



Viewpoint

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The Customer Journey in Media and Entertainment

Data is immensely important to the modern focus on the customer experience (CX). But data is more than just some stodgy technical resource. It can be used to generate insights that media and entertainment organizations can use to make better decisions that are grounded in the right context. It enables business leaders to connect the dots and make customer experiences more engaging. And data is an accessory to a collection of interconnected consumer processes. It must flow freely within organizations so that it can help shed light on opportunities and challenges in consumer engagement. Leaving data to pool in unattended silos is counter-productive, and this type of restriction can keep your most experienced and talented leaders in the dark. That's unfortunate whenever it occurs, but within the customer experience, it has particularly widespread consequences.

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The CX process is a sequence of events that reflects where the consumer is across every moment of the customer journey. Interactions can come at any time, whether when an entertainment experience is happening, or before or after, for example when purchasing tickets or resolving issues with charges and billing. These interactions might have varying metrics or criteria for success within the organization, but they shouldn't operate in isolation. Without contextual awareness of the interactions along the journey and how the consumer is engaging along the way, the teams handling each step in the process risk operating in a bubble, surrounded only by the kinds of data they are most comfortable using and unaware of important information that may be hiding in someone else's data.

In a worst-case scenario, the only people with visibility into the entire journey are the consumers themselves. And if their dealings with your media and entertainment organization are fragmented, broken up by interactions that

require them to retell their stories again and again, that means the organization isn't in control of the process and can't deliver the best possible customer experiences.

To operate with greater intention, media and entertainment organizations should free their data, making it available to represent interactions along the customer journey. That helps those teams working early in the process to have the metrics they need to understand customers' long-term value,



propensity to purchase and subscribe, communications preferences and what piques their personal interest.

Unifying data across silos can enable personalized customer engagement. The utilization of data also supports faster, more accurate self-service, and helps identify customer advocates and detractors. In fact, the availability of clean, cross-departmental data can consistently elevate a media and entertainment organization's responses to customer expectations—no matter where you are in the customer lifecycle.

Ventana Research asserts that through 2025, the establishment of CX application suites on a common platform in the media and entertainment industry will become the focal point to optimize customer and organization engagement. This reflects a growing emphasis on mapping and managing customer journeys and unifying data across departments and processes to knit together solid customer experiences.

Fortunately, modern CX technology provides solutions in the form of customer data platforms (CDPs). CDPs have become an important element in the effort to allow data to be dynamic rather than static. They consolidate and clean customer data, moving it out of the contact center, CRM, websites, point of sale systems or other apps where much of it originates and into marketing and lifecycle campaigns, where it can be analyzed and made actionable. An organization that is equipped with a CDP and a forward-thinking customer and data strategy can more easily envision what customers intend to do, what they like and dislike, and how they perceive the brand.

All of this suggests that CX professionals need to take steps toward utilizing their data to allow it to be used by teams within the organization responsible for any part of the customer journey. They should audit existing methods to understand where data is being collected and why it sometimes sits in silos. They should examine both the technology systems and the business processes that freeze things in place. Often, processes need only adjustment—or to be better data-informed—in order for them to be dramatically more effective at boosting customer satisfaction. But processes and data must cross departmental boundaries if a media and entertainment organization wants to be truly “customer-first.”

Some may be tempted to fall back on their existing tech stack, especially their CRM tools, to handle the integration and de-siloing. But traditional organizational thinking must shift toward greater internal collaboration and cooperation. Business leaders and CX professionals will be better off if they reexamine the fundamentals, take a wider view, consider the tools that are purpose-built to make data widely available—and put them to work.



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Keith Dawson is responsible for Customer Experience (CX) research, covering technology that facilitates engagement to optimize customer-facing processes. His focus areas include agent management, contact center and voice of the customer, along with technology in marketing, sales, field service and applications such as digital commerce and subscription management. Keith's specialization is in natural language speech tools and the wide array of customer analytics.