

Providing full visibility and insight for an improved CX journey

By [Gerrit de Villiers](#)

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Although South Africa has just avoided a recession, the outlook for the economy is less optimistic. With subdued investment levels and consumer spending being curbed, there is no doubt that local businesses face an uphill battle.



Notably, the latest [Absa Purchasing Manager's Index](#) (PMI) data shows weaker levels of private sector activity, and a pessimistic outlook on future business conditions.

In the face of these challenging conditions, businesses have to look to the factors that are under their control – and turn tough times into an opportunity to strengthen their customer service and provide an unparalleled customer experience. Indeed, while political and economic volatility cannot be immediately solved, business owners have the ability to actually boost bottom-line growth by finding ways to provide a seamless, personalised and efficient customer experience (CX).

According to [Salesforce](#) 84% of customers say being treated like a person (not a number) is very important to winning their business; while almost 60% indicated that tailored/personalised engagement based on past interactions is very important to them.

Given that customer experience is so pivotal – and is becoming even more important as consumer expectations rise – it

would be natural to assume that SA businesses are getting this right. Sadly, this is not always the case. In fact, as businesses grow and scale, and customer interaction channels multiply, businesses are losing their ability to develop an intimate and essential link with their customers.

Despite the reams of data being generated daily, businesses lack insight into their customers and are therefore failing to provide the efficient, engaging and personalised customer experience that is essential to business success today.



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Transforming the CX journey

For forward-looking business owners, a focus on customer experience should be a major priority. This critical element can be transformed by understanding what is required to repair the broken link with customers to deliver the best possible experience.

This requires rethinking the way in which contact centres operate, and paying attention to every customer touchpoint in the CX journey. Ultimately, within contact centres, the goal is to provide full visibility and insight into every customer interaction. This will then empower contact centre agents with the context needed to provide efficient service. Importantly, back-office processes must also be incorporated and enhanced to drive improvements that benefit both the customer and the business.

Let's break this down even further, and explore the three key elements in the journey.

1. Build trust with your customer

The most important part of building trust is to consistently deliver results. A starting point is being accountable – make a promise to your customer and make sure you keep it. Although the unforeseen may happen, providing proactive feedback and managing expectations correctly is an integral part of maintaining the customer relationship.

2. Empower your contact centre agents

Agents must be empowered with the means (technology, processes, information), the ability (training, coaching) and the authority to do their job efficiently.

To use the example of data, contact centre agents need access to relevant customer profile and interaction information at the right time to effectively transform and enhance the customer experience. This will help agents make better decisions by providing them with visibility, context and guidance to handle customer interactions more effectively.

If the information is presented to the agent in a simple, user-friendly way, the focus is also on servicing the customer efficiently rather than being preoccupied with managing and using tools and applications.



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3. Closely incorporate back office/3rd party providers

The third part of the customer experience equation requires that the back office and third-party service providers be closely

incorporated into the process flow.

Traditionally, the contact centre has operated in a silo that sits far outside of the business. This impedes efficiency and the flow of key information. Today, the contact centre must be closely integrated with full visibility in order to measure and enforce SLAs as well as to track tasks. The process of incorporation should be supported by the automation of workflows, which will further increase efficiencies and also support contact centre agents.

Finally, as businesses endeavour to provide engaging and technology-supported customer experience journeys, it is important to remember that customer-centricity is closely linked to agent/employee centricity.

David Skomo of UnitedHealth Group encapsulates this ethos by stating: "If we don't offer a really good employee experience, then we might as well hang it up. Because employee experience is probably the number one contributing factor of a good customer experience."

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