The Ultimate Guide to Scaling Content Operations

How to build a future-proofed, customer-centric marketing model

aprimo™

Since 2000, **52**% of companies in the Fortune 500 have either gone bankrupt, been acquired or ceased to exist as a result of digital disruption.[1]

Digital Has Transformed Customer Expectations

Gaining market share has always been less like a marathon and more like an extreme adventure race loaded with obstacles and sudden surprises.

You have to outperform, outmanoeuvre, and outsmart competitors to win customer loyalty and dollars. Before, you could see your fellow racers, but in the digital age your competition is nearly invisible, much smarter, and more clever.

Here's what you need to keep in mind as you strategize:

- The terrain has changed completely and continues to rapidly evolve.

- You have far more competitors now— many you may not recognize as such.

- The usual tactics and strategies continue to underperform until they're no longer viable.

- You have to forge new alliances in your organization. You can't succeed on your own.

- Marketing is seen in different forms and as distinct teams: Experience, eCommerce, Digital, Product, Corporate, Operational, etc.

To win this race you need more than just good products and services or a big marketing budget. Winning hinges on your ability to deliver a great customer experience (CX) each and every time your customer interacts with your brand.

Don't be like the former leaders that realized this too late: Toys R' Us, Radio Shack, Blockbuster, Kodak.

What if creating and delivering great experiences, every time, wasn't as hard as you think?

Gartner predicts there will be further casualties, believing **75**% of the top 100 global consumer brands will lose **20**% of their brand equity value to declining brand perception and loyalty by 2020.[2]

65% of consumers are more likely to make a purchase from a retailer that sends them relevant and personalized promotions, and remembers their previous purchases.[3]

Accenture

Nearly **95%** of shoppers read online reviews before making a purchase.[4]

The Terrain Is Dynamic

Brands used to be able to set the pace and control the message. A quick scan of the news and you'll see that this is no longer true.

Power has shifted from brands to their customers who now expect access to information and services whenever, wherever, and however they want them. Customers also expect brands to treat them as individuals, to know them, remember their preferences, and to interact with them in meaningful ways. As a result of this big shift, CX is now one of the most critical factors in determining brand success.

You probably don't realize who's winning your race

No doubt you've seen more competitors enter your space recently—both locally and globally. But did you know you're also competing against the best experiences customers have ever had with any brand—regardless of industry? Starbucks, Apple, Amazon, they're all showing your consumers what a great CX is—so now they expect it from every brand.

There's one more potential enemy you may not recognize—your customer. In the digital age, customers wield far more power and influence over your brand than any direct competitor. Customer opinions have the power to influence hundreds, thousands, even tens of thousands of other consumers—mostly to the benefit of brands, but beware the jilted customer with a big digital megaphone!.

You need to make new alliances

The customer brand experience is shaped by every interaction they have with your organization—good and bad. To ensure a consistent, relevant, and positive brand experience, every department and role that interacts with customers must operate under a unified experience strategy. Spend time and energy internally to get every part of your business on board the CX train.

Your Go-To Ways of Working Aren't Enough

The CX race is happening every second of every day and everywhere your customers travel. Your brand needs the insight to anticipate customer needs (DATA), the right offering to act and react to customers and competitors (CONTENT), and the speed to do all of this quickly (PROCESS).

Brands need the right technology to deliver a personalized, relevant, and exceptional experience when the customer wants, where they want, and via the device and channel of their choosing. If you offer anything less, your customers are likely to replace you.

The rules of winning have changed

Brand loyalty, competitive pricing, market leadership? These no longer guarantee brand success. The internet has leveled the playing field, enabling more agile small- to medium-sized businesses and start-ups to compete directly with brand leaders based on CX.

Winning the experience race now requires:

- Know who your customers are— their preferences, behaviors, and habits.

- Anticipate what your customers want and need as individuals.

- Create the right content to meet their needs.

- React quickly to changing customer needs and market changes.

- Deliver an always-on experience anytime, anywhere, and via any device and channel.

Winning in the digital age means delivering a consistent and superior experience every single time a customer interacts with your brand.

Think your most loyal customers will stick with you? Think again:

32% of consumers say they will walk away from a brand they love after just one bad experience.[5]
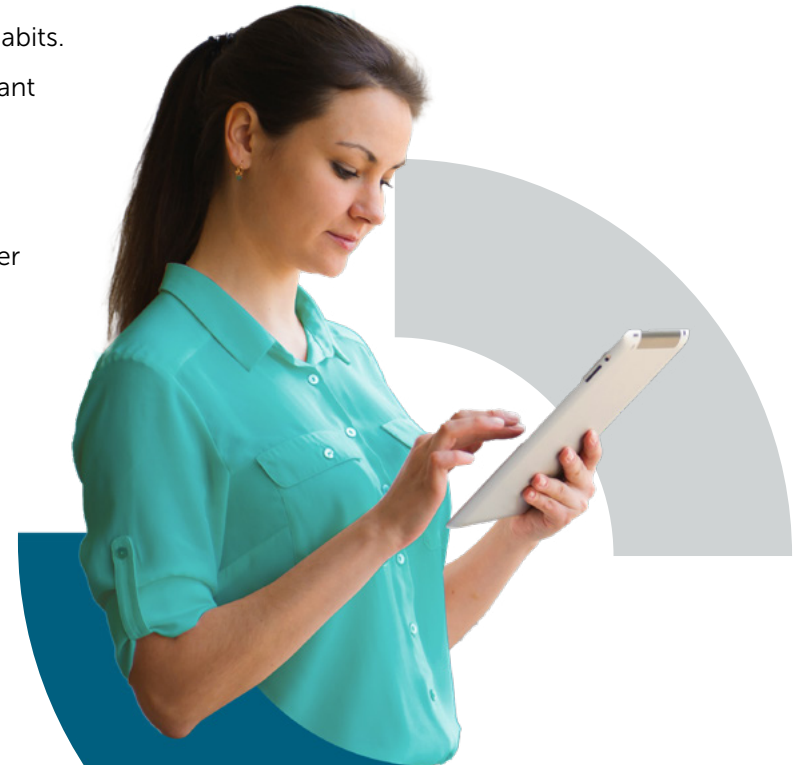
On average customer experience leaders realize a **25%** increase in revenue over customer experience laggards.[6]

Forrester

Is customer loyalty dead? No, but it costs more.

Create a New Plan by **Scaling Content Operations**

PwC's Future of Customer Experience study found that **54%** of U.S. survey respondents say customer experiences at most companies need improvement.[7]

So where do you start?

Getting to the level of customer centricity we're talking about may seem overwhelming or even impossible. But never fear! There are plenty of brands that are walking the CX path and realizing tremendous success—like Netflix, Amazon, Zappos, Disney, and Nike to name a few.

If your way of delivering CX is ad hoc and doesn't scale, now's the time to rethink your strategy so you can remain competitive in today's environment.

The easiest way to start this process is by reverse engineering your CX: Think about the content experience you must deliver and work backward to identify areas of improvement.

What Does **Scaling Content Operations** Involve?

How to scale customer experiences

Scaling content operations requires you to step back and figure out how the CX is actually made. Break down all of the factors that go into creating the CX to see how it actually works for your brand and for other organizations.

Armed with this information, you can analyze, duplicate, or enhance these factors. You can use reverse engineering as a learning tool to produce new, successful customer experiences more quickly and with fewer resources. Then you can create methodologies to repeat them.

6 steps to realizing your ideal CX

STEP 1

Understand your customers

STEP 2

Identify customer content expectations

STEP 3

Align content data to customer data

STEP 4

Integrate upstream and downstream processes

STEP 5

Establish new methods to be more agile

STEP 6

Measure effectiveness

STEP 1 Understand Your **Customers**

Do you know what your customers want at an individual level?

Are your brand's customer experiences meaningful?

Can customers interact with your brand on their own terms?

Are you delivering a consistent brand experience every time you interact with your customer?

If you can't say yes to any of these questions, then you have some work to do.

Your customers truly want help and reassurance that they've made the best possible decision for them. Only by understanding this can your brand meet customer demand for experiences that are relevant, convenient, consistent, and that deliver long-term value.

65% of consumers said they are more likely to make a purchase from a retailer that sends them relevant and personalized promotions.[8]

ACCENTURE

A "one-size-fits-all" approach no longer works. You need to create personalized, engaging customer experiences that are meaningful to the individual customer.

Customers expect a positive experience across the entire journey from pre-purchase to post-purchase.

73% of consumers say that a positive experience is among the key drivers that influence their brand loyalties.[10]

FORRESTER

**43**% of all consumers would pay more for greater convenience.[9]

PWC

You need to reach customers on their own terms, when and where it is most convenient and via the device and channel of the customer's choosing.

Customers want a consistent brand experience, whether they are shopping in-store, online or via an app.

29% of executives in global enterprises strongly agree that their content is consistent in style and tone across channels.[11]

FORRESTER
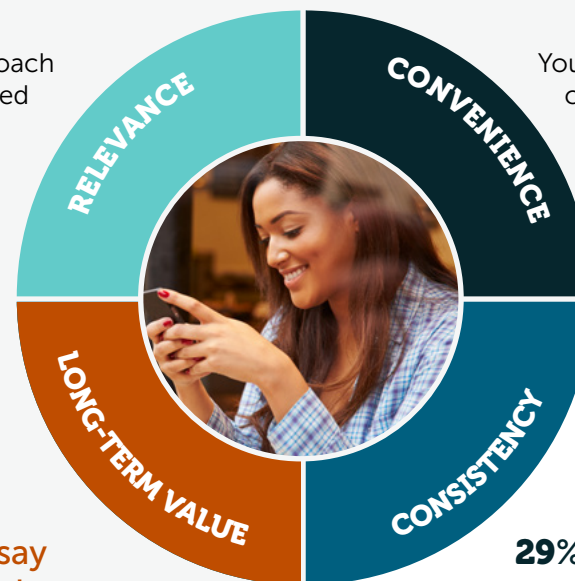
2 Identify Your Customer Content Expectations

Next, determine what kind of content experiences your customers are expecting across personas. This is loosely defined as the mix of content required to assure a customer they've made the right choice.

Behind the curve

Are you stuck in the past relying on what you've always done? Are you making one-off, disjointed content that only gets used once?

Making strides

Are you thinking holistically about your content creation abilities across your personas to ensure resources are optimized? Have you created centers of excellence around rich media that's proven to raise engagement?

Setting the pace

Have you optimized your content in a centrally managed location like a Digital Asset Management solution? Are your downstream channels integrated into this repository so you're always using the latest and greatest?

In most organizations **60-70%** of content built by businesses is never actually used.[13]

Gartner

Over **50%** of senior marketing and communications leaders said they have more digital content than they can effectively manage.[12]

Accenture

More than **65%** of executives in global enterprises said they spend the majority of their time on the operational details associated with content. [14]

Accenture

Need more help assessing where you stand? Take our marketing maturity quiz. →

STEP 3
Align **Content** and **Data**

Winning the race requires a marriage of an unlikely pair.

Over the last 15 years, most organizations have invested heavily in data analytics, usually at the cost of content. The result is that the right person is targeted at the right time, but the message and the experience are off. It's why despite knowing more about customers and having more ability to deliver a message than ever before, personalization efforts continue to fail.

Think about it this way: if you know 10 things about your customer, but only two things about a piece of content (e.g., title and a brief description), then you have a limited number of permutations. But if you know 10 things about a customer and 10 things about a piece of content, you have several more combinations that could form a winning personalization experience.

This is called content intelligence —and winners have a lot of it.

Integrate **Upstream** and **Downstream** processes

It's no longer about you or your product—it's about your customers.

> **How are you helping the customer?**
>
> **What help or guidance will they need in the future?**

These questions should drive every action and decision across your organization.

Identify and align CX owners

To forge your alliances, you need to:

- Engage with the CX owners across departments in your organization to create a CX task force. Make sure they represent the upstream (the process and creative people) with the downstream (your channel owners).

- Collaborate to establish cross-functional alignment and agreement about how your organization talks about the customer journey.

- Realign these roles, if you have to, into new CX teams based on various high-touch areas of the customer journey, including discovery, exploration, purchase, use, service, and engagement.

With new CX teams aligned, their job is to develop a new mindset of creating content, campaigns, and interactions around the customer's buying journey, not around products. Outline how this new customer journey will work and ensure all new team members are on board.

Once you create consensus, it's time to start building your new approach to CX.

5 Establish New Methods to Be More Agile

To help customers reach their growth potential and to deliver the experiences they expect, you need to balance digital exuberance with a human touch. Your brand needs a strategic mix of digital and non-digital options that allows customers to engage with several providers in multiple, highly satisfying ways.[15]

ACCENTURE

Strengthen your position by closing gaps

The consumer appetite for fresh, new, and relevant brand experiences across so many emerging touchpoints has resulted in a more complex landscape for brands.

Marketers are overwhelmed by the sheer volume of content and the extreme pace that customers are demanding. Existing legacy operations and systems simply don't have the flexibility or agility to support this new reality.

Consequently, most brands now have gaps—operational gaps, skill gaps, and technology gaps that cause fragmented campaigns and disjointed customer experiences.

Take back the lead in your race

Work management solutions give brands the agility, flexibility, and speed to keep pace with customer needs by streamlining and automating campaigns from ideation to planning, budgeting, and creation.

A best-of-breed work management solution that manages your content, operations, distribution, and planning will streamline and then relieve your exhausted workforce through automation of all the behind-the-scenes work that's involved for brands to create great experiences.

The best work management solution will help brands provide a better CX by:

1. Offering a single view of campaigns and content

2. Streamlining content strategy and governance

3. Providing a single view of budgets

4. Simplifying operations and workflows

5. Enabling channel distribution

6. Easily connecting to other MarTech stack solutions

STEP 6

Measure Effectiveness
Through AI and Analytics

Organizational intelligence is essential to assessing and optimizing performance, understanding your customers, and accelerating speed to market. You can utilize more niche distribution, analytics, and artificial intelligence (AI) technologies to get better insight over all the behind-the-scenes activities involved in creating customer experiences.

With your oversight, AI and analytics have the potential to help you better understand what makes for a great customer experience. They also can help reduce workloads and improve ROI of CX improvement initiatives.

Emerging technologies can help you deliver a great CX by:

- Predicting which content will resonate with prospects

- Automating activities

- Automating resource planning

- Calculating ROI

- Influencing marketing planning and speed

- Recommending specific content to use in which customer channel

- Determining when content hasn't performed well and should be removed

Agility, Flexibility, and Speed
Will Be Your Greatest Assets

Supreme customer-centric marketing model

The new customer-centric marketing model features the customer at the center of every activity.

IDEATE

ANALYZE

PLAN

**Operations
Content
Planning**

DISTRIBUTE

BUDGET

CREATE

Once your methodologies and technology are in place to scale content operations, you'll more easily be able to shift from product-centric marketing to customer-centric campaigns. Then you can home in on how to optimize your new approach to CX to better fit within the various customer touchpoints or stages within the buyer's journey.

Your company's experience race will continue to change and shift, quickly and in ways no one can predict. In the digital age, successful companies will be the ones who continuously evolve over time—and do so quickly. They'll be good at adopting new methodologies and technologies to maintain content operations as a response to changing customer behaviors and expectations.

The future success of your organization depends on your ability to think fast and act fast so you can embrace inevitable disruption by creating your own. You can break through the competitive chaos, take the lead with the right combination of planning and technology, and get to the finish line before anyone else.

THIS IS A RACE YOU CAN WIN!

For more great content, visit our resource center. →

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About Aprimo

Aprimo offers industry-leading digital asset management and work management solutions that help your teams spend their time and effort on content and marketing strategies that actually drive business outcomes and reach customers in the right channels. Its powerful Content Operations platform provides organizations with a single source of truth to optimize the way they plan, develop, govern, and deliver exceptional brand experiences at scale.

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