Adobe Experience Cloud

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Engaging Fans & Guests In the Moment: Do Your Customer Journeys Deliver?

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Not so long ago, a live event was all about the tangible here and now. Not so true any longer. We want the concert glow to last forever, supported by merchandise, fan clubs, and playlists. We want food and souvenirs without waiting in lines or missing a minute of the game. We want to walk in the door and straight to our table, drinks arriving at the same moment.

As marketers, how do we get out in front of these burgeoning expectations? How do we create these products? How do we enable journeys that next year's fans and guests will love?

A Look at How Technology is Already Impacting Live Customer Interactions

We're seeing technology penetrate experiences all around us in our daily lives that makes us wonder "why didn't someone think of this sooner?" Seeing a personalized menu board at the drive through; a restaurant that knows when to have food ready for you; ordering food on your app at a sporting event or concert so you don't have to wait in line.

Technology has made great strides in recent years, and it might be time to run and catch up with it. Here's how some of the leaders are using technology and customer-focused design to improve their customer journeys.

Cruising Today: On-Board and In-App

"Experience is everything in our business," says the eCommerce and Digital Director at a cruise line. "We don't sell physical products or services; we sell memories. That fantastic customer experience should extend to researching and booking a cruise."

A new WeChat program lets guests book and pay for a cruise itinerary, and share it with their network. Once onboard, they can browse and book specialty restaurants, spa, duty-free shopping and other services.

By following customer behaviors throughout the booking funnel, teams can narrow down what types of campaigns or content encourage consumers to eventually book a cruise. "We're no longer guessing what customers want," says the director. "We can listen directly to customers and use their preferences to drive experiences on websites."

We're seeing examples of this already emerging today.

Tourism Today: Tailored Engagement

For example, one tourism company partners with government organizations, regional tourism groups and businesses to promote events and develop tourism in the region. The organization's marketing efforts focus on connecting travelers with exciting experiences.

Campaign automation selects and sends content that most interests customers. All information about the guest, including email responses, searches, and content being consumed, feed segment decisions. Look-alike models help find the right segments for people, even on their first visit.

Theme Parks Today: A Concierge in Your Pocket

Every minute guests spend studying maps and waiting in line drains joy from their day. Decades of innovation at one theme park have led to apps and wearables that ensure more fun, less fuss.

Guests avoid waits by joining a virtual queue, which notifies them when their queue is forming and gives best-path directions from their current location in the park to the attraction. No need to wait for lunch, either: plan your lunch ahead of time and order it on the app, pick it up the moment it's ready.

Using the app, guests can plan the optimal visit to experience all their desired adventures. This itinerary is updated continually based on the guest's location and current wait times. Photos from those adventures are automatically available in the app, and any photos and merchandise purchased can be automatically delivered to the guest's hotel room.

Where Are Journeys Going?

These are just some innovative things happening today. Imagine what else you might be able to as technology continues to penetrate physical experiences all around us. Live events will no longer have customers, they will have members who engage ahead of the event and stay engaged long after the event. What do fans and guests hope for from their in-person experiences? Here are some ideas of where journeys could go in the near future:

Customer Journey: Sporting Events and Concerts

Major League Baseball is partnering with Adobe to forever change the way fans like me experience the game. Today my team could make it to the World Series, and I'll be there. I check on parking, and the app asks me who I think should fill in for the injured center fielder. That makes me feel like I'm practically on the team. I signal my choice and head to the stadium. I check the app to find out where some friends are sitting, and it signals me that this is a good time to order food delivered to my seat for the 4th inning. My center field choice is on the field, making an unbelievable catch in the 9th: we have won the division title! Here is an exclusive offer for members at the game right now: an autographed game ball. Gotta have it! At home, I'm on the app sharing highlights with my network and get an invitation for a Q&A with the batting coach: count me in!

Customer Journey: Restaurants

As I am about to leave a great concert, my favorite chain texts me that there's a restaurant on my way home, and that their new chicken sandwich will be ready when I get there. All I have to do is tap and then drive, using the directions provided. Wow.

The drive-thru line stretches around the store, no surprise. Sighing, I put the car in park and grab my phone to kill some time. A text tells me I'm in the wrong line! All I have to do is pull up to the pick-up window! Payment is already handled by my phone.

Customer Journey: Travel and Hotels

I just booked my flights, and my phone lights up with a reservation for my perfect room at my preferred hotel chain. I accept with one keystroke, relieved of yet another travel research chore. I head straight to my room, happy to avoid the scrutiny of a busy lobby full of strangers. The room TV is offering a spa appointment, and 15 minutes later I'm soothing my travel-cramped back with a massage. As I'm getting dressed, a dinner suggestion and reservation appear, highlighting the vegetarian fare I always choose on travel days.

I accept the app's dinner suggestion and walk straight to my table as my first course arrives. Lingering alone at a table always feels awkward to me, and I'm thankful that ordering and paying are done via the app. The invite for a special cognac (how did they know?) showing an image of the bar right now is appealing, and I swipe right to accept. All receipts flow into my expense report.

How Can We Adapt to Deliver the Journeys Customers Want?

Marketing Innovation and Evolution Already in Process

Adobe surveyed marketing professionals and leaders across industries to learn how marketers are adapting to be able to deliver the ideal customer journeys and found profound change already underway. One hospitality company described their efforts to evolve the customer journey like this: "Our ideal customer journey is to feel the unique warmth of our hospitality experience. It must be painless and streamlined. This industry is about enjoyment, and we need to have the easiest process for that to happen."

To make the customer journey more painless and streamlined, organizations aren't just adding new technology, they're adapting their structure and skillsets as well. Here are some things they are doing to adapt:

1. Investing in unifying customer profiles with real-time data and insights

In order for marketers to provide seamless, personalized customer journeys they must first seek to know customers as individuals, so they can then engage customers in their timeframe. A unified profile is the foundation that makes building the ideal journey possible. It's not enough to account for interests or preferences, the profile must fuse data from all possible sources, including mobile app, transactions, and responses to marketing campaigns. On top of that, it must actively listen for any behavioral data in real time, so the journey can always stay contextually relevant for the individual.

> "We are actively working on improving the Digital Guest Experience and use of segmentation to build smarter marketing that's more relevant to the guest."
>
> **VP of IT**
> at Restaurant Franchise

> "Some companies are changing those roles making them much more data driven so they can create new cross channel strategies. But most companies don't know how important it is to get a 360 experience in the marketing department."
>
> **Digital Marketing Manager**
> at South American Retailer

In addition to investing in the right technology, companies are investing in organizational shifts to make this possible.

2. Evolving their marketing organizations & eliminating technology silos

Our survey found that legacy marketing technology and the siloes that have sprung up around them over the years are one of the biggest roadblocks to providing a seamless customer journey. In a related manner, organizational siloes also prevent customer journeys from being as smooth as possible. A customer-focused organizational design makes it possible to keep content, messages, and offers consistent and contextually relevant throughout the journey.

> "The direction is toward omnichannel cohesion, so the org shifts together based on unified data. From an execution perspective, I expect marketers will be much more married to the data and leveraging automations to integrate cohesion with other stakeholders' realms."
>
> **Director of Marketing**
> at Global Technology Company

> "We are planning rapid hiring of new roles, especially people cross trained in multiple marketing channels and disciplines."
>
> **Digital Manager**
> at Global Sports Brand

3. Focus on building relationships throughout the customer journey

Another major challenge for marketers is knowing which channel is going to be most effective. Instead, let the customer dictate how, where, and when they engage with your brand. With new tools at marketers' disposal, such as location-aware mobile engagement, the customer carries the key to our relationship in their pocket. Now no matter if we're engaging in person, on a mobile device, or on some other channel, our focus is always on building a relationship with the customer by providing finely-targeted personalized interactions.

> "Our major initiatives are to increase customer acquisition with our app, retain and grow our loyal customer base, and personalize campaigns to enhance the overall customer experience and drive higher return."
>
> **Head of Marketing**
> at Restaurant Brand

> "We are building a martech platform that will enable us to personalize the customer experience across all marketing channels – before, during, and after the stay."
>
> **VP of Property Experience & Marketing Technology**
> at Global Hospitality Company

> "We want to ensure a seamless omnichannel customer experiencing that brings together the best of offline and online and increase opportunities for personalisation/high customisation, both in terms of product and content towards consumers. The goal is to build customer loyalty and repeat purchases in core markets."
>
> **Head of Marketing**
> at British Perfume Brand

Adobe Can Help

Technologies You Need to Make it Happen

Most companies, and very likely yours, haven't brought their customer journeys up to customer expectations. According the report Customer Journey Management: Meet Customers When and Where They Are from Adobe & The Winterberry Group, only 17% of companies describe themselves as "journey-focused". Most marketers are focused on campaigns rather than enabling individual personalized journeys. But marketer beware, 65-70% of Gen X and Millennials will walk away from brands if their experience is not contextually relevant or personalized, according to a study from Econsultancy. Consumers get frustrated when brands do things like send too many emails or push irrelevant products that don't match their interests.

Enter Adobe. With Adobe Journey Optimizer, brands get the data, content, intelligence, and orchestration that makes personalized real-time journeys possible, including:

Real-Time Profile & Insights: Create the foundation for a more complete customer journey with a complete customer view that "listens" for real-time events and customer actions.

Email & Mobile Engagement: Design and deliver personalized messages for email, push, in-app, or SMS messages with a drag-and-drop interface & easy-to-edit templates.

Omnichannel Orchestration: Design and orchestrate real-time journeys for individuals as well as planned campaigns for larger audiences all from a single application.

Personalized Content & Offers – Keep content and offers consistent across the customer lifecycle, regardless of channel, with a centralized location for offers and for marketing assets.

Intelligent Decisioning - Apply intelligence & gain predictive insights throughout the customer journey to automate decisions, optimize the journey, and personalize each customer's next-best offer.

Adobe can help ensure that your shoppers, buyers, or guests have a seamless experience throughout the customer journey, whether it's they're buying online, in person, or anywhere in between.

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