



The background image shows a hand holding the year '2017' in large, 3D, hand-drawn style numbers. Surrounding the hand and numbers are numerous hand-drawn icons representing various business and technology concepts: a group of people, an '@' symbol, a bar chart, a location pin, a speech bubble, a document with a flowchart, three interlocking gears, a magnifying glass, a musical note, a laptop, a globe, a lightbulb, a cloud with a download arrow, a pie chart with segments labeled A, B, and C, a telephone handset, a large red arrow, a pushpin, and a wrench and hammer. The entire scene is overlaid with a network of white dots and lines, suggesting a digital or data-driven environment.

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE *PREDICTIONS*

BROUGHT TO YOU BY

CXPA

Customer Experience
Professionals Association™



It's going to be an incredible 2017! Our profession has come so far and everyone's sharing, discovering and learning has fueled our success. It provides all of us opportunities to grow both personally and professionally. Entering a new year, we all should look back and celebrate our victories and progress, but also learn from our challenges and what opportunities we have to grow.

Our annual CX Predictions let you hear from our experts and board members as they reflect on 2016 and share their views on the promise of things to come. We know their views will help support you in CX 2017!

Some quick highlights:

What do you believe will become the primary focus of CX in 2017?

- Defining clear strategies and objectives for ourselves and our organizations
- Acknowledging the work it takes for a holistic and transformative process to take place
- Quantify and sharing the successes you've created
- Finding internal champions, but also building a network of CX professional support

How do we define CX within the organization and the amount of change required to succeed?

- The profession is becoming incredibly important, and we need to build impactful capabilities in our brands, particularly with regard to collaboration across the organization
- Link CX strategic imperatives to quantifiable business results

How will a clear definition of CX build your brand and momentum for every person in the organization?

- "Double down" on key functions that impact customer experience in your organization
- Focus on implementing deep organizational change management to gain the advantage our activities can produce
- Design and communicate a CX strategy and tactical plan and engage everyone to show their impact
- Influencing and supporting how important everyone's contribution is to the success of the brand

In summary, closely look at your CX skills to define next steps, develop more focused CX competencies, create a support system for your professional development and success, have a plan/work the plan, create structure to embed organizational understanding and actions into the organization, learn more about what it takes to create authentic transformational change and define (and communicate) the financial benefits of CX!

Have fun reading what our experts have to share. What will you focus on for 2017? What do you want your story to be at the end of this year? Engage with us to help support your progress.

Diane Magers, CEO CXPA





CX EXPERT - SARAH SIMON
VoC Consulting, Confrimit



Sophisticated best practices and leading edge CX innovations inspire us all. But I encourage many CX practitioners to assess their current state and make 2017 the year they get back to basics and address CX essentials.



If you made predictions for 2016, what do you feel has been achieved? Even if you didn't make a prediction for 2016, please still let us know your thoughts.

1. ROI Pressure on CX The pressure on CX practitioners to prove return on investment will remain or increase in 2017. Smart CX practitioners will proactively compile and share their ROI story. **2.** Increase in Unstructured Data Collection Low survey response rates will continue pushing VoC practitioners out of their survey-oriented comfort zones and into the world of non-data survey collection, much of this unstructured.



What do you believe will become the primary focus for CX in 2017?

ROI of CX



What CX challenges - new or old - do you think most organizations will face in 2017?

1. ROI is Critical Practitioners need to put their Voice of Customer to work and show results, or risk seeing their budgets put to work elsewhere. **2.** Broader Multi-Channel Data Collection Adoption Plummeting response rates will push data collection into new territory - out of necessity - making multi-channel data capture a reality. Even for those CX organizations not inclined to want to expand to multi-channel VoC, their hands may be forced in order to be able to continue capturing customer intelligence.



As a discipline, what will be essential for CX in 2017?

BACK TO BASICS Plenty of CX practitioners I encounter are still trying to get the CX essentials right. Exciting CX innovations are neat, but many teams are still trying to get basic CX right. I anticipate 2017 will be a year of regrouping and improving basic CX performance without the bells and whistles.



What one piece of advice do you have for someone who is new to Customer Experience?

Find a mentor and build a strong relationship with that person. All the classes, certifications, webinars, and white papers in the world cannot take the place of an experienced, battle-scarred mentor.



CX EXPERT - IAN GOLDING
CX Consultant



Continuously improving the customer experience is a never ending, infinite exercise. Continuously evolving the customer experience profession and specialism is essential in developing skills and competencies. 2017 is another step on the journey to becoming and being sustainably customer centric.



If you made predictions for 2016, what do you feel has been achieved? Even if you didn't make a prediction for 2016, please still let us know your thoughts.

At the end of 2015, I wrote about my five key learnings to take into 2016 - they were as follows: **1.** Leadership **2.** Governance **3.** Commitment **4.** Knowledge **5.** Emotion. Do I think that any of these five learnings have been addressed in 2016? Whilst there has been increasing movement in talk and rhetoric about CX in 2016, we are still a VERY long way to these five things being addressed. There are still too many leaders talking about CX without actually translating the talk into action. Too many businesses failing to commit to CX in the long term, with insufficient understanding of adoption and accountability (governance). At the same time, there is still insufficient investment in ongoing education of CX competencies - especially at senior leadership levels. I do think that emotion around CX has evolved a little more - mainly because we are all becoming ever more aware of the bad (and sometimes good) experiences we have as consumers ourselves, yet there are still too many people in business who do not know how it FEELS to be a customer of their own company.



What do you believe will become the primary focus for CX in 2017?

It would be too easy for me to repeat my list for 2016!!! Although all of those things remain true, the essential focus in 2017 needs to be in two areas: **1.** Simplicity **2.** Cross Functional Collaboration. If businesses want to start 'shifting the needle' with CX, they have to STOP doing things as much as they need to refocus on doing the right things. At the same time, until or unless companies can work harder than ever before to break down the silos and walls that exist between functions in their organisations, it will be IMPOSSIBLE to deliver a step change in CX.



What CX challenges - new or old - do you think most organizations will face in 2017?

All of the above!!! Yet in addition, I would say that the age old problem of patience, determination and commitment is the biggie - CX is a long term business strategy - do not expect success overnight!



As a discipline, what will be essential for CX in 2017?

Continuing exposure of CX as a fully fledged profession. The more CCXPs there are in the world, the better place the world will be. The bigger our community becomes, the more organisations have a genuine opportunity to become sustainably customer centric.



What one piece of advice do you have for someone who is new to Customer Experience?

Network, network, network. Transforming the customer experience is tough - and can often be lonely. However, you are never alone - the ever growing community of global CX professionals is like a big family - we are all here to support, counsel and encourage each other - make the most of the network.



CX EXPERT - VICKI AMON-HIGA
Amon-Higa & Associates



What do you believe will become the primary focus for CX in 2017?

Engaging cross functional teams to design and connect the dots for a positive customer experience.



What CX challenges - new or old - do you think most organizations will face in 2017?

Fixing problems and new design - ability to focus on both



As a discipline, what will be essential for CX in 2017?

Change Management



What one piece of advice do you have for someone who is new to Customer Experience?

Engage hearts and minds to build empathy for the 'why' of CX.





CX EXPERT - VALORY MYERS

Vice President, Ipsos Loyalty



CX must be core to the business strategy for companies to be successful in 2017.



If you made predictions for 2016, what do you feel has been achieved? Even if you didn't make a prediction for 2016, please still let us know your thoughts.

CX continued to gain traction in 2016, becoming more and more central to how companies run their business vs. a separate side initiative. CX leaders have gotten much better at proving the ROI. As a result, CX is becoming more operationalized across organizations beyond an aspirational vision.



What do you believe will become the primary focus for CX in 2017?

I anticipate three trends will come into the mainstream in 2017. **1.** A focus on the connection of CX to people strategy and employee engagement will strengthen. CX isn't just about measuring customer feedback and closing the loop. The shift of energy is transferring to a partnership with HR in terms of how to recruit, engage, retain employees who are motivated to deliver great CX. **2.** Predicting CX and taking appropriate actions in advance of customer complaints or defections will become a reality. The massive wealth of CX data is now out there, and beginning to be analyzed and understood in a way that the best-in-class CX leaders step in with the right action for the right customers (and not all customers are equal!). **3.** Storytelling will become a primary way for communicating CX insights internally from executive leadership to frontline employees. No one has time or energy to consume data-intensive reports searching for the nuggets of insight. Video in particular will become a more powerful tool in the CX leader's toolkit.



What CX challenges - new or old - do you think most organizations will face in 2017?

CX is a long-play... meaning doing the right thing for the right customers pays off over the long-term. A CX focus typically requires a change from the status quo. Change will always be challenged when times are tough, or when a short-term goal can be met by cutting CX corners. It will always be important to keep CX and its ROI front and center to avoid slipping back into old comfort zones.



As a discipline, what will be essential for CX in 2017?

Increasingly, CX leaders have responsibility to drive change across multiple functional areas across the business. As a result, having strengths in change management, building strong relationships, and being able to influence others will be key. It will be essential to have the analytical chops to interpret CX data and build the business case for CX AND the soft skills to motivate through stories, appeal to emotions and connection.





What one piece of advice do you have for someone who is new to Customer Experience?

Join the CXPA! So many tools, whitepapers, resources and best practices are available from those who have been there. Reach out to the CX Experts and the broader membership - we're here to help!



CX EXPERT - BOB AZMAN
Vice President Traveler Services America, CWT



For every decision you make, ask 3 questions – what would my customers say about this product, service, policy or practice? What do our employees think about this product, service, policy or practice? And what is the one thing I would do in my job every day to make a difference in creating a better customer experience?



If you made predictions for 2016, what do you feel has been achieved? Even if you didn't make a prediction for 2016, please still let us know your thoughts.

Predictions for 2017. We still seek the true identity of CX in our businesses! Companies will look for balance between financial and CX strategies, often struggling to seek common ground as they strive to seek success with shareholders while retaining customers. Journey mapping will continue to be a 'hot topic' among companies seeking to jump start their CX strategies but the resources (time and human) needed to make it a reality will cause companies to seek a more balanced approach to determining the best approach for their CX journey. Quick fixes will be pursued but the reality is – only root cause analysis and deep-seeded strategic change will prove successful. Unfortunately, many companies will profess a commitment to improved customer experience but lack the investment capital or executive commitment to make it a reality. New ways to seek voice of employee feedback will emerge just as it did with voice of customer programs.



What do you believe will become the primary focus for CX in 2017?

CX will continue to evolve as a profession as we train and certify more CCXP's and seek to create a workforce skilled in the knowledge and strategies to successfully implement effective CX strategies.



What CX challenges - new or old - do you think most organizations will face in 2017?

Breakthrough ideas will be generated by millennials and startups that will challenge our traditional approaches to CX.



**CX EXPERT - TONY HILLSON**

Customer Experience Design Director,
Service Design NZ and Australia

2016 saw CX come to the fore in Asia Pacific. People are aware of it now, organisations have in-house teams in place, but we still have a lot of work to do to help each function act differently and see direct return from their investments. We have to renew our efforts to show benefits for each function in our businesses in order to continue to maintain the profile that CX enjoy's today. My hope is that CX is seen as every other functions best tool by the end of 2017, rather than the weird relative in the corner at the Xmas party. Happy Xmas everyone!

**If you made predictions for 2016, what do you feel has been achieved? Even if you didn't make a prediction for 2016, please still let us know your thoughts.**

In Asia Pacific, the primary achievement has been continuing to establish CX roles and functions inside large corporates along with the growing awareness of the potential ROI from CX.

**What do you believe will become the primary focus for CX in 2017?**

In Asia Pacific, I believe we need to continue to build stakeholder understanding of CX and the specific return or benefit for each function. In addition, we need to develop better ways to communicate what CX is, influence and support managers to begin acting differently.

**What CX challenges - new or old - do you think most organizations will face in 2017?**

The most recurring challenge I see is 'maintaining strategic focus.' CX is in the light's today, but many organisations are focusing on short term metrics. Many organisations struggle to commit to a 3-5 year strategy and stay committed.

**As a discipline, what will be essential for CX in 2017?**

Helping organisations build a clear strategic plan, adhering to the plan, seeing the benefits and embedding this pattern.

**What one piece of advice do you have for someone who is new to Customer Experience?**

Develop a clear storyline (WIFM) for each of your stakeholders and learn about change management. Adopting CX practice is just like embedding any other change in a large complex organisation. Build your CX Strategy or Plan, but work with a Change Manager to figure out how you might establish momentum and sustainable change.



**CX EXPERT - TABITHA DUNN**

Managing Director, Customer Insights,
Concur, an SAP company



I love what I do in CX because I have the opportunity to make a difference and take on tough new challenges. I hope to see our profession grow with lots of great new people getting the same opportunity!

**If you made predictions for 2016, what do you feel has been achieved? Even if you didn't make a prediction for 2016, please still let us know your thoughts.**

I do see the emphasis of the need to be a change agent when you are a CX leader or practitioner. We are challenged to make a difference in our companies and show the impact we can achieve. I've heard similar stories from other CX leaders.

**What do you believe will become the primary focus for CX in 2017?**

I believe CX will continue to grow as a field and we will see more hybrid roles, where CX is attached to a function in the business.

**What CX challenges - new or old - do you think most organizations will face in 2017?**

CX teams will continue to be challenged to show their value to the business while making a difference for their customers.

**As a discipline, what will be essential for CX in 2017?**

Stay flexible through change and continue to show that CX is a professional discipline that truly adds value.

**What one piece of advice do you have for someone who is new to Customer Experience?**

Learn about the different paths of expertise in CX, pick the one you are best suited for but don't forget to branch out and learn skills in the other areas.



**CX EXPERT - JEANNIE WALTERS**

Author, Speaker, Trainer



Customers now expect great experiences. There is no room to take shortcuts on understanding customer expectations and then doing our best to exceed them.

**If you made predictions for 2016, what do you feel has been achieved? Even if you didn't make a prediction for 2016, please still let us know your thoughts.**

Organizations continue to WANT to become more customer-focused. Many are starting to apply real resources to that idea.

**What do you believe will become the primary focus for CX in 2017?**

Aligning the data available with the actions needed - the last several years have been about how to gather feedback and insights from customers. Now it's time to align what's gathered with what actions to take!

**What CX challenges - new or old - do you think most organizations will face in 2017?**

Most organizations still don't put the money where it needs to go to support a truly customer-centric culture. Hiring a single CX executive is great - but it takes a team to make things happen.

**As a discipline, what will be essential for CX in 2017?**

I believe focusing on creating an ongoing customercentric culture is the most important step for any organization. Without investing in a culture of empowerment and understanding of a true customer experience mission, investments in CX won't be sustainable or have the longevity needed to provide a return on the investments.

**What one piece of advice do you have for someone who is new to Customer Experience?**

Understand what your role is - what are the goals and outcomes you've been asked to achieve? CX is such a big field - it's easy to feel overwhelmed and want to boil the ocean.

**CX EXPERT - SONYA MCALLISTER**

Senior Vice President and Principal, Walker



In 2017, we at Walker will continue to be hyper-focused on aligning CX efforts with CEOs' (and other executives') needs and interests. It starts with speaking their language.

**If you made predictions for 2016, what do you feel has been achieved? Even if you didn't make a prediction for 2016, please still let us know your thoughts.**

As we closed out 2016 and looked toward 2017, we anticipated the CX industry would focus on leveraging CX to create a competitive advantage. We believed this would be accomplished in three ways: **1.** Less emphasis on surveys and more emphasis on gathering the right customer intelligence, using a variety of sources. We have seen the industry respond. More and more customer experience professionals are expanding their customer insight gathering approaches to include journey mapping, qualitative discussions with customer executives, and leveraging data that already exists, such as financial, operational, and purchase data. **2.** A greater need for agility and speed regarding CX initiatives would lead more companies to focus on leveraging big data, analytics, and mobility to create personalized experiences, proactive engagements, and seamless interactions. While we are seeing more companies talking about big data and analytics, too few are taking advantage of these tools to gain a customer advantage. It is still mostly talk. Those companies who have focused on these areas have an advantage (in their market and with their CX strategy). **3.** A continued focus on business impact. While the industry has focused on business impact, there is still work to be done.

**What do you believe will become the primary focus for CX in 2017?**

In our recent study, "The CEO View of CX" we identified three key imperatives for CX professionals. We believe these are necessary in order for B-to-B companies to create a competitive advantage through the experiences they deliver to customers. **1.** Recognizing that impact is still a challenge, CX professionals must focus on aligning customer initiatives to the business outcomes that executives expect. **2.** CX professionals must take a leadership role when it comes to customer experience innovation. While there is value in improving the ways customers interact with businesses today, CX professionals must couple customary break-fix activities with the real breakthrough initiatives that characterize innovation. **3.** Build an engaged, customer-focused workforce by helping employees across the organization identify with customers. They must shift from communicating customer intelligence to becoming a force for change by helping employees understand and truly feel what it's like to be a customer.





What CX challenges - new or old - do you think most organizations will face in 2017?

We believe CX professionals will continue to be challenged with having: **1.** Authority (they often have to rely on their influence to get attention), **2.** Access (this includes access to people and customer intelligence), and **3.** Action (they cannot afford to simply provide recommendations to the business; they must drive action).



As a discipline, what will be essential for CX in 2017?

Creating the right balance. At Walker, we often talk about “the power of AND.” It’s important for CX professionals to focus on the short-term AND the long-term strategy. They must be able to react to customer needs AND anticipate their future needs. We believe having a solid CX roadmap will help companies create the balance they need AND deliver an experience that is differentiated and valued by customers.



What one piece of advice do you have for someone who is new to Customer Experience?

Take the time to build a strong and commonly understood CX roadmap. The payoff in terms of employee engagement and improvements that customers recognize is worth the up-front investment.



CX EXPERT - GREG TUCKER
CEO, Tucker & Company



Transformational CX has the potential to transform businesses and industries - as evidenced by uber, airbnb, and amazon. Will your company be the leader or put out of business?



If you made predictions for 2016, what do you feel has been achieved? Even if you didn't make a prediction for 2016, please still let us know your thoughts.

I thought CX in 2016 would drive business change and results in a number of leading global brands



What do you believe will become the primary focus for CX in 2017?

That CX will drive business change and results in global brand leaders



What CX challenges - new or old - do you think most organizations will face in 2017?

That C-Suites think it is a soft, nice-to-have capability but not a high priority, mission-critical strategy.



As a discipline, what will be essential for CX in 2017?

1. Rigorous approach to journey mapping and insight integration **2.** developing the financial business case for CX **3.** CX program leadership and PMO capabilities to drive projects, delivery and results



What one piece of advice do you have for someone who is new to Customer Experience?

Be committed - and build hard skills, not just soft skills

**CX EXPERT - KARYN FURSTMAN**

Vice President, Agent & Customer Experience
Safeco Insurance, a Liberty Mutual Company



Making your company human to your customers by simplifying and connecting the experiences you deliver to them, through truly empowered employees, will give you opportunity to differentiate and drive long term business impacts.

**If you made predictions for 2016, what do you feel has been achieved? Even if you didn't make a prediction for 2016, please still let us know your thoughts.**

More growth of the CX profession, linkage of CX to business results continue to be critical for long term success. Employee engagement critical for becoming a true CX driven company.

**What do you believe will become the primary focus for CX in 2017?**

Designing for mobile-first in every interaction; linkage of employee inspiration to CX; operational excellence tied to CX (LEAN, etc).

**What CX challenges - new or old - do you think most organizations will face in 2017?**

Ever-evolving, heightened customer expectations making 'fixing' broken experiences not enough. Continued focus of long term business impact of CX and tying to operational measures.

**As a discipline, what will be essential for CX in 2017?**

Omni-channel seamless, personalized customer experience, delivered digitally first (focused on mobile), with nimble technology.

**What one piece of advice do you have for someone who is new to Customer Experience?**

Determine how to unite the vertical (front line, middle management, executive) and horizontal (cross company functions) and gain alignment on vision, strategy & roadmap. Celebrate the quick wins along the way.



CX EXPERT - JEANNE BLISS

President, CustomerBliss
Co-Founder, CXPA



What's on the inside shows up on the outside. Honor the people who honor customers. Know the customers' life... improve it...and you will grow.



If you made predictions for 2016, what do you feel has been achieved? Even if you didn't make a prediction for 2016, please still let us know your thoughts.

2016 brought mainstream and widespread desire to work on "CX". Many efforts started, many stalled. Practitioners are realizing this is a transformation effort that requires leadership engagement and the C-Suite united. To that end, people are retooling how they approach this work. "journey mapping" has emerged as a big "get" - but has also become (to me) a shiny object. Everyone wants to do a journey mapping session and "map the journey" - but the work begins before the session to realign the journey to the customers' life and priorities. Then the work gets greater as the journey needs to be validated with customers and employees.



What do you believe will become the primary focus for CX in 2017?

Leaders language needs to change, as does how they drive accountability, based on this journey. What we saw in 2016 was a great number of people facilitating mapping sessions, but not gaining the great transformational effect that comes when it is executed correctly as part of behavior and leadership change. We also saw many silos doing "journey mapping" independently - driving fractured and very specific journey maps - but not the real benefit of understanding the comprehensive one-company experience that customers yearn for.



As a discipline, what will be essential for CX in 2017?

From my work around the world with Chief Customer Officers, four key areas of importance are emerging that they all know they need to focus on: **1.** A deliberate approach to connect customer experience to growth and connect it to the priorities of the business. **2.** Establishing and embedding competencies into the organization that go beyond reaction to survey scores and metrics **3.** Building and embedding a center of excellence around customer-driven and human centered design. So that experiences are redesigned to deliver value and improve customers lives. **4.** Story telling that unites the organization and focuses on priorities - versus silos independently and in a well intentioned manner starting many projects versus focusing on priority experiences that will drive greatest growth and value.



What one piece of advice do you have for someone who is new to Customer Experience?

This is a discipline that requires right brain/left brain thinking. Make sure you are a good listener...and understand that your role is to unite the organization to understand the customers' perspective and holistic journey -- and to make others successful. Check your ego at the door.





CX EXPERT - KARL SHARICZ, CCXP
EdM, Principal and Founder, CX Partners



"For CX success, sweat the small stuff."



If you made predictions for 2016, what do you feel has been achieved? Even if you didn't make a prediction for 2016, please still let us know your thoughts.

I predicted that in 2016 more organizations would jump aboard the CX train and get rolling along the track toward customer-centric behavior and, if my consulting practice is any indication, I would say that has indeed come to fruition. It will likely take them the typical five to seven years to get up to CX cruising speed, but I do believe that once on board they will remain there. For those already cruising along and enjoying the scenery, I predicted that they will begin facing the inevitable challenge of proving the value of CX. As I have also simultaneously subjected myself to another trip aboard the corporate locomotive, albeit as a part-time practitioner, that's exactly where we have arrived. It's time to show the value of CX in financial terms and I'm hearing that whistle from other CX practitioners as well.



What do you believe will become the primary focus for CX in 2017?

From my practitioner persona, I believe the next boundary for any organization having been engaged in CX over the last 5-7 years is to clearly connect what they've been doing thus far to business outcomes and, by that, I mean largely financial outcomes. Budgets are tight, especially in highly regulated industries like financial services. CX practitioners are always eager to get their hands on the next best shiny CX object (product or service) on the market, but within many organizations having collected VOC over half a decade, it's now show-time. Whether organizations address this challenge with internal resources or seek outside help, the issue isn't going away and it will become even more urgent in 2017 and beyond.



What CX challenges - new or old - do you think most organizations will face in 2017?

The biggest challenge I have seen over my last 10+ years in CX within substantially large organizations is having senior leadership believe in, committed toward, and actively involvement in CX. I mean real engagement here, beyond sound-bites at town hall meetings and banalities in annual reports. When CX responsibility is relegated to single individuals within Marketing or Customer Service departments, that organization has no real CX strategy or any plan to develop a customer-centric mindset and culture or leverage customer feedback to any significant degree. I see many organizations challenged in this way with perhaps the exception of some smaller enterprises where a CX culture is built first before a product or service is even conceived.





As a discipline, what will be essential for CX in 2017?

The basics. The Fundamentals. We, as passionate CX practitioners, often want to climb that CX mountain and reach that summit as fast as humanly possible and in doing so we may not be stopping long enough to appreciate what's right in front of us and enjoy the scenery along the path. CX is not a race to the finish-line. It's a gradual process built on intent and design. It's a system of research and learning, followed by insightful decision-making that drives meaningful growth and profitability through change management led by teams of professionals across all elements of the organization. Anyone that touches the customer either directly or indirectly is an essential element in that process.



What one piece of advice do you have for someone who is new to Customer Experience?

Listen and learn from those that have experience in this business and, at the same time, question whatever you hear that doesn't ring true. Set reasonable expectations for yourself—especially with regard to the CCXP certification. OK, that's two pieces of advice you're getting for the price of one!



CX EXPERT - JIM TINSCHER

Mapper-in-Chief, Heart of the Customer



CX needs to move away from being an island to becoming the town square - that central place where everybody comes together.



If you made predictions for 2016, what do you feel has been achieved? Even if you didn't make a prediction for 2016, please still let us know your thoughts.

2016 brought mainstream and widespread desire to work on "CX". Many efforts started, many stalled. Practitioners are realizing this is a transformation effort that requires leadership engagement and the C-Suite united. To that end, people are retooling how they approach this work. "journey mapping" has emerged as a big "get" - but has also become (to me) a shiny object. Everyone wants to do a journey mapping session and "map the journey" - but the work begins before the session to realign the journey to the customers' life and priorities. Then the work gets greater as the journey needs to be validated with customers and employees.



What do you believe will become the primary focus for CX in 2017?

Continuing this move towards using KPIs, CX will start integrating more into the business. Currently, too many CX organizations stand on their own, recreating capabilities already owned elsewhere in the company, such as employee communications or technology. The early days of CX meant that we had to be disruptive, going outside of the company's existing capabilities to get anything done. But we can only get so far with that. Continual progress will require CX to better utilize existing company capabilities, such as employee engagement and change management.



What CX challenges - new or old - do you think most organizations will face in 2017?

Even with an improved economy, companies continue to tighten their belts. CX has been relatively unscathed because we bring in a new approach. But the honeymoon is over - now, companies are going to want to see hard dollars from their CX investments. That means becoming best friends with your CFO - counter-intuitive behavior, to be sure! CX does pay - in 2017 we're going to have to start doing the math.



As a discipline, what will be essential for CX in 2017?

See the previous example.



What one piece of advice do you have for someone who is new to Customer Experience?

Look for your partners. HR and IT are under-utilized resources (in our survey of journey mapping practitioners, only 7% invited HR, and only 30% included IT. Build bridges with these capabilities in order to accelerate your improvements.

**CX EXPERT - CAROLYN MUSE**

CCO Voice of Customer Analytics & Intelligence,
Dell



*Nail it then scale it.
Customers matter most.*



If you made predictions for 2016, what do you feel has been achieved? Even if you didn't make a prediction for 2016, please still let us know your thoughts.

Industry validation that Customer experience centric companies beat the competition. You must show tangible results for CX ROI.



What do you believe will become the primary focus for CX in 2017?

Communicate progress based on customer loyalty. Leverage ROI to gain adoption and scale. Ability to showcase customer health score & sentiment based on their data.



What CX challenges - new or old - do you think most organizations will face in 2017?

Budget cuts across Opex and discretionary spend. Influence the executive to invest in CX initiatives that deliver tangible benefits to customers in addition to operational efficiencies.



As a discipline, what will be essential for CX in 2017?

Prioritizing investment according to company strategy and vision with a laser focus on customer loyalty and growth. Investing in predictive modeling to proactively mitigate systemic issues before they impact customers & partners.



What one piece of advice do you have for someone who is new to Customer Experience?

The ability to develop technology, process and engagement models are critical to enhancing the customer experience. Ease of doing business, mobile access and listening to your customers through employee engagement will be instrumental in achieving customer lifetime value.



CX EXPERT - DIANE MAGERS
CXPA, CEO



About our profession: Customer Experience practitioners have been the catalyst for changing how organizations perceive themselves, how they work and how they create value for an ever-changing human experience.

Personal: Recognize the enormity of what you are trying to do and celebrate your wins.



If you made predictions for 2016, what do you feel has been achieved? Even if you didn't make a prediction for 2016, please still let us know your thoughts.

"In 2016, we saw progress and continued opportunities for 2017.

What is CX - As a profession we are making progress, moving beyond the 'what and why' to the 'how and how well.' Confusion persists about what CX is and isn't, as we focus on educating others on how to encompass all interactions and threading them together, rather than being just single focuses in marketing, service/care, UX or digital.

Organizational Change - Organizations have learned to "say the words." They know CX important, but lack the understanding that it is a series of integrated steps, rather than focusing on one aspect of the business such as design or VOC. I believe the marketplace **1.** continues to learn to understand the impact of CX and our profession and is focused on learning the hows, rather than theory, **2.** how CX can help create deep organizational changes enabling and helping organizations increase collaboration, prioritize efforts and investments, and build external awareness of their reliance and impact on customer behavior and **3.** how CX is really a way of doing business, and not a 'practice' or a one off project. We still struggle with communicating how large and all-encompassing the change must be to achieve results.

CX Action and Transformation - I believe we have seen many more organizations seeking to learn how to take the necessary leap from functional work (the basics) to transformative work. For example, taking VoC from gathering and reporting and converting to action. Or taking a journey map from just documenting the journey to a catalyst for projects to driving culture change and a way to manage multiple impacts to the customer.



What do you believe will become the primary focus for CX in 2017?

Connect the dots - Our work will continue to bring a holistic and proactive approach to how organizations think about customers. We have been a catalyst for changing the way organizations work, how they view themselves in the customer's eyes, and how we can accelerate innovation.

Value - Customer and business value will become even more critical and be more clearly engineered and communicated - with CX practitioners leading the way by partnering with their finance peers to build the story of the impact of engaging customers, employees and partners.



It takes a village - Employee experience design will become a prominent way for CX professionals to continue to work on costs and business value, helping fund CX efforts and increase the effectiveness of CX in the organization.



What CX challenges - new or old - do you think most organizations will face in 2017?

Executive Support - Continual support from executives and management to help see how CX can enable new approaches e.g. innovation, design thinking, co-creation. Rather than a distraction, CX practitioners will need to continue to show how they lasso the entire organization and can enable success.

Enabling Action - Action-ability and building capabilities and competencies within everyone in the organization.

Customer Intelligence - We will need to build more capabilities around how to use and extend all the customer intelligence that is out there and how to gather sentiment and conscious and subconscious thoughts and feelings. And, convert all this to action.

The Human Element - Psychology and change management will be important skills CX practitioners must continuously learn and practice.



As a discipline, what will be essential for CX in 2017?

- Learning how to manage change, influence and build relationships.
- Understanding the financial picture and story of your work, and how to communicate it (see bullet 1).
- Building the capabilities into the organization. Call it federation, operationalizing, embedding etc., we must look for ways to embed CX throughout every part of our organization in tactical, realistic ways.



What one piece of advice do you have for someone who is new to Customer Experience?

Have a strategy and a plan focused on impact and value. Find others who have been on the journey. Learn from them. Ensure you have a roadmap and can tell stories about your success and the opportunities in the organization's journey – both past and what's coming. Talk to the natural leaders in the organization, paint the picture for them, and include them in your planning.