WHAT IT TAKES TO LEAD CX TRANSFORMATION

A NEW MINDSET AND A NEW WAY OF OPERATING

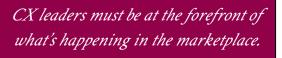*Authored by Ed Murphy; published June 15, 2023*

Leading a customer-experience (CX) transformation requires a new mindset and a new way of operating. As a CX leader, you face the challenge of driving change across every function in the organization. You also have an opportunity to impact meaningful change as a thought leader who intersects with all the different functions within the business from the beginning to the end of experience management.

CX transformation requires more than comprehensive road maps and the implementation of business-as-usual programs to execute the needed change. CX has evolved into more innovation and change management because the marketplace has demanded it. The COVID-19 global pandemic not only changed consumer behavior and expectations but also pushed the accelerator for organizations to implement plans slated to happen years down the line.

With change occurring at an unprecedented pace, CX leaders must excel at organizational navigation, change resilience, and leadership.

Adopt a mindset of continuous learning

It's well known that the most effective leaders are the most insatiable learners. CX leaders must stay in-tune with how consumers are changing and understand the impact on all areas of the business to be able to translate experience management into functional areas of the organization. To do this, CX leaders need to adopt a continuous learning mindset and the ability to adapt and speak the customer's language across all stages of the customer journey.

> *CX leaders must be at the forefront of what's happening in the marketplace.*

A continuous learning mindset supports the day-to-day work and collaboration required to advance CX transformation. The breadth and depth of knowledge also allows CX leaders and their teams to serve as thought leaders because they engage and collaborate across all functions in the organization.

Speak to the value CX delivers

Democratizing CX — making CX accessible to every function in the organization — requires education and a cultural shift in how the company operates as an organizational team. It is about helping cross-functional stakeholders understand their role in CX and the value customer experience improvement delivers in whatever part of that customer lifecycle they have a role in or impact. CX leaders that speak to the value CX brings to the organization have more success influencing change across the organization.

Lead with those things that demonstrate value.

As the CX leader, you must demonstrate how the work required for CX transformation improves all stakeholder outcomes. In practice, this means connecting outcomes, such as an improved NPS, with what that improvement means for the business. It's about communicating the value of what CX has given back to the organization, whether it's retention, increased loyalty, or customer lifetime value.

Build relationships within the organization

CX leaders are well-versed in the science and complexity behind experience management. The most successful leaders also understand CX transformation must be built on relationships within the organization. Relationships with leaders across the organization's functions, from the C-suite down, are strengthened when you lead with outcomes and communicate the value of CX — what's in it for them.

As a CX leader you are blueprinting company-wide transformation.

CX leaders recruiting talent for their leadership team should look for those with the strongest relationships and who navigate the organization the best. CX expertise is not necessarily a requirement for your team of change agents — those skills and practices can be learned. Your team's ability to build relationships and communicate the value of CX is what will drive CX transformation success.

Prioritize diversity for forward thinking

Historically CX teams had a high concentration of traditional marketing or research practitioners and backgrounds. As CX evolved, team members with operations, digital, and design backgrounds were sought after and recruited. Today, CX teams must include talent across the spectrum - everything from data scientists to pure researchers, classic marketers, communications people, and change management experts. Successful CX leaders understand the more diversity you have, the more impactful the CX team will be.

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The advantages of diversity expand well beyond the CX team and lead to greater creativity and innovation across the organization. CX is not a siloed function; it is an organizational team role where every leader influences how the organization meets and exceeds customer expectations. CX leaders who embrace a mindset of continuous learning, lead the value CX delivers, build relationships, and prioritize diversity are the best positioned for success in leading CX transformations.

Democratize CX

A CX team plays two critical roles - democratizing CX and experience management. As the experience management organization, the goal is to democratize CX because you are the team that architects it. To be successful every function has a part in it, and everyone has a role to play.

> *Democratizing CX is partly educational, partly cultural, and partially operational.*

Foster cross-departmental collaboration and ensure people understand their role. Be inclusive from the start, so that they can impact change in whatever part of the customer lifecycle they have a role in.

In summary

The nature of CX is continuous change; you and your team are the change agents for CX transformation. As change agents you must:

- Foster strong relationships across the organization.
- Lead conversations with outcomes to show them what's in it for them and the organization.
- Be very thoughtful about change management.

Customer experience excellence requires a commitment to culture change. Here at ImprintCX, we understand the keys to successful CX programs and can support you along the way. Let's get started.

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Co-founder and President of Imprint CX, a modern marketing and customer experience services company. Ed has achieved a very successful career by building relationships and providing innovative solutions to meet clients' needs. With over thirty years as a global researcher, management consultant, and business leader, Ed brings his experience, expertise, and passion to every consulting assignment. To learn more about ImprintCX contact Ed at Ed@imprintcx.com.

IMPRINT CX

ImprintCX is a modern marketing and customer experience services company that seamlessly combines insights, consulting, and activation into one integrated offering. The company is powered by sophisticated analytics, deep human understanding, and design thinking to help organizations develop and deploy retention and lifetime value strategies for their high impact customers. Collectively, the ImprintCX team has developed and lead hundreds of customer experience transformations for Fortune 500 companies such as Mercedes Benz, Honeywell, Pizza Hut and Walmart.com.