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by David Cooper

# The Compelling Case for Moving from CX to BX

CX

BX

**C**ompanies have been slow to accept that creating a memorable brand experience is no longer the job of one or two departments. For years, marketing has owned customer experience (CX) and the sole focus has been on the customer. The problem is that CX has become stagnant and inadequate. Businesses are feeling the pain, clearly indicating the function must evolve.

The new destination is the Business of Experience (BX), and getting there is a company-wide mission. Marketing leaders – I know you hear me. You need



shared responsibility to keep up your good work, and hopefully, your full company leadership will heed the call to action. You have surely noticed that the approach to experience is radically expanding at some companies. It's hard to miss how they are reengineering their operating models to ones in which experience is embraced and felt by all stakeholders inside and outside of the company, not just customers.



Don't get me wrong. Experience is still about being customer-obsessed, but it has grown. It is now an organization-wide initiative with a fresh, holistic approach that includes purpose, values, mission, innovation, customer experience, employee experience, products, service, transaction and delivery models, IT, data, analytics and community. As they say, the whole enchilada.

## What is BX and what is driving the shift?

Accenture refers to BX as "an experience renaissance to reignite growth." Can I get an amen? Every

company I counsel is looking for ways to do exactly that, given the challenges imposed by the pandemic, from the talent crisis to supply chain disruptions and dramatically changing consumer behaviors. I think the biggest question is, why aren't more companies doing it?

To be fair, COVID-19 monopolized business leaders, forcing them to make monumental operating changes to survive. As if that weren't enough, the pandemic also exacerbated the pre-pandemic trend of abrupt disconnects between brands and their customers, and between

Moving to BX is crucial because both customers and employees are more focused on quality of life, values, higher expectations of businesses, and choosing to interact with purpose- and values-driven companies. It's worth noting that employee experience is a key component of BX because your people are the glue between your departments, and between your company and your customers. The importance of this interconnectivity can no longer be ignored.

**Finer points on the shift to BX** are revealed in the results of Accenture's extensive research and market analyses:

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companies and their employees. It's true. Most companies have been long detached from what really motivates customers and employees to engage their brands.

**This is what is driving the shift to BX:** Challenges have reached a tipping point, creating renewed interest in moving beyond the traditional confines of CX. Despite the existence of solid CX strategies, customer loyalty flew out the window during the pandemic. And as we all know, employees and job candidates have drawn their own lines in the sand.

- Emphasis on experience is at its greatest today because the structure of almost everything we do – how and what people buy, how and where they work, and how they interact with others – has been upended by the events of 2020.
- More than 80% of consumers who increased digital use in various channels during the pandemic expect to sustain those levels. Further, they're flocking to providers that make their lives and

experiences better and easier. Their expectations are growing accordingly and constantly. Bottom line: Greater experiences are necessary for business survival.

- More than four out of five brands report languishing growth from their investments in CX, and 85% of elite brands' CX scores remain stagnant. In other words, CX has become mainstream, leading to a sea of sameness. As a result, 77% of CEOs said their company will fundamentally change the way it engages and interacts with its customers.
- BX-oriented companies, such as Apple, Amazon, Salesforce and others, have proven that you can drive commercial impact when you make a positive impact on people. On average, such BX-oriented companies grow profitability year-on-year over their CX-oriented industry peers, in some cases by at least six times.
- In what Accenture coins "Flight to Purpose," eight in 10 consumers say that a company's purpose, what they stand for beyond the products and services they sell, is at least as important to them as CX. And more than half of Gen Y and Gen Z consumers have shifted a portion of their spend away from current service providers when a company disappointed them due to its words or actions on a social issue.

"COVID has pushed experience further into the spotlight, accelerating its significance through

every function and employee," says Brian Whipple, former CEO of Accenture Interactive. "Simply put, when you improve the experience, you improve lives and in turn, you improve business."

## 7 steps to ensure a successful transition

'Experience' is no longer a routine workstream with a series of established processes and technologies that do the same things every other company has been doing for years. It is a new and unique model backed by company leadership.

Becoming a business of experience happens in phases, implemented over time. This is good for planning, sensitive to budget, and gives you the flexibility you need to adapt to market changes and emerging opportunities to innovate. Regardless of pace, all departments must act as one unit, collectively focused on innovations in experience for all stakeholders. New operating models don't materialize overnight, either, but planning, strategy and action do. Here are steps for the weeks, months and years ahead:

**STEP 1**  
**Know what the business of experience is, what it entails, the benefits it delivers to your company and constituents, and why it is essential for moving forward.** I highly recommend digging into Accenture's comprehensive [report](#) on moving beyond CX to the business of experience. It goes deep into the differences between CX and BX,

how to pivot to BX thinking and actions, and offers trailblazing methods being used to enhance the journey.

**STEP 2**  
**Know what they want, what competitors are doing and the novel ways you will respond.**

It is not possible to advance without knowing where you stand with customers, prospects and employees. Collect, [analyze](#) and use their feedback to form data-driven goals and objectives. Research competitors as well. Then define the differentiating experience you aim to deliver and what it will take to make it happen, from product or service developments to service innovations and how the entire company will work to enhance the human experience.

**STEP 3**  
**Gain buy-in from company leadership to adopt a new operating and business model.** This involves educating internal stakeholders. Start by getting key marketing, sales, service, ecommerce and social media heads together to create an abstract business case. Now armed with the facts (including data analytics), go to your president or CEO, make your case and get their blessing to present the concept to leaders across the company. Remember – BX is holistic.

**STEP 4**  
**Develop a strategic plan for how your company will get from CX to BX.** For companies without a [CX strategy](#) in place, you are likely suffering from it, but it won't set you back in your transition to BX. It may even be more time- and



cost-efficient than transforming what already exists. Either way, you need a strategy for a sound and phased approach that fosters an internal culture and company-wide ecosystem that is both employee- and customer-centric. This involves Human Resources, IT, R&D, marketing, sales, service, e-commerce, interactive, accounting, finance, production, supply chain – the entire operation.

## STEP 5

**Cost it out.** With a solid strategy in hand, you now need to establish the technologies, IT architecture, talent, skills, training and other resources required to implement each phase of your strategic plan. This includes internal and external marketing and communications. Building blocks and related costs can be allocated over time, based on your budget.

## STEP 6

**Create an implementation plan:** Every department should

have a role, with new processes to establish, metrics to collect and measure, and milestones to achieve – but as Accenture says, no more siloes. And instead of using traditional metrics to measure employee performance, build into your plan how you will shift to inspiring, incentivizing and empowering employee behaviors that drive better outcomes for customers and the entire organization. As you implement your plan, maintain cohesion and strong, company-wide communications on forward movement, timelines for completion, and individual and departmental accountability.

## STEP 7

**Monitor progress, stay current on trends, keep learning from customers and employees – and adjust accordingly.** In our increasingly digital world, the best laid plans are flexible enough to embrace newer, better solutions, and efficient enough to keep

communication pipelines open with employees and customers. The key enabler behind BX is technology, so be ready to take advantage of enhanced capabilities, tools and resources that will simplify continuous discovery and improve your planning, performance and ROI.

## Make experience your whole company's primary focus

No matter what business you are in, transforming your organization's business and operating model to BX will make all other critical goals easier to achieve, from revenue goals to employee performance, talent acquisition and retention, product development, digital and ecommerce success, and customer growth and retention. To reignite growth, BX is the way forward.



A cartoon illustration of a man with brown hair, wearing a dark blue suit, white shirt, and blue tie. He is smiling broadly and pointing his right index finger to his forehead. The background is a light pink gradient.

# The Open Mind Is the Braintrust of Success

**T**he New Year is weeks away and hopes are high for greater stability. We continue to adapt. It is not easy because normal is something all new that reveals just a bit more of itself each day. If anything good has come out of the pandemic, maybe it is that leaders have not been able to feel comfortable, even momentarily, for a very long time. Competition moves while we snooze.

Growth and advancement are tough even when things are calm and predictable, so this time is testing our mettle. With the stakes higher than they have ever been, pressures are constant and visceral to sustain and grow in new ways.

While no one is feeling overly secure, many leaders are having issues due to an inability to change. Maybe this is you. Maybe it's another member of the management team. It could even be your CEO. Granted, change is hard for us as individuals and even harder for businesses. But no matter who is in the way, deal with it and get on with the future. There is no time to waste.

## **What brand of resilience will it take going forward?**

I have six answers for professionals who are struggling, and even for the most courageous among you. Everyone needs a fresh perspective and sanity check in today's environment.

### **1 Wipe your mental slate clean:**

It is imperative that leaders remove ALL preconceived notions about your current challenges. You have been operating in a global pandemic for nearly two years, doing what you

can, where you can, with what you have. To effectively lead, you need an objective outlook.

Mentally let it all go. You need room in your mind to entertain new ways of thinking, communicating, collaborating, planning and innovating. I'm talking about a mindset that frees you up to crash your own gates, more commonly known as changing with the times.

## 2 Kill groupthink

Bruce Lee once said, "All fixed set patterns are incapable of adaptability or pliability." This is groupthink, and it is known by a lot of names, like echo chamber, decision-by-committee, silo mentality...there are more. By any name, it is a danger zone where limited views dominate discussion and decisions, while creativity and innovation are crushed and buried. If this is happening within your

Review has a cure for this blockage in a recent article: "[Are You Really Listening?](#)"

## 4 Be unbiased and receptive

Keeping an open mind goes beyond becoming a generator and user of vibrant ideas and creativity. A leader's open-mindedness also needs to be seen and felt by the team. This is done by prioritizing even-handed engagement through which people are welcomed and confident in expressing views and concerns. When you indulge people with humility, their contributions, performance and teamwork improve and grow.

## 5 Dare to be disruptive

In these unprecedented times, leaders must take unusual and often unprecedented approaches to operations and the market. You can break through mental barriers (we all have them) in several ways:

- Never let disagreement or failure hinder you. Remember: "Everyone wants to live on top of the mountain, but all the happiness and growth occurs while you're climbing it." – Andy Rooney

## 6 Think like your career depends on it

Open minds are in demand all over corporate America to invigorate teams, drive development and scale the business. Simply said, real thinkers are the new outliers in our hyper-competitive environment, and entrepreneurial thinking is the new fuel. To improve the trajectory of your company and your career, be an entrepreneurial and informed contributor – a bold one who is open and ready for change.

## Adopt, trust and advocate this mentality. It is required for success.

Time is of the essence, but time is on your side when you continue daring to grow and disrupt the status quo. Encourage yourself, your leadership and managers to look at every curve as an opportunity, not a challenge. When we keep our minds open to new ideas and diverse points of view, the future rewards us as individuals and as thriving, change-driven companies.

# A leader's open-mindedness also needs to be seen and felt by the team.

company, [use these tips](#) to rise up against it, and ignite the vigorous interaction that is needed to create and problem solve.

## 3 Come out of isolation so you can hear

The greatest obstacles to opening our minds are our own thoughts and distractions – and here's a serious one for business leaders: getting trapped in information bubbles, where access to what's really happening in the organization is truncated by limited flows of information. You need to be tuned in, not shielded. Harvard Business

- Champion alternative points of view among other leaders and within your team.
- Have the grit to challenge biases and pre-conceived notions (theirs and your own).
- Surround yourself with other open-minded thinkers – those who see the glass half full.
- Always question assumptions by seeking truth through facts and data, and sharing them.
- Always ask, "What if?" to uncover alternate solutions and make better decisions.



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