – and they’re working behind the scenes to speed up delivery times.

KPIS DON’T MATTER AS MUCH AS KEEPING THE CUSTOMER HAPPY

Abandoning the measurables you normally use to determine a successful outcome sounds radical, but if it gives the customer what they want then now is the time to take the advice of Accenture’s Glen Hartman: “Instead of talking about lead generation or converting a customer, we have to think about how to help a customer.”
The Convergence of Sales and Marketing (Finally)

It’s about time the traditional antipathy and rivalry between sales and marketing was laid to rest, because unless they work together your customer experience will suffer. The good news? Research from the CMO Council shows there’s a will on both sides to improve the situation.
It’s not often that a bank becomes an object of affection, but Canada’s ATB Financial has made its customers fall in love by focusing on what makes them happy.

Most banks’ Facebook pages are not happy places. For all of the life-affirming imagery and positive statements their PR agencies post, the comments section is almost always dominated by disgruntled customers complaining about long call centre queues, high fees, failing technology – anything, really. But not on ATB Financial’s page. Here comments include “way to go ATB,” “great job, ATB,” “thanks ATB, for your great Alberta focus” (the A in ATB stands for Alberta) and “this is brilliant – thank you for helping.” This is a loved brand. But how has this happened?

The authenticity of its content helps – ATB is heavily involved in cultural events in Alberta – as does its resolutely local stance. But the reasons why people seem to love this bank go deeper than sponsorship of music nights in its home town of Edmonton. And many of these reasons are the result of a sharp focus on the customer experience.

“Our goal is to make our customers’ lives better, every day,” says ATB Financial’s head of customer experience, John Tarnowski. So far, so familiar – many companies pay lip service to this mantra without being able to follow through. But this is where ATB differs from other organizations. “Every company says that,” says Tarnowski. “We’re different, because we know we don’t do this 100% of the time. We want to make every interaction a customer has with our products improve their life. Every time they interact with us we want them to be happy.”

Giving the customer what they want can mean breaking with the orthodoxy of financial institutions. ATB no longer automatically blocks a customer’s card if it detects unusual activity – instead, it tells the customer something is up and gives them the power to do the blocking. “People hate it when their card is blocked,” says Tarnowski. “Banks do it to protect themselves, not the customer. When we took this idea to our risk management people they threw their arms up and said, we’ll lose money. But we knew this upsets our customers so we designed a solution. A lot of it is about a creative mindset that involves the customer.”

Making these changes requires what Tarnowski describes as being able to “inspire within the organization. We’re lucky that our CEO is championing this focus on the customer experience, from the top down. But everybody
needs to play a part.” ATB has 5,300 employees and, says Tarnowski, “they need to be involved. We can have the best products but, if our team isn’t part of it, it will be an uphill battle. Team members take care of the customers. So we take care of them.”

That means getting them involved with new products and new tech from the start. “We spend a lot of time prototyping with the teams. They get early releases so they know what it’s like before the customer does.” Involving its people in this way has helped ATB reach number two in the Best Workplaces in Canada 2017 list, up from number four in 2016. Using your employees as your testers means you can also get things done faster and make them better. “We fix bugs with our people before we release anything, because we don’t want to annoy customers. And we try to do things fast.”

Moving quickly is an important part of how ATB operates. By global banking standards it’s small, and that means it needs to be agile. “In finance, if you don’t do things quickly you’re going to be irrelevant quickly,” says Tarnowski. “And it’s the smallest [players] who become irrelevant fastest.” The key to this, he says, is not to spend too much time analyzing and researching. “I made a vow that while we would be focused on the science of what drives customer decisions and why it matters, we would be equally focused on the art of getting things out the door and getting proof that stuff actually works. We were one of the first in Canada to launch Apple Pay.”

Equally as important is ATB’s realization that its customers do not judge the experience by comparing to other banks, says Tarnowski. “For our customers, their last best experience is the one they’re judging you by. If they’ve just ordered a pizza using an app that allows them to choose pepperoni on one half and five different toppings on the other half, then they expect something equally clever from a bank.” That’s why ATB’s site has a shopping cart symbol, just like any other online retailer. “We wanted it to feel like Amazon,” says Tarnowski. “The marketing people didn’t like the idea but when we tested it, customers loved it. They said: ‘This feels like Amazon.’” He reiterates the fact that ultimately, it’s all about happiness. “What makes our customers happy? And what will make customers’ lives better? That’s what we’re aiming for.”

For our customers, their last best experience is the one they use to judge you.
The anatomy of a cult brand

Every cult brand shares at least six defining features that create great experiences for its customers. How many does your organization have?
Every year, in a beautiful castle high in Canada’s Rocky Mountains, dozens of leaders of the world’s most admired brands get together to talk, listen and learn from each other. This is The Gathering, organized by marketing agency Cult Collective. It’s given Cult Collective a thorough knowledge of what makes a cult brand, a brand that CEO Chris Kneeland defines as “benefitting from having above average advocacy – customers who love them enough to talk about them to others.”

And what causes this conversion from customer to advocate? Great experiences. It’s as simple as that. Cult brands are experts in consistently offering their customers outstanding experiences, from the tangible (Converse’s free recording studios) to the philosophical (Tesla’s disruption of the auto industry). Kneeland reckons that, provided they have the desire, knowledge and courage needed to do great things, all brands can apply the qualities shown here to create their own great customer experiences.

These are Kneeland’s six principle of cult branding and the brands that do them well – as he says, “what is done most consistently amongst cult brands and done significantly better than their peers.”

1. **REMARKABILITY**

   **TESLA**

   And not for the reasons you might think. Tesla’s ‘remarkable’ is not its electric vehicles, but its rebellion against the automotive industry. Everything that Tesla does, from the way it manufactures, the way it sells and the way it interacts with customers, is intended to be opposite of what the big automotive companies do. It gets people noticing Tesla.

   Tesla benefits from five times more Google search than any automotive company, yet it does not spend a penny on paid advertising. Tesla does not discount its products. How many times have you seen an automotive manufacturer advertising 0% down and a low APR? They’re bribing you to get you to visit the dealership. Tesla does not do this.

   And it works. Tesla has 500,000 customers on a waiting list to buy a car that hasn’t even been built yet. That is the power of a cult brand.

2. **PURPOSE DRIVEN**

   **JIF**

   There must be few jobs harder than that of brand manager for a peanut butter manufacturer. It is so commoditized. Essentially every product costs the same, with the same packaging and it’s made with the same ingredients. So other than cutting the price, what else are you going to do to get people to buy it?

   But in the US Jif has been the market leader for decades, and you don’t do that through discounting. Jif has done it through creating a purpose for the product, starting with the famous tagline: “Choosy moms choose Jif.”

   All of its content marketing strategies, strategic partnerships and advertising amplify the fact that choosy moms, the best moms, choose
Jif, and it has resonated. For Jif’s customers (and now the tagline includes dads) buying Jif is about more than buying peanut butter. It makes them feel better, because they’re doing the right thing for their children.

3 INSPIRE FROM THE INSIDE ZAPPOS
In mediocre companies, marketing spends the majority of its resources on external audiences. In cult brands, marketers, not HR and operations, spend a significant amount of resources on internal engagement. They build the brand from the inside out. And the best people help to create great customer experiences.

There is no logical reason why Zappos should be a $3 billion a year retailer. It doesn’t have any private label exclusives. It sells the same stuff you can get anywhere else. It never has a sale, it never advertises and you can’t try anything on before you buy. But it’s a huge success, and the reason isn’t visible from the outside. The reason is an internal culture that treats all the employees as its most cherished asset. So much so that its annual vacancies of around 250 get 25,000 applications.

There are financial rewards, too. The Parnassus Endeavor Fund only invests in companies that are consistently ranked as the best places to work. For decades it’s been in the top 1% of all US mutual funds. Great workplaces offer great returns.

4 RELATABILITY CONVERSE
A few years ago, at the Cult Gathering, one of Converse’s senior management made a confession. He said that there was nothing remarkable about the shoes, describing them as canvas stitched to a rubber sole in a factory next to another factory that made its competitors’ products. So, he said, Converse had to do things that would enable a customer to justify spending more on a pair of shoes.

To that end, Converse has always been good at creating great customer experiences and one of the best, in my mind, was Rubber Tracks. Converse bought 12 recording studios across the globe and invited emerging artists to record for free. Its customers are often creative and artistic, and Rubber Tracks spoke directly to them.

Rather than buying impressions with media dollars, Converse is making impressions by doing things that its customers can relate to. Think about the loyalty: you’ve made my demo tape possible, you’ve helped launch my music career. In the spirit of reciprocity I’ll buy your shoes because you’ve given me something.

5 CO-CREATION LEGO
Cult brands don’t value customers just because they buy things. They value customers for their advice and advocacy and over-emphasize this way of interacting. My very favorite cult brand is Lego, and Lego has perfected the art of co-creation for decades.

As their CEO will tell you, Lego believes its smartest people do not work for Lego. Its smartest people are the legions of fans and advocates who can help to make Lego’s
products better. They have Master Builders, creatives who use Lego, and they offer them all sorts of experiential things and activations and events where they literally give their customers jobs to do.

It’s a non-paid, non-commissioned workforce, where customers are volunteering their man-hours and their innovation to help make Lego beloved and great. And when your customers are not just investing dollars, but their time and their voices, that is how you get to the holy grail of a cult brand.

6 PERVASIVENESS
RED BULL AND VICTORIA’S SECRET
This is not about ubiquity – it’s about embedding yourself into people’s lives by doing things that tell your story so people know who you are and what you stand for. When Felix Baumgartner jumped from a balloon in space for Red Bull, 80 million people watched him do it.

That’s so much more compelling than the millions Red Bull could have spent on a Super Bowl commercial to display the same thing. It was perfect – it wasn’t a gimmick, it wasn’t a stunt, but a daring and genuine embodiment of the brand’s manifestation of living a life with wings.

My favorite example of pervasive branding is Victoria’s Secret. The idea that Victoria’s Secret can charge money for people to view their advertising is the ultimate goal of really great marketing. CBS pays them and sponsors pay them for the privilege of putting their content on television. That is amazing pervasive marketing.
Here’s a conflict: You need data to create a personalized experience for your customers, but the new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) means getting it is about to become much more complicated. Not only that, you must allow customers access to it and, if they want you to, delete it.

GDPR is possibly the single biggest change to data protection ever, and it’s going to change your relationship with the customer – possibly for the better. One of the most important aspects of complying with GDPR involves getting your data organized so it is easily accessible. Just by complying with this regulation you’ll have everything in one place at the same time, making it possible to get a complete view of your customers.

If you do business in the EU, it’s coming your way. Everyone who operates in the EU has to abide by these rules. The idea is that one set of laws covering every country will make it easier for companies to comply, but the concept of giving more control to the ‘data subjects,’ as the jargon calls them, is an important part of the legislation. Some businesses are taking drastic measures. UK pub chain Wetherspoons has deleted its entire email database and, although the company didn’t say it was a reaction to GDPR, it did say that no data means there’s no chance of breaches or non-compliance.

So how do you go about turning GDPR into a benefit to your business? Patrick Salyer, CEO of customer identity management company Gigya, says providing the personalized experiences that customers want while adhering to the GDPR is complicated. If companies are going to collect enough data to provide a personalized experience, consent is required throughout the customer journey. The first stage is to consent to cookies as an anonymous user. Then there’s what Salyer calls a “light” registration, such as giving an email address to receive a newsletter. After that, the consumer provides more information at the checkout stage, and then might fully sign up.

Each one of these stages requires agreeing to a data collection policy. If a consumer was then to go to a different brand owned by the same company, they would have to give their consent again. What’s more, the regulations...
How can I turn GDPR into a benefit for my business?
state that if they were to withdraw consent from one brand, the company would have to treat the request as opting out of every brand in its portfolio. Customers must also be able to see the data a company holds on them and delete it, and their account, at any time.

The problem, says Salyer, is that different parts of the process may be managed by different systems, or even different companies – a separate business might run a company’s loyalty program. It’s up to businesses to make sure that all consent information is unified across different systems, so that all the choices a consumer makes about data are respected.

As Salyer says, obtaining customer consent under the new regulations is “not a simple checkbox”. But here’s the opportunity. To comply with GDPR, businesses need to unify the data they hold on customers. It’s a reason for companies to get their house in order; to keep accurate records on all their customers in a central location, with seamless links between systems.

This could be on a company’s own systems, or via a dedicated customer information management company such as Gigya. The upshot is the same: if you have all your customer data in one place and accessible to all your systems, you’re in a much better position to provide a seamless customer experience across every channel.

**TRANSPARENCY AND TRUST**

GDPR is all about transparency. It is an excellent opportunity for companies to improve customer relationships – to build trust by being open about how customer data is used, and to prove to customers that they are in control of their data. If a user trusts a company, they are more likely to share their data; Salyer cites an Accenture study showing that 70% of those surveyed would share data if a brand was transparent about how it was used, and 75% would share if they could control that use.

Salyer thinks that the best way to build trust is to acquire data gradually; a getting-to-know-you process, such as you might have with a shop remembering your weekly grocery requirements, or a café knowing your usual order. He says that relationships with customers shouldn’t be binary, in that you’re either a known or an unknown customer (browsing a website in a logged-in state or as a guest, for example). Instead, companies should build “progressive relationships” with customers, only asking for data when it is relevant and necessary.

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**60-SECOND GUIDE TO GDPR**

**What is it?**
The EU’s new data protection law, replacing the current, 20-year old rules. It gives the people whose data you collect – your customers – extensive individual rights such as the right to access data, change it, delete it, object to it and to restrict its processing. These rights are considerably greater than anything that has gone before.

**Who does it affect?**
Every country in the EU, and every business that operates in those countries – even if they’re not based there.

**What will change?**
Aside from the need to give people access (and providing it, for free, within a month), data breaches must be reported to the country’s regulator within 72 hours. And if your organization employs more than 250 people, you must document why information is collected, how long it’s kept for and what you’re doing to keep it safe.

**Why do I need to act?**
Because there is no getting round it. You must comply. Those that don’t face fines of up to 4% of turnover or €20m, whichever is greater. Companies that show willingness to have leeway – in the UK, the Information Commissioner’s Office has said it would prefer to work with companies to deal with compliance failures rather than instantly fine them.
Transparency also comes into its own when trying to persuade users of the benefits of sharing their data, such as when creating an account. Many users don’t want to create an account the first time they buy, partly for reasons of trust, and partly because it’s a hassle. Forcing them to do so to make a purchase might put them off and lead to an abandoned basket, so allow customers to check out as a guest, then on the order confirmation screen ask if they would like to create an account.

The way to make this happen is to offer customers a quid pro quo, says Sergey Krayniy, Gigya’s vice president of global pre-sales, by using statements such as: ‘Create an account and get control of your data.’ Krayniy describes this as a “powerful message”, and it’s a neat way to benefit both parties; companies gain access to valuable customer data, and customers can see exactly what data a company holds.

"Some of you probably see GDPR as a monster that tries to make your life miserable," says Krayniy. "but I see this as an opportunity to first of all refresh your relationship with the consumers, and second it could be a good call to action to create an account."

CUSTOMER DATA
To comply with GDPR, it’s not enough to ask for consumers’ consent to share their data and to keep all that data in the right place. You also have to make it easy for consumers to see what data a business holds, the consent they have granted and the ability to opt out of their data being used at any time.

Gigya is trialing a profile interface that allows this to happen, split into three parts: Profile, Communication Preferences and Privacy. Profile lets you edit or delete info such as name, email address and number. Communication Preferences gives you fine control over the communications you receive.

Privacy is particularly interesting. This gives you access to any terms and conditions you have agreed to, such as a website’s privacy policy, as well as the option to download the entire data set that a company holds on you. There are also clear links to freeze your account or delete it entirely – a key part of GDPR’s right to erasure article. This is the way the wind is blowing; even Facebook, which once made you contact a customer service agent to delete your account, now lets you remove yourself from the social network permanently with a few clicks.

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**SLOWLY DOES IT**

**Building a customer identity respects privacy. Use the five key stages of the customer journey to create trust and respect**

1. **AWARENESS** Anonymous interactions
   When consent starts. The first data exchange between brand and customer is with cookies.

2. **CONSIDERATION** Light registration
   When the customer shows more interest, ask for an email address for downloadable content or a newsletter, or to send a receipt if they’re in-store.

3. **CONVERSION** Full registration
   Now is the time to begin profile creation. Don’t ask for masses of data, but just enough to create a profile. While the username and password method still dominates, social log-in is important because it gives quicker sign ups, less drop off and allows access to lots of data.

4. **RETENTION** Progressive profiling
   Gradually gather data, as much to help the customer as to benefit profiling. Ask why they’re visiting, or about their preferred activities, to help to personalize their visit. Just don’t do it during check out – pick a less time-pressured moment.

5. **ADVOCACY** Enriching profiles
   Once they’re established customers and they trust you, you can begin to enrich their profiles with data they’re happy to give. Frame this as a trade – in return for telling you about themselves, they get a better experience.
IS THIS THE DEATH OF RETAIL OR RETAIL’S SAIOUR?

Amazon’s Echo is just the start
Communicating with a brand via a digital assistant might currently be the preserve of Amazon and Google, but this technology has the potential to reshape the customer experience for every brand in the world. Now is when you make sure you’re not left behind.

“This will be more disruptive than the smartphone was. And people are not aware of it, in the same way that ten years ago they were not aware of the potential impact of the smartphone.” Kees Jacobs, who works as digital proposition lead for consumer products and retail for CapGemini, is talking about conversational commerce, and he is one of those who does know about it. He reckons it is creating a fundamental change in the way consumers experience brands and retail.

The crux of this change is caused by customer behavior and expectations, says Kees. “You cannot say the customer behavior is changing. It has changed. And the rules that retailers used to differentiate themselves have gone. It’s no longer just about range, access and price. It’s the same for brands – it’s no longer about pricing, promotions and how much they spend on trade promotions. The new rules are about addressing new behaviours, and using data in a different way – and doing it at scale.

We’ve done a study with the board of the Consumer Goods Forum, sponsored by the CEOs of the 50 largest consumer goods and retail companies in the world – Walmart, Tesco, Unilever – and they are worried. They don’t want to end up like the Roman Empire – it saw itself as invincible and eternal but the Goths and the Vandals saw the weaknesses.”

One of those expectations is of an experience where the customer is in control and expects the retailer to make every part of the journey as easy as possible. Consumers want to feel as if what they experience has been designed for their benefit, not that of the retailer. For instance, CapGemini research indicates that 75% of consumers want to check stock levels online before going to a shop and 73% want same-day delivery. Convenience and speed are expected, as part of the increasing desire for an experience without barriers.

“This is a weak spot in the industry that retailers and brands need to address,” says Kees. “They need to make consumers’ lives as easy as possible – hassle-free shopping, what they want at that particular moment without complications. They don’t want to shop around for best value – they want to trust a brand to give them the best value.”

This is where conversational commerce enters the room. “It’s the biggest change on the horizon. It’s not technical or tactical – it’s about new ways of interacting with consumers. Consumers don’t know about it and it will completely change how we live. And we believe that this is a huge opportunity for brands.” Because, according to CapGemini’s chief experience officer Mark Taylor, conversational commerce “puts the humanity back into shopping.”
That might sound like an oxymoron. How does technology based on AI and machine learning inject humanity into the customer experience? Kees draws a parallel between Alexa and himself as an eight-year old: “I was a conversational commerce device. My grandmother would say to me, go to the store and get my favorite cheese. I knew what cheese she wanted. I was embedded in her life. She didn’t need to say anything more than that. Speech is much more natural than swiping or using a keyboard.”

And it’s not speech being used simply to turn things on and off. “This is not about having a voice-activated speaker in your kitchen or giving commands. It’s about a dialogue. It’s about empathy, recognizing tone of voice, being relevant. This is where conversational commerce really comes into play.”

Its potential to become embedded in so many aspects of our lives will make it ubiquitous. You’ll be talking to your car, your fridge, your shopping trolley, probably through a single device. The expansion of the Amazon Echo range is an indicator of what’s to come.

There are now seven Echo devices, covering different price points, and eventually they will be everywhere, and wherever you are you’ll be able to have a conversation with Amazon.

What this isn’t is here, now. “We’re at the first stage of the development of conversational commerce,” says Kees. “It’s robotic dialogue – there are some examples of basic personal dialogue, but none of it is playful, or genuinely personal.” There is still a long way to go until we get to the truly personal personal assistant.

And in the time between here and there, the risk is that conversational commerce remains dominated by the device brands – the likes of Amazon and Google. That would mean competitive retailers may have to use their technology. So one of the things Kees and a team from MIT and Intel are working on is a set of commands that could put the consumer directly in touch with a brand. You’d say ‘hello, Coca Cola,’ rather than ‘hello, Alexa,’ allowing the brand to escape the influence of whoever makes the device.

“It’s important for companies to start shaping the impact of this technology,” says Kees. “Then they’re not dependent on a technology provider. That way they can master and then control the experience.” And that way lies the ultimate purpose of conversational commerce – satisfied customers. Twenty years ago, Steve Jobs said “you’ve got to start with the customer experience and work back toward the technology – not the other way round... What incredible benefits can we give to the customer?” This is a rare chance for brands and retailers to make those incredible benefits a reality.
The Four Stages of Conversational Commerce

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<th>Level of Change/Disruption in Consumer Behavior</th>
<th>Maturity Level of Personalized, Human Dialogue</th>
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<td>1. Robotic Dialogue</td>
<td>1. The Genuine Personal Assistant</td>
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<td>This is where we are now. A simple Q&amp;A format with limited sources of information and limited integration into enterprise systems.</td>
<td>With the ability to accurately predict what a customer wants and when they want it, the customer experience becomes truly personalized. Cognitive learning thinks, anticipates and remembers for the customer while a streaming supply chain gets the product to them quickly and at low cost.</td>
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<td>Using a more complex algorithm and better access to data will enable the tech to converse with a limited representation of a brand’s tone.</td>
<td>Self-learning algorithms allow technology to get better at understanding you, along with knowledge of purchase history and payment preferences. Full integration into enterprise systems gives access to many products.</td>
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<td>Level of change/disruption in consumer behavior would be called the maturity level of personalized, human dialogue. The human experience would be with self-learning algorithms allowing technology to get better at understanding you, along with knowledge of purchase history and payment preferences. Full integration into enterprise systems gives access to many products.</td>
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The retail store of the future

Conversational commerce isn’t the only advance that’s changing the customer experience – new technology is reshaping the way we shop in-store, too.

As the customer enters the store, the store detects the presence of her phone and sends her a personalized offer, based on knowledge of her shopping history and preferences.

She tells the robot assistant that she’s after a particular shoe, and the assistant directs her to the right part of the store. As it talks, the shelf with the shoe on lights up.

When she picks up the shoe, a video on a screen above her starts, explaining the shoe’s features.

She scans the shoe’s label with her phone to read reviews by other customers.

Numerous self-service screens allow her to ask questions and request a pair of shoes to try on.

When she tries the shoe on, lights in the floor illuminate to show her where to put her feet to experience the shoe’s support and other features.

An augmented reality mirror shows her what different colour and trim combinations would look like.

There are still human staff in store – here, they measure her feet and height. This data allows the store to recommend shoes that suit her feet and build.

The customer profile is linked to a fitness app, so the retailer understands how she runs, when, where and for how long, enabling it to make more accurate recommendations.

One-hour delivery is made possible by drones based at the store. They take stock from the store and deliver locally, so customers receive their order within an hour.
“MY NAME IS PEPPER THE ROBOT. MY INVENTORS RECKON I’M THE START OF THE BIGGEST PARADIGM SHIFT IN HUMAN HISTORY, AND THE AI THAT POWERS ME WILL EVENTUALLY OVERTAKE YOUR OWN KNOWLEDGE AND INTELLIGENCE.

HOW MAY I HELP YOU TODAY?”
Have you met Pepper yet? If you haven’t, odds are you soon will. This is the very real face of a new world for interaction between humans and machines. Robots are no longer confined to the lab. They’ve been let out into the real world. There are Pepper robots all over Japan – over 2,000 of them – and they’ve reached Europe, where you’ll find them at train stations in France, acting as customer assistants. They’re in stores across the US. They are one of the most noticeable signs of the transformation artificial intelligence will make to our world. And the effect they are having (and will have) on customer experience is nothing short of revolutionary.

Pepper’s abilities are just the beginning. As Masayoshi Son, CEO of Softbank Robotics (which owns Pepper) says, artificial intelligence is “the biggest paradigm shift in human history.” His view is shared by luminaries such as Andrew Ng, adjunct professor at Stanford University, who reckons it’s “the new electricity,” and will “transform industry after industry” just as electricity did. PricewaterhouseCoopers, in a report entitled “What’s the real value of AI for your business?” put that value, globally, at $16tr. By 2030. And robots are the most visible sign of this change.

So how do robots fit in to the world of customer experience? Behind the scenes there are many robots changing the way that customers experience their interactions with brands. Take the Kiva robots used by Amazon in its warehouses. A Kiva is an orange box on wheels – it looks a bit like a large Pelicase – and it brings trolleys of products to human packers and pickers, who select the order from the trolley. Using Kivas allows Amazon to cut the time it takes to get orders dispatched, so customers get their goods faster. Amazon liked them so much it bought the company, which now forms part of the retailer’s robotics division.

Useful as they are, these robots can’t interact with humans. They have one job to do and can’t operate outside of a very narrow set of parameters. For customer experience (and everything else), where robots get interesting is when they start to recognise emotion, with the ability to talk to human beings in different tones and to adapt their responses to suit the human’s mood. And that’s where Pepper comes in.

Pepper’s approach to people changes depending on how it perceives what mood you’re in. Its facial recognition software allows it to analyze expressions, adapting its tone and what it says to suit how you’re feeling. That is what sets it apart from the Kivas and what makes it useful in a CX context. Pepper’s potential starts with meet and greet. It can direct customers to the right staff member, tell them where the goods they want are, give them information on a product.
FIVE WAYS AI AND MACHINE LEARNING CAN HELP IMPROVE YOUR CX

But that’s only what the customer sees. Beneath the humanoid form (itself important, as it’s easier to talk to a machine with a face and arms), Pepper has a much deeper value. Once a customer has introduced themselves, the robot will be able to access the customer’s history with the brand, making accurate, personal recommendations based on the data. It records everything it sees and hears, becoming a data source itself, and it can ask questions – so it can be used as a tool to gather specific information, such as customer satisfaction. That facial recognition software isn’t there just to generate empathy – it can determine details about a customer such as age, gender and potentially even the sort of job they do without having to ask. This is the application of AI to the task of evolving customer experience.

And there is, of course, the novelty value. Even though Pepper has been around for three years, the appeal of a cute and helpful humanoid robot is perhaps a reason to choose one brand over another. Customers may be more likely to answer survey questions when they’re posed by a robot. And it’s not unknown for robots to have inspired sentiment and even feelings of loss – in Japan, owners of Sony’s Aibo robot dogs held funeral services for their pets when they became unrepairable – making the promise of a robot that humans can relate to a truly powerful one.

By 2020, 85% of a client’s relationship with a business will be managed without interacting with a human, according to Gartner research. That doesn’t mean we’ll all be rushing out to buy thousands of Peppers, but it does mean there are plenty of things that AI can help with right now to make your CX better – for customers and for your business.

1 HELPS CUSTOMERS FIND EXACTLY WHAT THEY WANT, EVEN IF THEY DON’T KNOW WHAT IT IS
Image recognition is one of the most rapidly improving areas of AI. The ability to look at pictures and work out what they are powers Neiman Marcus’s Snap.Find.Shop app. A customer sees something they like, takes a picture and the app’s image recognition software will find something similar from the company’s inventory.

2 GETS YOUR DATA ORGANISED AND THEN TELLS YOU WHAT IT MEANS
Too much data? It’s the lifeblood of marketing decisions, but as the volume grows then analyzing it becomes tougher. AI and machine learning can deal with vast amounts of data, sorting, analyzing and extracting patterns far more quickly than humans can. It can analyze customer sentiment during calls, transcribe them and present you
Customers win both ways... when they need human contact, they get it faster and for longer

Not having what people want is more than a supply-chain issue – it’s a customer experience issue, and can lead to shoppers going elsewhere. AI’s ability to consume and analyze vast amounts of data means it can accurately and quickly predict customer buying behavior, using information such as weather forecasts and newsfeeds. The analysis allows you to make sure you have the right inventory to match demand created by events beyond your control, such as the weather.

Never let your customers run out of stock

You need a lot of people and space to run a 24-hour customer service operation. For many companies that’s just not feasible. But chatbots don’t need offices, food or sleep. So while your humans are in bed, chatbots keep your call centers open.

Always-on, 24-hour customer service

If chatbots can deal with routine queries such as ‘how do I reset my password’ and ‘can I get these shoes in black’, your people don’t have to – freeing up their time to deal with issues that require a human touch to solve. Customers win both ways. They don’t have to queue for an answer that could be provided in seconds by a bot, and when they need human contact, they get it faster and for longer.

Allow humans to do what they do best

With a text file so you can read what people are saying. It can look at social channels and give feedback on what customers think. This is intelligence gained from your data, to give you an accurate picture of what your customers think about you.
These three terms are often seen as interchangeable, but they mean different things:

**AI, Machine Learning and Deep Learning**

**What's the Difference?**

- **Artificial Intelligence** is defined as “a set of techniques that can mimic the human brain.”

- **Machine Learning** is one of the most crucial contributors to the development of AI, and describes a machine that learns to get better at a task without being programmed to do so. This is normally achieved by giving it data, which it uses to improve the way it does things. It stems from the idea that instead of programming computers to do tasks, we could get them to teach themselves to do it – like a human does.

- **Deep Learning** is a subset of machine learning. It’s concerned with the idea of solving problems which require thought. Instead of the need to tell a machine what to do by giving it more data, by using deep learning it can find things out for itself. It’s the sharp end of machine learning and it’s likely to be the key to making computers ‘think’ more like humans.

**Illustration: Richard Rockwood**
Keeping customers happy has never been more demanding. Find out how to stay ahead of the competition and give your customers what they want with this masterclass in improving customer experience, from three of marketing’s most experienced minds.

FORGET METRICS AND KPIs. GIVE THE CUSTOMER WHAT THEY NEED

GLEN HARTMAN
Managing director, Accenture Interactive

We have to operate with a heightened level of relevance – we need to understand someone’s intent in the moment. I travel a lot for my business. I’m on the road all the time. Marriott knows me better than my mother. I’ve been a loyalty member for everything, for food, every hotel I’m in. But I’m a wildly different person when I travel for business than I am when I travel with my family. When I travel for business, I like to have a room near the elevator so I can get in and out fast for my early flights. But when I travel with my daughter, I want it to be away from the elevator because we’re on vacation and I’m going to let her stay up late, and I want her to sleep in in the morning. If a hotel figures this out, they’re going to do a better job of giving me what I want.

Instead of talking about lead generation or converting a customer, we have to think about how to help a customer, or empathize with them. Imagine you’re in a grocery store. You go every Saturday, you use the store’s app and the store knows you’re there. They can serve coupons or make recommendations for your shopping list, adding ingredients to give you new recipes. Your basket is filling up, they’re selling more stuff.

But then you show up on Tuesday at midday. Maybe you’re on your lunch break, and you need to be quick. If they’re smart, they’ll see you’re there. They’ll see your app and your list. But instead of giving you all that other stuff, they will show you the location of every item on your list so you can get out fast.

Do this and, as a marketer, you’ve done away with every metric you’d usually measure with. You’re not driving more traffic. You’re not keeping them in the store longer. You’re not going to increase the shopping cart, but you made that experience so powerful for the customer and you met their needs, in the moment. This is reverse engineering of CX, starting with the experience and making something that provides it. It’s humanizing the process.
Instead of talking about lead generation or converting a customer, we have to think about how to help a customer.

Glen Hartman, MD, Accenture Interactive
What influences CX decisions? The value a customer has to the company and the value a company has to the customer

Simon McLain, global customer strategy leader, Deloitte
BE GOOD TO YOUR CUSTOMERS, BUT MAKE SURE THEY'RE GOOD FOR YOU

SIMON MCLAIN
Global customer strategy leader, Deloitte

Increasingly we’re seeing companies compete on the basis of customer experience. And we know how investing in customer experience increases promotion, advocacy and spending.

But many companies struggle to show how investing in customer experience increases promotion, advocacy and spending. The question is, how do we connect customer experiences to the value they create for our business?

The way we deal with this is to concentrate on figuring out the value a customer has to the company and the value the company has to the customer. It’s these two things that should influence decisions on customer experience. When a brand delivers an experience that has value for the customer, it hopefully improves the interaction and increases satisfaction. But the other part of the equation is the value customers create for the brand. How much do they promote us? Are they advocates? Do they spend more?

We see that a lot of companies are pretty good at understanding one or the other. For example, a brand could spend a lot of time understanding what a customer wants and delivering experiences based on that. But they don’t really know what pays off or which customers to focus on. Or, they have a deep understanding of how value is created from a customer but don’t really know what that customer wants from the experience.

Organizations that do well are those that put the two together. They really understand what customers value, but focus on those customers that create the most value for them. They do this by recognizing a customer’s value at the point of contact and use that information to deliver a truly personalized treatment.

This is something many organizations find difficult. You need a full view of the customer’s value, and you need first and third party data to make sense of it. Not only the in-house data, but data from other sources for a complete view and the analytics behind it. And then the ability to use it through all of your different channels.

Put customer value at the centre of your thinking and construct a system that delivers the right experiences across lots of channels, and you’ll be winning.
I’m getting rid of direct mailing and calling at OpenText. How many people answer a cold call from an unknown number? How many open an email packed with text they didn’t ask for from an unknown source? We are saturated.

To be effective, we need to be more accurate and personal. The one email I did open was so highly personalized it was as if the sender had been in my office for a week. They had looked at their data and our interactions, studied our annual report and composed a message that described my exact problem. It was powerful enough to make me call them to find out more about the solution they had.

This is what machine learning and AI can do. They have the capacity to gather volumes of data beyond the scope of what humans can process, make correlations and develop personalizations.

An individual data scientist sitting behind an Excel spreadsheet is not going to have the capacity or the scope of cognition to correlate the massive volumes of information necessary to deliver industry-leading experiences. Machine learning and AI can, and is becoming increasingly important for the customer experience. It won’t be a panacea, and it won’t happen immediately, but everything is evolving in that direction.

That’s why I’m getting rid of the mail outs and calls. Machine learning and AI will supplant those traditional tactics to provide a more compelling experience on the demand side. And then not on the demand side, just on the pure human interaction side, to provide more compelling experiences based on what people are looking for rather than what we want them to look for.
It’s time to put an end to cold calling and random emails

Adam Howatson, CMO, OpenText
WHAT CONNECTS ASICS, TREK BIKES & MAUI JIM SUNGLASSES?

They’ve all worked out how to put CX at the heart of their businesses (and learned a lot about their customers along the way)

Improving customer experience is about more than improving your website. And sometimes that involves changing the way you do business, which can lead to a whole new set of challenges often connected to the idea of putting the customer at the center of what you do.

Three big brands with global reach took on the challenge of making their businesses more customer centric. For Trek Bikes, it meant changing a fundamental part of how they operated. For sportswear firm ASICS it meant dealing with huge variations in cultures and expectations across its global markets. And for sunglasses manufacturer Maui Jim it was about making good on its promise of ‘ohana – the Hawaiian concept of becoming part of a family. Each company has been successful in its mission, and each has learned a lot along the way.
Trek Bikes: the hybrid model

Trek needed to get closer to its customers, but not cut out the bike shops that are the bedrock of its business

Trek Bikes has always had a close relationship with its retailers. For most of the 40-year-old company’s history, it relied on independent bike shops for sales and customer service – bike shops that would sell Trek products alongside those from other manufacturers.

From 2014, the company decided it needed to improve the customer experience. It wanted to engage more directly with customers but not at the expense of retailers, says Steve Novoselac, director of digital technology. “Retailers are a big part of our business. We don’t want to push them to the side.”

Trek also wanted to unify its websites, and in doing so found a way to connect directly with customers while keeping its retailers in the picture.

Before Trek launched its SAP Hybris Commerce system in November 2015, it had a website, which Novoselac describes as “more of a catalog”, a site for sales of accessories but not bikes, and a dealer locator.

These sites are now unified in a single system, and it makes for a simpler customer journey. Once you’ve found the bike you want to buy, you add it to your basket. Choose your delivery method and the dealer locator kicks in, showing you shops that offer click and collect or a delivery service.

Despite the efforts to keep them involved, retailers were skeptical when the new system was announced, but Novoselac says they’ve been won round. The retailers get a commission for the bikes that they deliver (not as much as if they’d sold it themselves, but still “a decent percentage”, says Novoselac) and don’t have to worry about back-office tasks such as handling payments. A retailer can even use Trek’s own point-of-sale system, which makes it easier to feed stock information back to Trek.

The retailers also benefit from their listing on Trek’s site, taking advantage of Trek’s profile to reach a larger audience.

Trek knows that direct-to-consumer is the future, which is why it ships accessories direct to a customer. But with bikes, consumers want to see if the bike fits their shape and riding style, and will also want servicing and repairs in the future. So Trek’s hybrid model works: it connects consumers to retailers, while making sure that they have the service from a physical shop.
ASICS: going global

While transforming itself into a global customer-centric brand, ASICS used the knowledge gained from challenges in one part of the world to make its life easier elsewhere.

ASICS needed a better relationship with its customers. “Because ASICS was always a little bit technological, we were never perceived as a brand that you would shout out about, so we needed to get in real contact,” says Thomas Wasser, ASICS’ head of global CRM. And traditional mass marketing was not the way to do it.

So ASICS created communities for its customers, to see how they were using the products. This was part of the move from, as Wasser puts it, a sports goods manufacturer to a “lifestyle services counterpart”. It also needed to unify and improve the way brand interacted with customer. “If you walked into a store, we wouldn’t know that you were already starting to plan a marathon,” says Wasser.

ASICS wanted a single solution to link up its marketing, apps, omni-channel shopping and customer care services, and one that would work globally. Making it work across the regions where ASICS operates presented its own challenge.

For example the US is incredibly diverse, but dealing with this diversity made the US team “very good at understanding preferences.” Europe’s diversity created situations such as that when the Italian office declared that a certain color would “never” work there. A different color had to be made for the Italians. Over time the European team became very good at personalizing specific products.

In Korea, ASICS found that customers expect amazing service – “everything has to be 110%”, says Wasser. Japan, the home of ASICS, was tricky due to the consensus-driven nature of Japanese business. In Japan 50 or 60 people would be involved in the launch, all with different expectations.

As Wasser says, get a roll-out approved in those circumstances and the rest of the world would seem significantly easier.
Maui Jim: join the family

Maui Jim draws inspiration from its Hawaiian heritage with the concept of ‘ohana – making customers feel part of the Maui Jim family.

For Maui Jim, it’s all about family. According to Jim Ferolo, VP, digital and marketing technologies, when you buy a pair of Maui Jim sunglasses, you’re joining the ‘ohana – Hawaiian for family.

Building a relationship with its customers is a core part of the business. Ferolo believes that agency is a key part of making a customer feel involved, whether they’re interacting with the company as a B2B retailer or as a consumer. "They have to believe that their decisions and inputs are really recognized and would resonate in all the offerings you provided them."

One way to provide this agency is to give consumers and retailers control over the design process. The My Maui portal lets customers build their own sunglasses. The color and material combinations mean users can create around 5,000 different pairs. If a particular combination is ordered enough times, Maui Jim will add it to their standard SKU set, making retailers and consumers feel part of the ‘ohana.

The improvements to the B2B system have also impacted the consumer experience. Orders for prescription sunglasses come from thousands of opticians and, when Maui Jim launched its new B2B site, half of these orders were placed by fax.

Apart from the overheads involved in processing those faxes, there’s a problem of product suitability: you’re relying on the optician’s knowledge to determine if a frame style will work with a prescription. If the orders are made through Maui Jim’s own site, the site can apply its own rules, and flag something that may not work – not only in the way the glasses are made, but the way they look. "If you have a high degree of correction we’re not going to put you in a frame that’s super-thick, where you’re going to see a really horrible edge" says Ferolo.

Maui Jim has had success in making consumers feel part of a community; it encourages consumers to upload photos of themselves and their sunglasses, with purchase links appearing next to the photo. The company emphasises after-sales service. "Buy a pair of Maui Jim sunglasses, and we’ll take care of you for life," says Ferolo.

A large part of this lifetime care is the repair portal. In the US customers get a breakdown of the cost of each component. Nose pads and temples can be provided free of charge. And if the glasses can’t be fixed a solution will be found for the customer. Sunglasses for life, indeed.
Do your sales and marketing teams work to create best customer experience?

If your organization is like most companies surveyed the answer will probably be... NO

Don’t despair. There is a will to change and make things better.

The CMO Council surveyed 367 marketing and sales executives to find out how they regard each other and their role in customer experience.

While the results show division, they also indicate that sales and marketing want to do more to improve CX.

There is plenty you can do to help them. But let’s understand the issues first.

It starts with sales people who don’t believe marketing is critical to helping them acquire new customers.

How critical will marketing be to helping you acquire new customers?

50% say it’s important, but it isn’t the key to success.

Marketing are not always convinced of the importance of sales.

34% don’t consider sales the key to success.
IT’S NOT ALL BAD

THERE IS COMMON GROUND

DO SALES AND MARKETING AGREE ON WHAT CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE IS?

YES (Mostly – 61% of sales and 57% of marketing agree on a common definition)

WHAT IS IT THEN?

“A COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY THAT LOOKS AT HOW THE BUSINESS ENGAGES, REACTS, AND PROACTIVELY RELATES WITH CUSTOMERS IN THE MOMENTS OF NEED AND IN THE CHANNELS THAT CUSTOMERS EXPECT”

THEY BOTH BELIEVE THAT GROWTH IS THE GOAL

The largest proportion (28% of marketing and 37% of sales) of respondents from both areas believe growth is the most important goal for this year.

THEY BOTH BELIEVE THAT EACH OTHER’S GOALS ARE IMPORTANT TO THEM

HOW FOCUSED IS MARKETING ON ACCELERATING REVENUE GENERATION, OPPORTUNITY CREATION AND SALES CLOSURES? 60% ‘TOP OF MIND’

HOW FOCUSED IS SALES ON ADVANCING AND OPTIMIZING THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE, ENHANCING CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENTS ACROSS THE ORGANIZATION AND ACCELERATING BUSINESS GROWTH? 61% ‘TOP OF MIND’

BUT: THIS DOESN’T TRANSLATE INTO MUTUAL APPRECIATION. AND IT’S SALES THAT PLACES A LESSER VALUE ON MARKETING

Just 36% of sales think marketing will help them achieve their goals.

MARKETING PEOPLE PLACE A GREATER VALUE OF THE CONTRIBUTION OF SALES

61% believe sales is critical to achieving their goals.

36% Critical to achieving this goal
50% Important, but marketing is not the key to success
14% Not that important but helpful

61% Critical to achieving this goal
34% Important, but sales is not the key to success
1% More of a road block to success
4% Not that important but helpful
While **60%** of marketing executives say they get some input on CX from sales, there’s no formal system in place.

Only **28%** say they get creative input from sales leaders, and that they are ‘totally collaborative.’

**Sales people see it slightly differently**

**51%** say they give input in an informal manner.

**37%** see their relationship with marketing as ‘totally collaborative.’

**AND THIS COULD BE THE CAUSE OF A LACK OF COLLABORATION BETWEEN SALES AND MARKETING**

**THE SOLUTION? GET PEOPLE WORKING TOGETHER**
‘We’ve made it work by getting sales on side, because this is good for them

Theresa Worrell, senior marketing manager, Insight

THE IMPORTANCE OF WORKING TOGETHER (AND GETTING EVERYONE INVOLVED FROM THE START)

When we started using predictive analytics, we focused on better targeting of sales. We said to sales, of your 85,000 clients we’d say focus on these 500 because they’re the ones who are most likely to buy. To begin with, it didn’t go as well as we liked; we didn’t get enough buy-in from everyone in the organization and the only way we measured the effectiveness was to say, call them and tell me if they’re interested.

Today, we don’t do anything without predictive analytics. We don’t send 6,000 emails. We target the right people at the right time, and we measure it properly. Before predictive analytics we had a win rate of about 30%. Now it’s 57.5%. And while the number of qualified leads and opportunities goes down, the average deal size increases. We’ve made it work by getting sales on side, because ultimately predictive analytics is good for them.
WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

BECAUSE MARKETING AND SALES PEOPLE WANT THE INFORMATION TO DO THEIR JOBS BETTER

23% of marketing and 17% of sales say ‘actionable insights from data and analytics’ would help them improve delivery of a better customer experience.

17% of marketing and 24% of sales reckon a ‘closed loop lead-to-customer process’ would help them improve the delivery of a better CX.

They also agree on who should be in charge of customer experience.

It’s the CMO. 59% of sales and marketing say the CMO should be the CX strategy leader.

Even though CX is not generally owned by one department (as it should be a company-wide concept)...

...THERE SHOULD BE A CENTRAL POINT OF CX LEADERSHIP WITH AN OVERSIGHT OF THE STRATEGY

THE GOOD NEWS

IS, WHEN IT COMES TO IMPROVING HOW CX IS DELIVERED, BOTH SALES AND MARKETING AGREE MORE THAN THEY DISAGREE AND THEY WANT THE SAME THINGS

They need better access to information, and more of it. Access to a comprehensive view of customers and data from across the organization, including second- and third-party data, is limited to 23% of sales and marketing.

Access to data for the remaining 77% is limited in some way.

‘The reality is, very few marketing and sales executives felt that they had excellent access to data from across the company.

Liz Miller, VP, CMO Council

IT’S GETTING BETTER

– more people in this survey than all previous ones say they do have real-time access to a comprehensive customer view, and that it’s created from data collected from across the whole organization. This is good. But if you’re not one of them, you have a challenge. You need to catch up.

23% have total access to a comprehensive view of the customer and data from the organization, including second- and third-party data.

77% access to data is limited in some way.

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I’ve seen the perfect sales and marketing relationship. It was between the VP of sales and the VP of marketing at SAP Ariba. They discussed everything. Because of the conversations and the mutual learning they probably had the most ideal alignment I’ve ever seen.

Talking and learning is important. But it’s also important to get marketing invested in the success of sales. If you have a sales meeting, invite marketing. Get people together to talk. It sounds simple but so many organizations don’t do it. At a conference we ran, I was asked about aligning sales and marketing by sales and marketing people from one company. I took them to lunch, and asked them what their definition of marketing was. The marketers said brand building, PR and social. The sales people got frustrated because they wanted marketing to generate leads. And then they confessed that this was the first time they’d sat down at a table together.

**WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT IT?**

**1. DEFINE A STRUCTURE FOR YOUR CX OPERATIONS, AND MAKE IT COMPANY WIDE**

Someone needs to be in charge. Perhaps that’s you... And everyone has something to contribute

Use this opportunity to bring people together

**2. GIVE PEOPLE ACCESS TO THE DATA THEY NEED**

Don’t let different departments hide it away

Let everyone see everything

Make it easy for them to get to it, without the need to call IT

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**IMPROVING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SALES AND MARKETING**

Gerhard Gschwandtner, CEO, Selling Power

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‘It’s also important to get marketing invested in the success of sales’

Gerhard Gschwandtner, CEO, Selling Power
Robots. AI. Machine learning. Right now, there’s a lot going on in the world of customer experience. It is fast evolving, so fast that sometimes it’s easy to be distracted from building the foundations of great customer experience. And as SAP Hybris CEO Alex Atzberger says in his welcome at the start of this magazine, trust is the bedrock of those foundations.

Trust matters now more than ever. With so many brands competing for the customer’s attention (and cash), and so many new technologies promising to make every experience better than ever before, chances are your customers will make decisions about purchasing and handing over data based on whether or not they trust you. Or your competitors.

The tech, the ideas and the creativity you’ve just been reading about do many different things, but they all have one goal in common. To give customers the kind of experiences that build their trust with brands and businesses. Take registration, signing up and data collection, an everyday process that millions of people take part in and one that has become hugely complex, partly due to legislation such as GDPR but also because parting with personal data requires a bond of trust.

Creating the systems that underpin the process requires customer identity experts like Gigya to make sure that the delicacy of the moment isn’t damaged by asking for a phone number at the first registration. It’s like a first date – you don’t get to go round for dinner before you’ve been out for coffee.

This matters to us at SAP Hybris. In fact, it matters so much that Gigya is now part of the SAP Hybris family, which means our solutions now have the ability to identify and engage customers in the slowly-does-it-manner that’s crucial to building trust. The result is that you and your customers form a relationship that’s based on transparency and control because you’ve given them a great experience. And in turn that helps you create even better experiences for them, because they trust you to look after their data. Building these symbiotic relationships is a more natural, human way of getting to know your customers.

This is what we do at SAP Hybris. Ostensibly, we make software but what we really do is help brands create trust through great customer experiences, and create great customer experiences based on trust. With or without the help of robots.

To find out more about what we do at SAP Hybris and details of our industry-leading solutions, visit hybris.com