

Redefining our strategies for CX in challenging times



Capita

Compelling CX Insights from today's clients, customers and colleagues

Our thought-provoking think tank on 7 November 2022, **redefining our strategies for CX in challenging Times**, provided compelling insights into how we must adapt our customer experience (CX) strategies as the world challenges us in new ways.

The good times are on hold, now replaced by a less stable and more uncertain outlook. We are all increasingly anxious, vulnerable and worried about our futures, and facing impossible choices.

We all know that CX is a key driver of corporate growth and those who do it well typically outperform the rest. But can businesses be certain that they are adapting their strategies effectively for the challenges of today's world?

Adapting means letting go of past certainties and opening up to new ideas. As organisations, are we really hearing the recent experiences of customers and employees with fresh ears? Can we uncouple our creativity from groupthink in how we respond? Are we over-analysing, rather than just getting on with finding out what still works?

These are the key questions we sought to examine in light of the tough and vulnerable times that we are all currently living through, asking how organisations should be responding – what practical actions they may consider taking that will give the



Moderated by Martin Hill-Wilson, CEO BrainFood Consulting, the discussion was led by an expert panel of speakers and boosted by a combined studio and virtual audience

Speakers



Tom Lytton Dickie
Founder of Meaningful Business



Paul Jackson
Chief Product and
Technology Officer at Level



Dr. Emma Stone
Director of Evidence and Engagement
at Good Things Foundation



Claer Barrett
Consumer Editor at
Financial Times



Charlie Whitworth
CX Design & Delivery Director
at Capita



Alan Linter
Innovation and Data Science
Director at Capita Experience

Through the course of a 90-minute exchange, the following topics were explored:

- How must customer and employee experience management adapt during tough times?
- What are the new 'truths' about customer and colleague needs and expectations?
- What becomes priority?
- What will vulnerability look like over the next six months and what should be our response?
- What does success look like and how are we going to measure it?

Common challenges that everyone is facing



As we move from the pandemic and 2 years of instability into recession and all-time high inflation, increasing numbers of people will face hardship and vulnerability. The way we manage and respond to our customers' needs to be adaptive, relevant but above all empathetic

Different consumer groups are impacted in variety of ways, depending on a wide range of circumstances – and many are being affected financially for the first time ever. We need to treat each group accordingly

Claer Barrett
Consumer Editor at Financial Times

Ongoing uncertainty increases personal stress and anxiety for employees. Motivation and productivity then obviously suffer. Therefore, organisations have a clear reason helping colleagues build and maintain resilience as they face the consequences of tougher times.

Tom Lytton-Dickie
Founder of Meaningful Business

Our people, often vulnerable themselves, are feeling the increasing pressure of reassuring customers with ever more complex needs. We need to keep them supported, resilient and motivated to better serve customer needs

Key to improved CX is understanding customers' needs, responding more accurately to their interactions. This can be achieved by better managing, interpreting and acting upon data driven insight

Unlocking innovation and using data insights will create real value. Give customers wide and real-time access to their data, supported by algorithmic analysis to develop better financial habits.

Paul Jackson
Chief Product and Technology Officer at Level

The brands that survive the ongoing disruption will be those who understand their customers lived experiences and that deliver Empathy through their interactions on both human and digital channels

Alan Linter

Innovation and Data Science Director at Capita Experience

Many customers still struggle with digital confidence, fear and exclusion. We need to ensure that services are accessible to all and that we equip our people with the right skills to ensure digital inclusion

Customer preferences and choice of communications channel is becoming more dynamic in line with their individual circumstances. We need to offer a true omni-channel experience blending human and digital tailored to their specific needs

A significant number of people still don't have the foundation digital skills, devices or affordability needed to access critical services. Developing innovative collaborations will help enable those offline to get online and stay connected

Dr Emma Stone

Director of Evidence and Engagement at Good Things Foundation

In buoyant economic condition the CX priority is still growth which requires continuous investment and experimenting with new offerings and new channels that genuinely serves the increasingly diverse needs of customers and colleagues.

Charlie Whitworth

CX Design & Delivery Director at Capita

To build customer trust and confidence, brands need to demonstrate how they are supporting customers in these challenging times with empathy and authenticity

The single most powerful catalyst for organisations seen as being in tune with people's needs is acting with empathy. This is easily claimed, but much harder to effectively practice.

For instance, it is one thing to view vulnerability as just a set of behaviours that need adding to your segmentation framework. By contrast, immersing yourself in the reality of other people's lived experiences and how it impacts their ability to interact, make decisions and feel supported by you is quite different.

Moving from cognitive to emotive understanding is what's needed to become sensitised to people's needs and what is expected in your response. Therefore, it is worth investing time and energy nurturing a collective, empathetic mindset. This becomes the foundation context for how you adapt your experience management plans to suit tougher times.

What does success look like and how are we going to measure it?



So, what can we do in the short, medium and longer term to help our clients, customers and colleagues in these tough times?

In response to the conversation and observations of the day, Capita Experience has developed a menu of activities to help organisations refocus and revise the assumptions that built previous success.

- While loyalty remains the core ambition for brands, customers are understandably different. Their lifestyles have been disrupted, and many are feeling poorer, less resilient and more anxious. Getting things done during lockdown required new behaviours and digital alternatives took off. Yet the desire to engage with another human being remained constant – a behaviour now being repeated in the cost-of-living crisis.
- Customer service and contact centres in particular face crucial decisions going forward. Although the technology sector has been the most visible so far in terms of budget cuts and headcount reduction, economic slowdown is a more broadly shared pain.
- Many service leadership teams will need to review their operating models in search of more cost-effective ways of delivering customer outcomes. Leveraging the ability of modern technology is going to be critical: done effectively, this enables personalised service at scale within the parameters of what the Financial Service Authority describes as an organisation's duty of care. A standard every organisation should aspire to – regulated or not.
- This is the core competency on which to pass the test of meeting the growing and varied needs of vulnerable customers. In other words, how to acquire the goodwill needed to shore up loyalty during the recession in order to then be able to use it as a springboard for growth once a new economic cycle kicks in.
- And of course, **customer service is all about people**, and frontline teams are finding themselves under greater pressure. From customers with greater expectations for informed, empathetic engagement. From line management, now being instructed to get more performance from less resource. From themselves, looking for the right work/life balance in a workforce that is shrinking, due to long term sickness – a trend the Office of National Statistics reports has increased 43% among 25 to 34-year-olds, who are a traditional recruitment demographic for contact centres.
- Therefore ensuring the **availability and resilience of employees** is a core experience management challenge going forward.

Find out more in our practical plan which offers a set of suggestions that will help strengthen your responsiveness and explore your own readiness and interpretation of tomorrow's priorities.

Practical plans for managing CX and EX in challenging times

[Link to our plan >](#)

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