



Join the Adventure: Your New Customer Journey is Just Beginning

EBOOK

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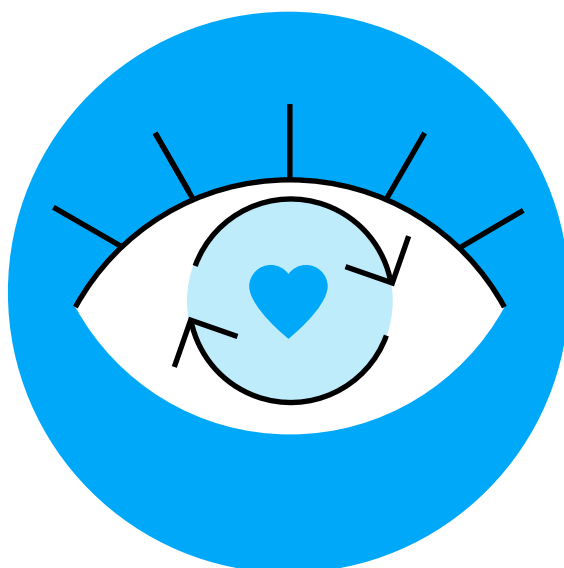
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The Root of a Great Customer Experience

The customer experience is incredibly important to the success of any business. It is often directly tied to aspects such as engagement and retention rates, revenue per customer, purchase frequency and overall customer loyalty. The better the customer experience, the better businesses can monetize each and every customer.

This is not some sort of new-age revelation. Even dating back centuries, entrepreneurs put a premium on the customer experience. Business owners knew each customer's specific needs, which empowered them to deliver a one-of-a-kind experience to every single customer, building relationships that last in the process. They had to take this one-to-one approach—they could only serve people in their immediate geographic proximity, so every customer mattered.

Regardless, customers love the prospect of the one-to-one relationship with brands. They appreciate when businesses go the extra mile to truly understand their needs and motivations, and they tend to reward customer-centric brands with their patronage. As such, businesses have been taking this extra step for ages to delight their customers and show that they “understand.”



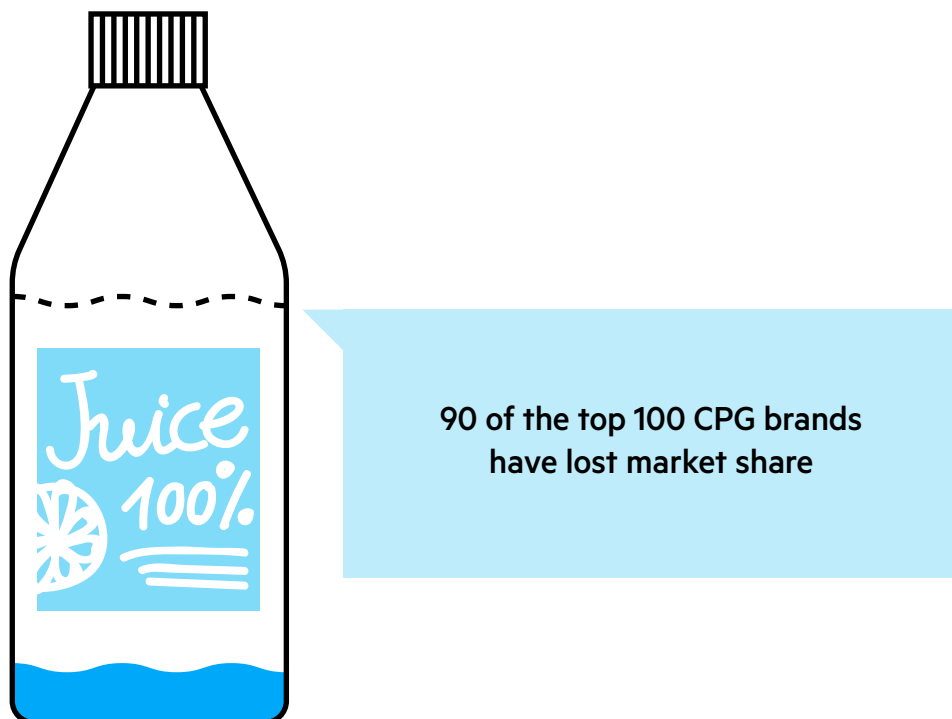
New Channels, New Approach

Today, the customer journey is incredibly complicated due to new communication channels, the explosion of available data, new technology and the rise of the global economy. Modern technology and communication mediums have enabled businesses to expand their reach considerably as they serve customers at a global scale. The pool of potential prospects has never been bigger—and is growing larger by the day.

However, everything around the customer relationship—from customer service to messaging and communication—has changed. To support operations at the global scale, many businesses have moved from a one-to-one customer approach to a one-to-many broadcast method. On the one hand, this enables enterprises to serve a growing number of customers. On the other, it makes building memorable, highly personalized customer experiences more difficult than ever before.

Companies big and small alike are encountering issues as they strive to create a meaningful customer experience. This directly impacts their bottom line through loss of engagement, lower retention and decreased brand loyalty. Whether businesses serve a niche B2B market or an expansive B2C audience, today's customers have high expectations—and many brands are simply missing the mark. They struggle to truly “know” their customers and likewise, their customers form weaker relationships with them.

The one-to-one interactions of old seem to be forgotten, lost in the rush to reach more customers.



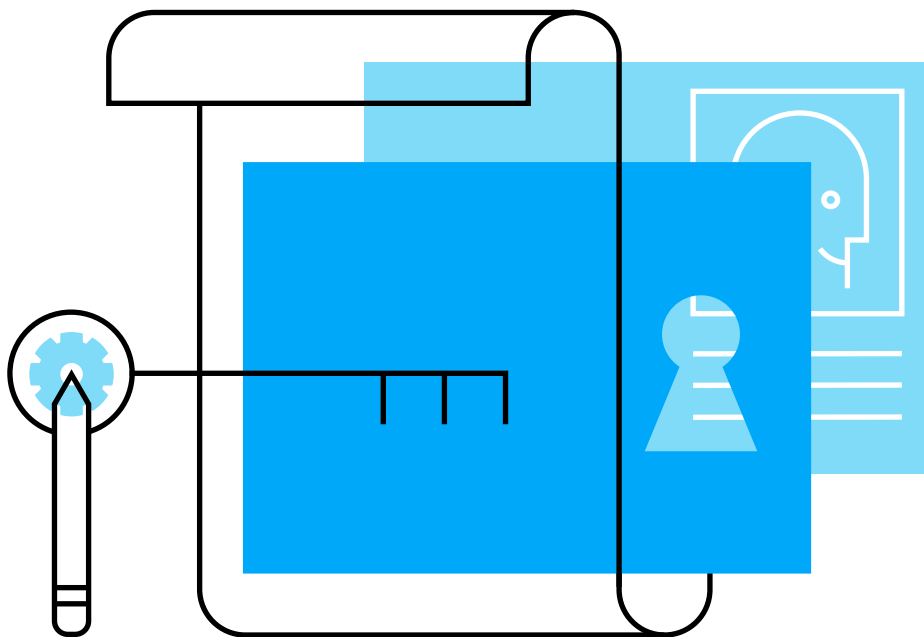
What's Old is New Again

Businesses are always looking for new ways to set themselves apart from competitors. As customer experience is an area in which many enterprises struggle, it presents a new angle for savvy brands to differentiate themselves. If enterprises can deliver engaging personalized customer experiences, they will be in a prime position to set themselves apart from their competitors—gaining fierce customer loyalty.

How do businesses build the customer experiences that today's consumers expect? Instead of looking forward, the key may lie in a return to the basics. Consider the one-to-one relationships forged by businesses long ago. Revisiting the best practices of the past may offer insight into how businesses can craft more captivating experiences for today's customers.

The modern digital business landscape introduced many complexities to the customer journey, but new tools and capabilities are also helping enterprises get back to the root of what made customer experiences so compelling before. By combining these new tools with inspiration from the past, businesses can deliver the personal one-to-one experiences that today's customers want—without sacrificing the global scale.

And so our story begins. Here are five examples of how businesses are using modern technology combined with time-tested best practices to create a highly personalized customer experience:



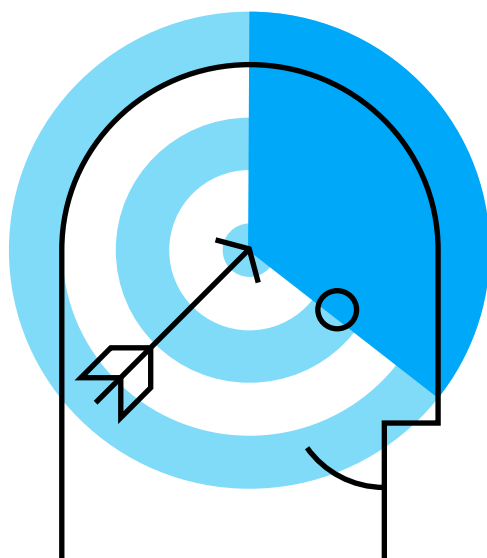
1. Personalization is Back

There was a time when business owners knew the precise needs of every single customer they served, which enabled them to personalize the entire customer experience to each person. They could create the perfect pitch that spoke to prospects' specific motivations and desires, fine-tune offerings and services and utilize prior interactions to continually refine the customer experience.

Businesses are once again able to personalize the experience (even at a global scale), thanks to tools that enable marketers to segment audiences, score behaviors and automatically present the most relevant content. These tools empower brands to tell the story that matters the most to each customer, instead of trying to create a single story and telling it to millions of customers. No more offering lawn mowers to people that live on the 40th floor of an apartment building or displaying introductory content to long-time customers.

Even simple moves toward personalization can produce big results—targeting website visitors with industry-specific content, for example, can garner a 34% lift in conversion rates. Whether it's as complex as creating entirely different content experiences or simply making relevant product suggestions, every little bit can improve the overall customer experience.

The ability to turn actionable insights into personalized customer experiences across all channels will be vital for years to come. With the rise of artificial intelligence, machine learning and data science, the importance of data-driven personalization will only continue to grow.



Targeting website visitors with industry-specific content can garner a 34% lift in conversion rates

2. A Return to the First-Name Basis

People often reminisce about when they could walk into a store and the owner would greet them by name. Nowadays, people interact with businesses across numerous channels and engage with a wide variety of brands, so many enterprises struggle to even approach that level of familiarity. However, customers still want that “first-name basis” level of engagement.

Fortunately, brands have the tools to deliver on this promise—but doing so requires a tight integration of customer relationship management (CRM) and enterprise resource planning (ERP) solutions to manage relationships. Customers are willing to hand over personal information and preferences to brands, but only if they use this information to further improve personalization and the customer experience.

ERP and CRM solutions empower businesses to build a better experience for their customers. They can target prospects more effectively, deliver the right information at the right time and improve visibility into customer relationships. However, it all starts with the integration between the two systems—if the integration isn’t there, it may negatively impact the relevancy of initiatives.

Context is already important to crafting the customer experiences that consumers demand. Moving forward, intelligent systems as well as the data that drives them will play an increasingly important role in the evolution of the customer experience. Breaking down the walls between systems of engagement and systems of record (like ERPs and CRMs) will empower businesses to better drive relevant experiences.



3. Digital & Mobile: The New 24-Hour Store

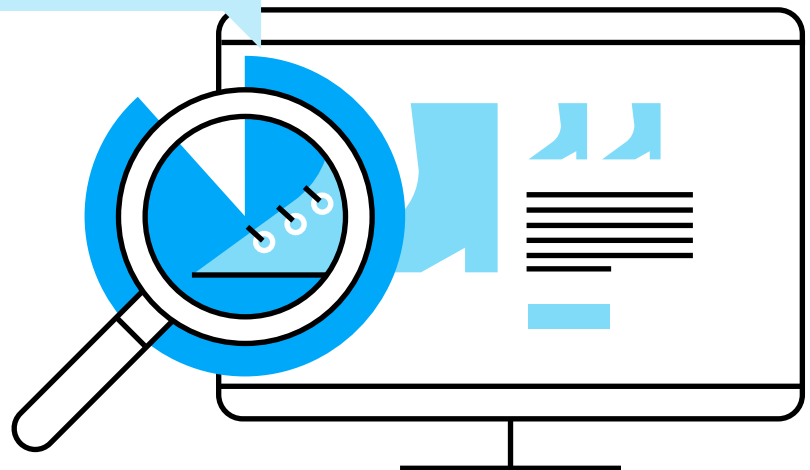
The 24-hour store is the ultimate convenience for customers—they're able to shop for goods, try items and make purchases whenever they want. However, many brands have been scaling back on their 24-hour operations due to resource constraints. This has led many businesses to compensate with their always-available digital and mobile outlets. Through the anytime, anywhere access of websites and applications, people can research products, browse inventory, make purchases and interact with customer service at any time.

Businesses must treat their digital properties as the first point of interaction. On the internet, they are always open and must always be ready to serve customers—even during holidays or off hours. Many consumers start their customer journey online and only commit to making a purchase after concluding their research about the product and brand.

Enterprises must also pay special attention to their online availability. Website or application downtime can result directly in lost sales and leads, and may even drive customers straight to competitors. Even slow performance from websites and applications is enough to annoy customers.

If businesses are looking to deliver a great customer experience, it starts with a performant, feature-rich digital presence.

81% of shoppers conduct online research before buying



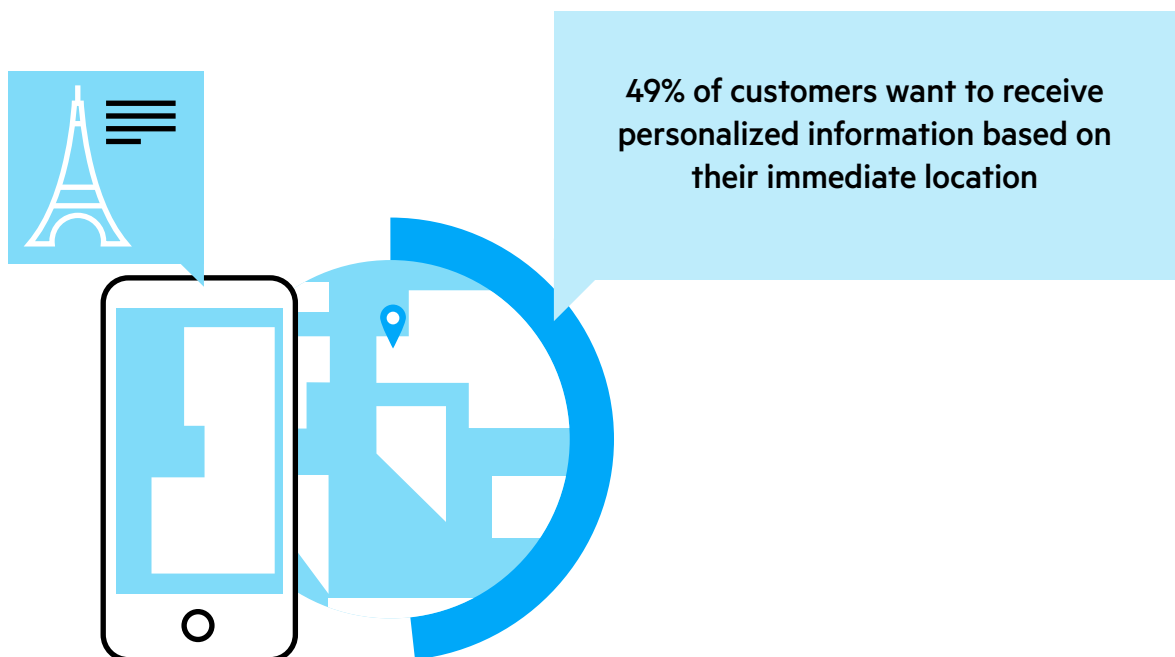
4. Community Still Matters

Globalization has enabled many businesses to expand their reach to all four corners of the earth, but that doesn't mean that location has become any less important. Quite the opposite—the community focus that drove the success of early businesses is still key and it's more important than ever to embrace the context of location to offer relevant experiences to customers in different regions.

Serving an international audience is difficult. It requires businesses to understand the specific values and needs of their customers, while also delivering highly targeted messaging that embodies these values and needs. Localization ensures your customers—regardless of where they are from—feel like a valued part of your audience.

In the past, localization has been a significant challenge, often forcing businesses to manage hundreds of content pages on their website, depending on the scope and number of regional audiences. With today's digital technologies, enterprises are better able to deliver tailored messages to each market they serve. Companies can seamlessly manage websites in different languages, with as much content as required.

Whether brands want to sell region-specific products and services, customize their messaging to appeal to certain communities or share information about nearest locations, modern web management tools enable businesses to serve local audiences effectively and efficiently. It's a return to the “community first” focus of old—without sacrificing the global scale.



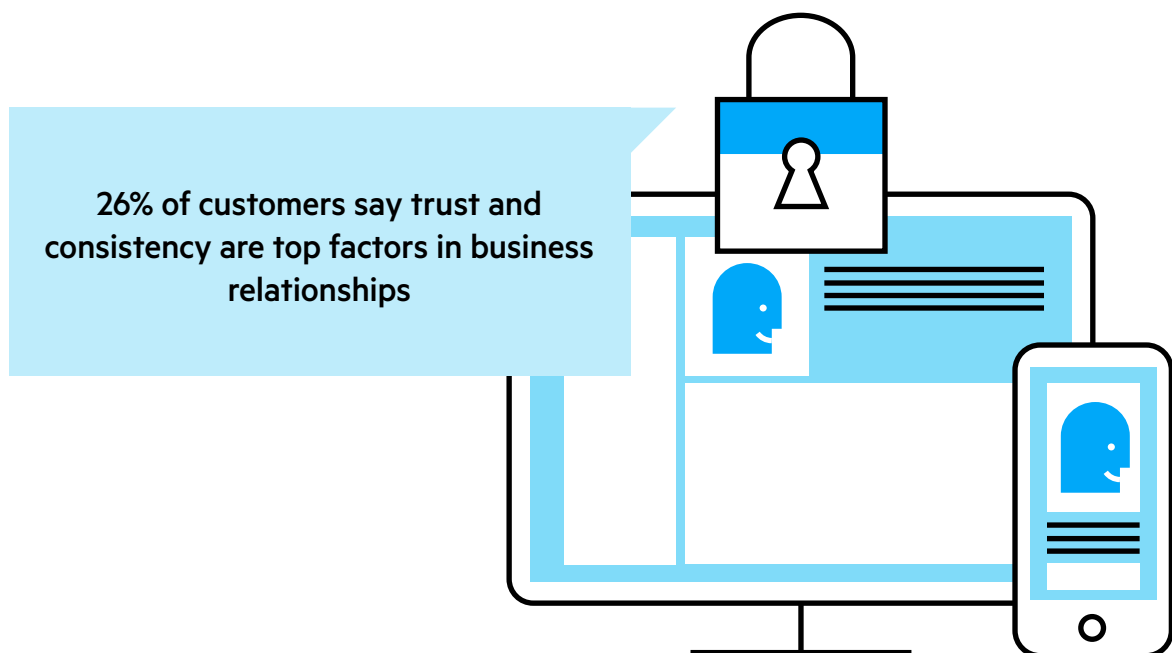
5. One Customer, a Single Experience

Over the past century, brands have gained access to many more channels for engaging customers. In the past, most interactions were limited to the store. Now, from the advent of the telephone to the rise of digital channels more recently, the customer experience is happening across a wide array of touchpoints. This is great for customers, as it gives them the freedom to engage with their favorite brands how they want, when they want.

However, through the rise of all these different channels, consistency in the customer experience has become a challenge. Tracking customers across channels and creating a single source of truth is no easy task, which often results in disjointed brand experiences. For example, it's not uncommon to see physical locations that can't return purchases made online or sales agents who can't access customer information from the web.

Fortunately, there are new tools that can help businesses keep better track of all this customer information across touchpoints. They can use this channel information to build stronger customer profiles, resulting in smarter, more unified campaigns that deliver a truly consistent brand experience—regardless of how customers interact with brands.

The customer experience has always revolved around a seamless, continuous customer journey. The rise of new touchpoints may have added a new level of complexity, but new tools enable brands to bring their customer journeys back in line.

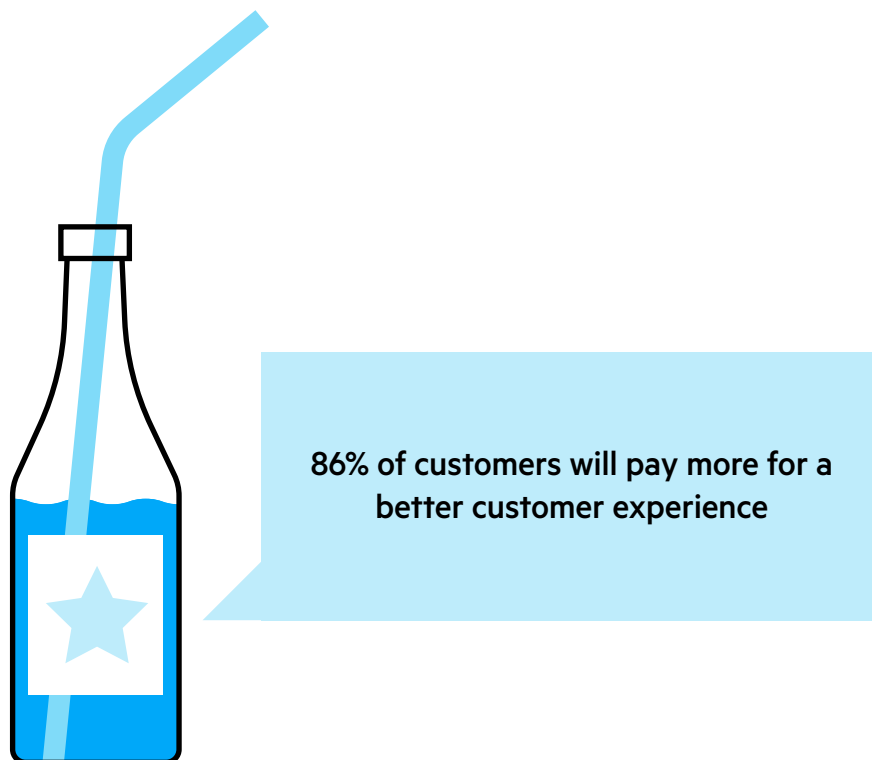


Today's Customer Experience: Old Battle, New Tools

Whether you're serving a niche audience or millions of prospects across the globe, customers demand a quality experience and they won't settle for less. This makes the customer experience the new business battleground for many enterprises across the globe.

That said, while customer experience may be the new business battleground, the battle itself is as old as time. By combining the latest marketing tools with the theory that drove the memorable one-to-one experiences of old, businesses can reimagine the modern customer journey and craft highly personalized experiences that truly impress customers—regardless of business size, industry or audience. Whether you're already deploying some of these practices or none of them at all, there is always room to make the customer experience even more compelling.

New technology is disrupting the way businesses engage their customers. Take advantage of these tools and embark on a new customer journey. Every moment matters.



Progress Sitefinity: The Modern Digital Command Center

Progress® Sitefinity® is a web content management system that empowers your ability to manage content and customer interactions across all channels and at all points of the customer journey. Engage prospects wherever they stand, whenever they are ready to be reached with tailored customer experiences.

With capabilities like personalization, multisite management, behavior tracking, audience segmentation and marketing attribution, Sitefinity is the complete digital marketing command center. Today, Sitefinity powers over 11,000 websites worldwide across various industries—from financial and government services to communications, retail and entertainment.

Learn More About Our Solutions

About Progress


Progress (NASDAQ: PRGS) offers the leading platform for developing and deploying mission-critical business applications. Progress empowers enterprises and ISVs to build and deliver cognitive-first applications that harness big data to derive business insights and competitive advantage. Progress offers leading technologies for easily building powerful user interfaces across any type of device, a reliable, scalable and secure backend platform to deploy modern applications, leading data connectivity to all sources, and award-winning predictive analytics that brings the power of machine learning to any organization. Over 1,700 independent software vendors, 80,000 enterprise customers, and 2 million developers rely on Progress to power their applications. Learn about Progress at www.progress.com or +1-800-477-6473.


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