

Measuring customer experience? This is now possible thanks to Big Data



Customer experience is at the heart of marketing strategies to increase the average shopping basket, improve customer relations, and build loyalty... But how can a concept that largely relates to emotion actually be measured? How can we quantify what is essentially qualitative?

Digital technology, which is transforming behaviour, offers marketing and business managers new tools. Among them is Big Data, capable of structuring and analysing enormous quantities of scattered and diverse information. It may prove to be THE way to measure, for the first time, customer experience.

Customer experience is defined as "the sum of impressions and emotions that provokes in the customer the one-off and cumulative effects of his or her interactions with the brand, its products and its services". Customer experience has already been the focus of considerable work and numerous innovations, applications, technologies or experiments.

A point that continued to trouble Marketing Executives up until now was how can this customer experience be measured? It is now possible thanks to big data.

It is clear to see: the digital revolution is dramatically changing

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the behaviour of consumers and the resources available to professionals.

Mobility enables information to be accessed without geographical constraints playing a part anymore.

Social networks enable opinions to be expressed and shared. Interconnected smart objects track and facilitate use; collaborative platforms are multiplying and offer services that influence behaviour...The customer has gradually seized power, without always being aware of this, and in this way, has become more demanding: the customer now has an entirely new status of adviser, influencer, tester, and even journalist...

Customer experience and the relationship between the user and the company, count increasingly more in the act of buying. In order to stand out, offer a more personalised service, inspire, surprise and delight customers... it is necessary to add emotional content,

to continue the customer experience beyond what is offered, and particularly to show humanity by listening and being more understanding... this appears to be very different to the digital revolution!

In fact, digital technology is providing marketing and business managers with new tools.

Among them, Big Data, capable of structuring and analysing enormous quantities of scattered and diverse information, can improve customer experience. Above all, Big Data may prove to be THE way to measure customer experience and therefore to work to improve it. The difficulty lies in "quantifying the emotion". To a certain extent, Big Data facilitates this as it is omnipresent in the changes described. There is one objective in mind: to immediately propose relevant offers and services using the right channels by taking into account peer and social preferences.

Big Data at the heart of customer experience

Big Data is a set of solutions enabling the processing of a vast volume of structured or unstructured data, originating from a variety of systems such as computers, smartphones or various communicating objects, and produced in any geographical area of the world.

For example: thanks to Big Data, it is possible to dynamically adapt the content of a website or its referencing, according to the analysis of user behaviour by adjusting the display (dynamic advertising), real-time segmentation, and targeted recommendation of appropriate products and services.

The first measurements on the ground

Practically speaking, it is not quite so easy. It is necessary to be able to manage and exploit enormous volumes of data of all types, synthesize it, break down silos, cross-reference with external data, boost weak signals, process flows in real-time...

Besides improving customer experience (almost three-quarters of consumers claim to be ready to

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repeat the shopping experience if it is simple and "easy"), how can it be measured to make it even more efficient?

We are beginning to see answers, like scoring tools which measure the performance of services according to the effort required by the customer. Measuring their journey is multi-faceted: cognitive, emotional, temporal. Big Data can optimise this score by favouring test and learn.

As for emotion, there are increasingly more innovations to measure it: a leading producer has announced a smartphone capable of detecting the user's mood; the German system, SHORE, categorises emotions by comparing facial expressions, etc.

Another e-commerce giant has launched a delivery service to the boot of their customers' car when the car is equipped with a remote opening system ! And better still, by organising deliveries even before orders have been validated, with predictive algorithms!

For its part, Sopra Steria is working on innovations in connection with its' Digilab, to integrate the emotional aspect into restoring on-line reputation and in the analysis of interactions with a customer.

Beware though; the apparent simplicity of the new forms of interaction offered to customers masks the cultural, technological and organisational divides for companies.

Typical example: payments where, in order to make monetary transactions secure, it is necessary to re-examine the authentication processes. In this way, when the customer makes a payment via a

mobile application, the security protocol will send him or her a single-use dynamic code by text or e-mail. In the case of a security problem, all of these contacts arrive at the same terminal. By using new processes such as biometrics, banks are transforming the sphere of trust for customer experience.

It is clear that the number of interactions between a company and its customer is literally exploding. To successfully measure customer experience, tomorrow's digital marketing challenge will consist of establishing and exploiting the link between standard off-line customer understanding and the digital ecosystem.

Author

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He has solid experience in transformation programmes focusing of B2B and B2C customer experience on such areas as:

- customer capital, i.e. gathering and leveraging information on customers;
- marketing intelligence, with new products and services, Web 2.0 campaign management, and social CRM;
- sales performance, enhanced through Web 2.0 agencies and stores, effective customer service representative attitudes, and remote tools;
- relationship excellence, achieved by digitization of customer relations.



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Along with our 1 500 consultants, including 800 in France, our aim is to speed up the development and competitiveness of leading European private and public organisations by supporting them through their digital transformation.

