CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE
INNOVATION & TECH FEST

COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT 2017

the eventful group

The Eventful Group recently conducted a series of round table discussion groups between Johannesburg and Cape Town which welcomed over 50 professionals driving customer experience programs within their organisations. The 47 organisations who attended were from a diverse group of industry sectors across South Africa.

The attendees had the following titles:

- GM/ Director/Head of Customer Experience
- Chief Customer Experience Officer
- Head Customer Engagement
- Director Customer Transformation & Innovation
- Customer Experience Manager
- CRM & eCommerce Manager
- Senior Customer Journey Manager
- Consumer Business Insights Consultant
- Director of Marketing: Direct Delivery
- Business Partner: Information Systems
- Digital Strategist
- Operations Director

Discussions focused on the technology, people and processes that are transforming the way businesses make and keep customers.

2017 Themes

The following themes emerged from our round table discussions as being most important to the customer experience community:

1. Creating a True Customer Centric Culture
2. Leveraging Data for Business Value
3. A 360° View of the Customer
4. Making Customer Experience Strategy Come Alive
5. The Future of Customer Experience
6. Technology Solutions & Service Providers – From Selection to Implementation
7. User Experience – Your Potent Differentiator

What Do We Do with These Insights?

This unique research process ensures pure and accurate information is generated through debate and discussion among the community. Themes that emerge from the research groups are used to build the agenda for Customer Experience Innovation & Tech Fest 2017.

Customer Experience Innovation & Tech Fest will demonstrate how customer experience innovation and process improvement is being enabled by technology through a combination of case studies, thought-leader presentations, discussion groups, product demos and panels. All based around the key topics in this report.

1. Creating a True Customer Centric Culture

Consistently driving excellent customer experience means changing the way your team operates. Changing your culture is often one of the greatest barriers to this imperative. Hindrances to this transformation include ingrained behaviours, paying lip-service, and neglect to take ownership from the backend to the frontline as brand ambassadors of the business. Success is about making every communication, conversation and interaction meaningful. So has your organisation bought into your vision of the value of "one customer" and its overall benefit to the business? Has Customer Centricism permeated into your organisation's DNA?

- Developing a clear, defined and effective culture change strategy in order to deliver a change transformation project
- The importance of a well thought out vision/mission statement and delivering on it
- Aligning the values of the organisation to ensure customer experience is driven for long-term viability
- Aligning the customer value proposition throughout the organisation
- Making consistent, incremental and sustainable cultural changes for mutual significant impact – what really works and how is the new culture maintained?
- Becoming more customer experience end-to-end focused, making sure you're collaborating across all functions – everyone is on board and not simply paying lip service to the idea
- Strategies to remove existing silos and foster inter-team collaboration
- The nature and impact of centralized versus decentralized decision making within the organisation
- Finding and engaging the WHY across business functions – ensuring a culture of inclusivity and continual improvement by advocating clear up-stream and down-stream communication
- IT Change Management versus Business Change Management
- What role does employee engagement play in the improvement process and the acceptance of change, especially since they are the ones who are closest to the customer?
- Prioritising cultural fit as a precursor to customer centricism buy-in, translating into exceptional customer experience
- Aligning recruitment and compensation to drive customer experience
- Prioritising continual evolution and improvement through sustainable and continuous learning and training techniques
- Defining the methods to change the ingrained behaviours and habits of staff with years of experience who are "set in their ways" or who've said "we've tried that before and it didn't work"?
- Guaranteeing customer centricity is being driven from the CEO down and monitoring that your C-suite is living by their words when saying the right things
- Strategies to ensure bottom-up ongoing innovation is adopted and leveraged for continuous improvement
- Determining which rituals to install to ensure consistent behaviours, and what policies need shifting or changing to overcome key obstacles hindering permeation
- How to translate jargon into meaning for your customers?

- Articulating the investment value while producing "quick wins" to illustrate the potential – keeping up the impetus through an "Agility meets Simplicity" approach, reflected in moments of truth
- Continual assessing of the customer's lifecycle value, and levers along the way
- What metrics can be used to measure effectiveness, a customer centric culture, as well as change management, and are these metrics being adhered to in their truest sense?
- Understanding how bringing VOC to the forefront highlights the ROI on innovation and change

2. Leveraging Data for Business Value

The amount of data organisations have access to today is gargantuan. According to research, in 2016 we were creating more data every two days than all of the data that ever existed from the beginning of time to 2003. Every single micro action experienced by a customer can be tracked by today's advanced databases. Data is becoming the key enabler behind most touchpoints including speech analytics, proactive care, automatic call routing and personalised digital experiences. The pivotal question arises of how to harness and mobilise the vast amount of data generated from data warehouses, call centres, websites and social media, and turn it into valuable business outcomes for all key stakeholders.

- Understanding how to implement an effective analytics strategy as crucial to customer experience success
- How is your organisation aggregating, analysing, mobilising, and leveraging data in a relevant, effective and iterative way according to a clear data strategy? Does your organisation recognise that this operates as a built in key enabler to an experience strategy that delivers on customers' needs?
- Strategies to harness the predictive power of data as an invaluable asset through proactive engagement. How is your organisation sharing and mining data to predict customer needs, behaviours and journeys?
- Ensuring appropriate, contextualised and relevant value when pulling and mobilising data, and how to successfully measure this value
- Prioritising analytics growing in complexity as segmentation is being replaced by highly personalised products and service offerings
- Clearly defining the business problem before charging head first into advanced and expensive analytics endeavours
- Ensuring that data capabilities are fit to solve real business problems from the outset, built around key customer needs (i.e. choose, buy, get help, pay, recommit, leave) – avoiding analysts and data scientists merely "pulling numbers"
- Clarifying voice of the client versus voice of the intermediary
- Understanding how to turn data into information, and information into insights – best practices to consolidate and integrate data across multiple channels to form a holistic and integrated viewpoint that yields powerful insights
- Advocating for leveraging analysis or the ability to produce insights at a customer level
- Understanding where the process is failing in continuous service improvement based on data
- How to break down data silos - Is POPI a hindrance to this due to different legal compliances?
- Leveraging relevant data to be lucrative – how are you monetising data?
- Monitoring that data value is being leveraged at the right time for the right reasons and outcomes
- Realising ROI on big data investments
- Clarifying who owns the data in data management strategies, and how one gets to good data to start the journey
- How to mobilise cross functional teams to mine and make sense of big data, and keep up with trends?
- Bridging the gap between customer experience teams and BI teams

- Making presentation of business information easier and more useful to ensure consumption of business insights throughout the organisation – what are the preferred dashboarding and visualisation tools?
- Maintaining data cleanliness and integrity as success rests on ensuring consistent accuracy and ensuring staff understand what will be done with it
- Organisations in the African context have concerns and considerations regarding security, accessibility, and POPI – how to maneuver through cloud-based data?
- Within the context of POPI, clarifying who has access to the data and why, and what interactions are being affected
- Clarifying what constitutes authentication under POPI, and what the responsibility of the business is to authenticate?

3. A 360⁰ View of the Customer

Customers are communicating and engaging through multiple points of entry with your business, and expect a seamless ability to traverse this multitude of channels that makes up their experience of your brand. Attaining a 360⁰ view of the customer is increasingly more challenging with this expansive array of devices and methods of communication. Especially since customers will choose the channels they prefer to communicate through. Pivotal to this is ensuring that the communications from one channel are accurately captured so that the conversation is maintained and consistent when a customer chooses a different channel to communicate with your business. A strong data capability is vital to bring this 360⁰ view to light, and ensure it is deeply embedded with consistent messaging and channels that speak to each other.

- Strategies to ensure consistent and integrated data across every touchpoint
- Understanding how to overcome data silos which creates a challenge in omni-channel
- Streamlining the creation and maintenance of a contextually relevant dialogue with customers across all channels, while anticipating their needs before they know they have them
- Understanding how to steer customers into the channel that will give the best experience – understanding the channel objective and lifecycle which best speaks to the customer journey lifecycle
- How to move from multi-channel to omni-channel – what strategies are in place to ensure omni-channel is the baseline and not merely Customer Experience Utopia?
- Weighing up of the gimmick versus "fit for purpose" aspect – channels that are worth the investment
- Investment and implementation tips and tricks to support the interoperability of platforms to avoid managing a multitude of systems which don't talk to each other - how many single sources of the truth can you have
- Which channels need to be revised, at a customer level as opposed to a transactional level, and how to measure this effort across platforms?
- How can you deal with the complexities of using multiple internal technologies across departments?
- Recognising the value of the next wave of voice
- Increasingly mainstreaming the enabling of better service and improved propensity modelling through highlighting potentially negative mentions

Once successful customer experience has been bought into as a powerful differentiator, where is the anticipated profitability and growth truly witnessed? For numerous organisations, synchronising all decisions, investments, processes and transformational alignments with the customer at its centre is a utopic notion. In implementing a successful program that your entire business can embrace, how do you overcome the internal and external challenges that obstruct implementation? What does embracing agility within your processes look like, especially in businesses that are more freight ship than speed boat?

- Understanding where building a customer experience strategy begins, and how to test this strategy
- Guaranteeing the necessary executive buy-in to ensure long-term support of and investment in your customer experience strategy and initiatives
- Articulating a compelling business case for change that embeds and aligns customer experience as a central principle
- Best practices to operationalise your business strategy (VOP) to contextualise and embed all considerations in a multi-stakeholder environment
- How to get customer experience a seat at the boardroom table?
- Clarifying how to form a customer analytics strategy with the right mix of measurement, process improvement and product innovation – ensuring data becomes decision making
- Making a clear vision synchronise with your strategy and roadmap, and ensuring permeation through aligning your processes to your vision and strategy
- Engaging journey mapping to determine long term goals and quick fixes
- Realising customer experience ROI and ensuring that customer experience investments are measurable
- Since customer experience is only as good as your people and their culture, how are you tapping into their WHY and ensuring all employees are customer heroes?
- Understanding how to derive benefit from your technology investments through effective management techniques that help overcome internal resistance to change
- Who should own customer experience?
- Engaging proactivity versus reactivity
- Understanding how to navigate business as usual while also prioritising strategic innovation
- Strategies to bridge the gap between customer experience business teams and IT to achieve customer satisfaction through integrative innovation
- How to integrate VOC, VOI and VOE in your customer experience strategy
- Getting the entire organisation to buy into technology as an enabler of sales targets, engagement and business objectives, which is able to deliver on promises delivered by the executive mandate
- How do businesses mobilise design thinking across functions through an agile approach and strategy where "Agility meets Simplicity" and "Utility meets Emotion"?

The Next Generation of Customer Experience is hot on everyone's lips, and the momentum of mass innovation and disruption in this space is palpable. As "next-generation" solutions such as the Internet of Things (IoT), Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning and Virtual Reality (VR) permeate into the everyday reality of businesses, this momentum is rallying some serious speed and igniting a radically alternate web of interactions between businesses and their customers.

- What are the implications of IoT for customer experience in terms of driving value, managing data, and navigating security and ethical issues, inter alia?
- Is IoT a symptom of convenience or innovation – is there a point where convenience becomes ridiculous and IoT extends into smart cities and a new vision of humanity?
- Engaging machine learning and AI to provide personalised experiences and communications based on instant insights and predictive analytics – and how can you provide immediate value in your business through this?
- Understanding the implications of replacing human-to-human connection with technology
- Headlining the debate between High Tech versus High Touch
- Understanding where bots and automation may work better in resolving a certain complexity of query
- Making contextual assistance drive the business aspect – can businesses enable deeper investment in more complex customer engagements if the accuracy, responsiveness and consistency of bots can feed the utility aspect of customer experience?
- Should bot engagement be transparent to manage customers' expectations?
- Understanding whether human and bot engagement is able to run parallel
- Understanding whether tech is being used to enhance the human interaction
- What role will humans play in next-generation customer experience, and how to maintain the human/personal touch?
- Strategies to reorganise the organisation as automation filters through
- What does this trend of technology replacing humans mean for your employees?
- The customer experience workforce of the future and the impact of the digital revolution – out with some "outdated" jobs, but in with some new roles? And who owns this new future?
- Engaging ethical considerations especially in the SA context of bots replacing people's jobs, where no one can predict the scale of tech - how to upskill and relocate people, as well as expand product offering and service for continuous development and improvement?
- Engaging the Next Generation with long-term vision and encouraging entrepreneurship in SA - Coders as the New Collar Workers
- Seeing the bigger picture in transitioning your organisation's entire ecosystem effectively, and how to create shared ecosystems
- Concerns about AI and bot security and how to safeguard against hacking
- Ensuring customer centricity is tailored for all current and future generations
- Has your organisation bought into how customers co-create your brand with you, and that their interactive experience will ultimately become the product?
- Curiosity about trends that follow obsolescence and then retrieval
- Understanding how "voice" as the next wave will impact on us and our privacy, and how to embrace a whole new world of measurement aligned with this

- What are the implications of "voice" in an SA context of diverse accents, dialects and languages
- Understanding how to best prepare for a tech convergence, where super-personalisation, AI data mining, and energy and decision management intersect
- Is your business prepared to be part of shared experience economies?

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6. Technology Solutions & Service Providers – From Selection to Implementation

Technology is but one enabler of customer experience success. Where cloud-based, agile, and test and learn approaches are becoming the norm, relevancy to the customer and the value the technology solution will deliver to the business must be maintained as a crucial imperative. How do you orchestrate all the systems, processes and teams necessary to ensure ROI on a technology solution, even if this is not immediately visible?

- In the context of rapid technological evolution, strategies regarding evaluating the options, assessing the vendors and implementation partners, and talking to other users to get the best solution for your needs
- Ensuring Business is taking as much responsibility as IT for business decisions when looking to invest in the most fitting solutions - Multi-stakeholder ownership is shared across Marketing, Customer Experience, Sales and Service as much as IT
- Strategies to hold true to business requirements through the power of consolidated multi-functional teams
- Should your technology selection dictate and drive your customer experience strategy or vice versa?
- Knowing whether single platform technology is truly feasible, and if so, what this would look like
- How do you implement agile methodologies to embed a rapid prototype, fail fast, solve quickly approach in an "experiment culture" – "perfect is the enemy of done"
- Strategies to maximize investment through quickly ascertaining whether you're getting it right or wrong
- Incorporating and mobilising effective project management methodologies
- Assessing available options and determining right fit for your business goals and requirements
- What are the questions to be faced when focusing on customer versus consumer solutions?
- Strategies to overcome budget concerns
- Understanding the benefits of buying open source and bespoke tech, and whether this moves away from omni-channel because of so many integrated functions
- Engaging customisation versus standardised tech
- Change management strategies to ensure in-house adoption
- Who are the third party vendors, can we trust them, and can they scale to enterprise?
- Strategies to engage questions around a local data centre, POPI sovereignty and integration
- What is being done regarding customising versus upgrading for cloud services?
- How to quantify the value of customer experience and how it affects the bottom line, and whether being able to better measure this would speed up implementation?

How do you design an experience which is easy, intuitive and invisible, while integrating with all pertinent communications? What are the trends that organisations are using to design and personalise the customer and user experience? Has your organisation bought into this being a potent and key differentiator? Not only does this ensure the longevity of your product or service, it is also the lifeblood of long-term and future relationships with your customers. Attracting and retaining customers is not the only spinoff of successfully satisfying customer experience. User uptake, loyalty to the brand, and increased revenue are bound to follow suit as well.

- Strategies to look across the complete user journey, from the initial interactions through to building easy to access communities of interest
- How to get a community on board which translates as building brand empathy which in turn strengthens loyalty through works of value and empowerment
- Knowing how to bring the opinions of customers and customer testing into the design process, enabling businesses to receive instant feedback and also enabling highly personalised customer and user experience design
- Conducting and synchronising VOC, VOE, and VOI
- How is your business endeavouring to get to know your customer, what they are looking for and how they want to communicate with you?
- Making UX-centricism a priority, with simple, open sourced and mobile friendly solutions headlining
- Determining which functionality you want customers to use, and whether you'll adopt a one size fits all process or design specific journeys for your customer
- With reference to the SA context of access, knowing how to integrate the landscape of mobility and enhanced digital experience particularly in lower LSMs
- Understanding how effective the experiences designed really are, and whether monitoring trend analysis is the most accurate way to deduce which communications have been most effective
- Since it is impossible to cater to everyone's needs, knowing to identify the customers you want to retain, who are more productive and sustainably profitable to your business
- Understanding how to simplify business processes, and eliminate transactional processes significantly using automation techniques
- Knowing the practical benefits being driven from chatbots
- Understanding what the rewards are for those who develop successful products and user experiences using Virtual Reality