



CX: the ultimate competitive advantage

How better-engaged employees can help you deliver on the promise of CX





What's in store for retailers

CX is top of mind

For **72% of businesses**, customer experience (CX) transformation is their top priority. And for good reason. In an omnichannel world, where consumers have endless options available to them at their fingertips, **CX is the leading way for retailers to achieve success.**

For companies like Rebecca Minkoff, their CX efforts are already paying off.

Since installing smart mirrors and other fitting-room technologies, sales have been up **more than 200% each year.** This success has less to do with the technology itself, and more to do with the experience it creates. The brand has successfully brought the digital efficiencies of e-commerce into the store to remove much of the friction. And customers love it!

Not all retailers are taking the high-tech road to create amazing customer experiences. Some, like Ulta Beauty, are focusing more on services and atmosphere.

One of the fastest-growing beauty retailers (thanks to a recent **23.7% spike in sales**), has differentiated itself by understanding what their customers want: A combination of prestige and low-price products, all in the same store. What really sets the retailer apart from the competition are the in-store salon services and relaxing, spa-like environment which encourages customers to experience products as they discover them.

Whichever road you take; the stakes are high.

90% of customers will leave a company because of a poor experience. Which means all the technology and innovation in the world won't amount to anything if it doesn't translate into amazing CX.

What exactly is CX?

And why is it so important?

The whole notion of customer experience is somewhat nebulous. It's often used interchangeably with customer satisfaction (the measure of how happy a customer is with your product, service, or interaction), customer service (the process of ensuring customer satisfaction with a product or service through a transaction) and even the customer journey (the route a customer takes to find and obtain product or service).

But CX is bigger than customer satisfaction, customer service and the customer journey.

As the saying goes, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Without getting too philosophical, this truly is the case for customer experience. That's because **CX is your customer's perception of how all the interactions they have across your company touchpoints come together**—or their experience with your brand as a whole. In other words, it's how your customer *feels* about everything—from your messaging to the quality of your products to the people in your organization—including the customer service they receive, how

satisfied they are with your product or service and even the journey.

Because it pertains to all aspects of your brand, CX is all-encompassing. And that makes it all-important. In fact, **CX has quickly emerged as the single-most important brand differentiator**. That means you can no longer compete on product or service alone.

We're now living in an "experience economy" where CX even trumps price!

In this new era, you have to cater to new consumers: digital natives (made up of Gen Z and Millennials). This demographic, which accounts for **nearly half of your consumer base**, is used to create a seamless and personalized experiences across all channels and expect the same experience to carry over into your store.

It has to. Research shows that **86% of retail consumers** are willing to pay for a better experience. So you can have the best product for the best price, but if your associates can't deliver on the promise of CX, customers will go somewhere else—even if it means paying more.

All of this paints a pretty clear picture: The brands with the best CX will win.

So what does this mean for you?

BRAND TOUCHPOINTS





Your associates will make or break CX

So make them a part of your CX strategy

CX efforts are transforming the function of the in-store associate. Amazon's new cashierless store is a perfect example of this.

Driven by the same technologies that power self-driving cars, Amazon Go provides a convenient, grab-and-go shopping experience. No lines. No cashiers. No fumbling for cash, debit, or credit. But that doesn't mean no employees. Rather than serving traditional, transactional purposes (like ringing through customers or processing returns), associates perform new tasks designed to enhance the customer experience.

While Amazon Go is something of an extreme case (for now), it's a perfect example of how CX can impact the in-store associate's role. It also underscores the need for operational agility.

Because, as you find new and innovative ways to differentiate yourself from

the competition, you will need to make sure your associates evolve with your business.

Agility will be key to ensuring future success.

So what's the secret to ensuring your associates keep up with customer expectations (so you can stay ahead of the competition)? In a word (or three): keeping them engaged.

But engaging associates is difficult. Turnover is high, shifts are unpredictable and, without corporate email addresses, they're hard to reach. CX transformation will only complicate things. Whether you're implementing new technology, offering new services or overhauling your visual merchandising practices—**your CX efforts will, without a doubt, effect your associates in their daily jobs.**

With such a strong focus on the customer experience, you can bet that change will come quickly. As such, it's imperative that you set your employees up for success and empower them to pivot at the same pace as the business so they can continue to deliver on your brand promise.

But how do you engage your employees and get them to this point?



Give your associates what they need

So they can give your customers what they want

While the concept is easy, many retailers struggle to execute. That's because retail is a complicated game. With ever-changing inventory, new in-store technologies, shifting priorities and growing customer expectations, your associates need to know and do more than ever before!

Making sure your associates know everything they need to—from your brand's vision to the latest prices and promotions—is paramount. But simply telling them this information isn't enough. You need to continually reinforce concepts with **ongoing communication** to build their knowledge and confidence and change behavior so that your entire workforce personifies your brand.

But getting employees to internalize your brand's vision requires **engagement**—and no amount of breakroom posters will get you there. Employees want to feel connected to the organization and understand the vision and the role they play in executing it. Imagine the power of enabling your CEO to communicate these messages directly to your associates. This type of interaction could connect them to your brand on an emotional level and make them feel more invested in their role. When employees are engaged like this, they proactively seek out information to help them excel at their jobs.

In order to engage your associates, you need to be able to reach them. So

convenience becomes a critical factor. Making communications available to associates from any device—be it a personal smartphone, a shared workstation or POS terminal—makes it easier for them to engage in a way that fits naturally into their on-the-job routines. Convenient access to knowledge in the moment of need is equally important, because most associates just don't have the time to flip through manuals, search intranets, or chase down a manager when they don't know something.

What your frontline knows (or doesn't know) varies from associate to associate. As such, each associate has unique needs. Delivering **content that adapts and is targeted** to each associate's needs helps to close knowledge gaps. This builds stronger, more confident employees and a more consistent frontline and in-store experience.

But what about what you need?

You need a way to **change behaviors** to get your associates to where you need them to be, as quickly and effectively as possible. Because, as the stats show, customers have a low tolerance for poor experiences, and they won't be sympathetic to your growing pains.

The problem is that traditional methods for connecting with your associates (like huddles, classroom training and posters) aren't agile enough to keep up with the speed of business today. And they certainly don't change behaviors.

So where does that leave you?



In order to successfully execute on your CX strategy, your workforce needs to know and do the right things. To do this, you need to fundamentally change behaviors.

The secret to changing associate behavior

It's easier than you think!

In an ideal world, your managers would be able to sit down with each associate for a few minutes at the beginning of every shift to brief them on the latest offers, alert them to new priorities and answer any questions they might have. That way, they could ensure each employee had the knowledge and confidence needed to do the right thing on the job.

Unfortunately, especially for larger teams, this scenario just isn't feasible.

But what if there was a scalable and automated way to do this?

Lucky for you, there is! Microlearning.

Microlearning delivers the personalized content each of your associates need. But instead of doing a single information dump (which is both overwhelming and highly ineffective), microlearning delivers this information in bite-sized pieces over time to increase knowledge and confidence, develop the right behaviors and improve productivity. And it does all this in just 3 – 5 minutes a day!

No more taking associates away from their jobs so they can reluctantly sit through day-long training sessions full of information (most of which doesn't pertain to them) they'll forget the next day. (It's true! According to the forgetting curve, people forget 90% of what they learn within 30 days if it isn't continually reinforced). Just quick, convenient and relevant training that can be completed when an associate clocks in for a shift.

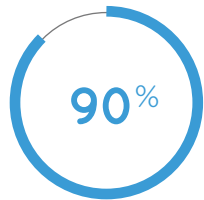
In terms of the bigger CX transformation picture, microlearning gives leaders an easy and effective way to keep associates in the loop and behaviors on track. Whether you need to send out a real-time message to your entire workforce to communicate a shift in strategy or push out training updates for those new smart mirrors you're rolling out, microlearning gives you the technical **ability to update associates as change happens**.

When your associates are engaged and exhibit the right behaviors, they can't help but deliver on the promise of CX. That's the promise of microlearning.

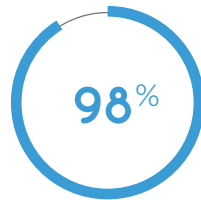


Microlearning is more than a new training approach —it's a transformational business strategy

Powerhouse home décor retailer, At Home,
re-brands and boosts sales.



decrease in employee
onboarding time



voluntary participation
in platform



increased sales in stores
with higher knowledge

“Being able to connect our people—to the tools, vision, mission and each other—has been the most rewarding part about ensuring that we are doing our part to prepare our team members, also in terms of our shareholders and ensuring we deliver on business goals as well.”

VALERIE DAVISSON, CHIEF PEOPLE OFFICER, AT HOME

Microlearning works! But we don't expect you to just take our word for it. See what our customers have to say at
<https://axonify.com/customer-love/>



To truly realize the ROI of your CX efforts, you need to invest in your employees.

Cashing in on CX

When it comes to CX, your customer's perception is reality. And the reality is, there's a pretty big gap between how you and your customers perceive the quality of your CX. The majority of retailers are falling woefully short of customer expectations. **75% of brands believe they deliver customer-centric experiences, but only 30% of customers agree.**

You can't afford to underestimate the role your frontline associates play in informing your customer's perception. When your associates don't deliver on your brand's vision or your customer's expectations—whether it's because they don't understand the strategy or haven't been given the tools they need to succeed—it results in disconnected and unsatisfying CX and, ultimately, lost sales.

By optimizing your workforce, you're impacting your bottom line. With a microlearning platform, you can measure how training directly impacts business performance and make data-driven decisions that influence other targets, like NPS, CSAT, CES and customer lifetime value.

And when your vision, your people and your business goals align, your associates can deliver on the promise of CX and drive the competitive advantage you need to thrive.

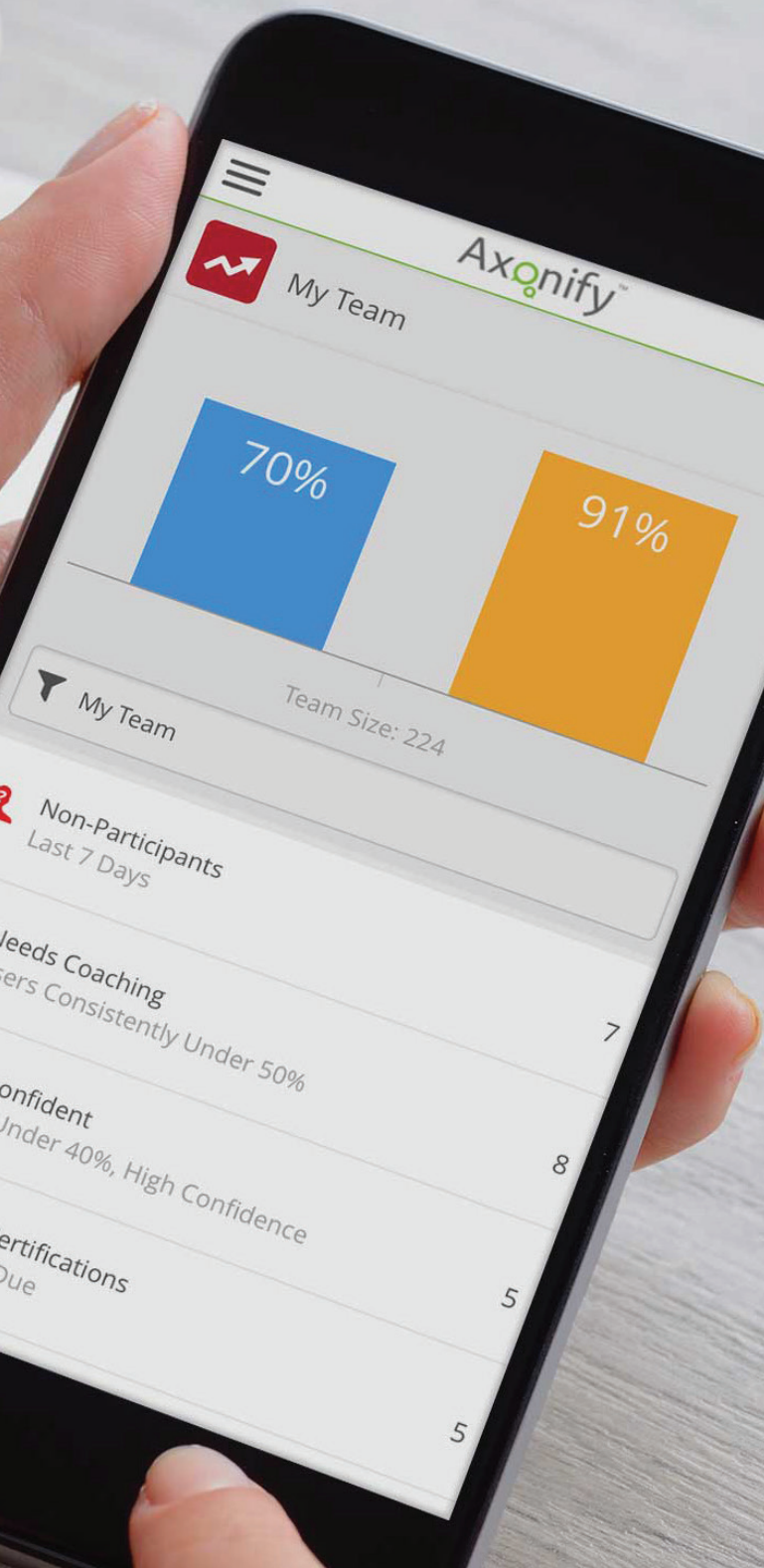


of all customer experience transformations fail.



of those that fail are due to employee resistance and unsupportive leadership behaviors.

Source:
McKinsey & Company. [Avoiding the seven deadly sins of customer-experience transformations](#)



Are you ready to change
associate behavior and make
your workforce a critical part of
your retail organization's success?

You can, with Axonify.

With Axonify, you do more than train people. You drive business results with a personalized learning experience that fits into the workflow, only takes a few minutes, and ingrains the knowledge people need to achieve your business goals.

Want to learn more about how microlearning can deliver competitive advantage in your organization? Read our comprehensive guide: [Everything you need to know about microlearning](#).

Contact one of our microlearning experts today to learn more.

sales@axonify.com | Toll-Free: 1-855-AXONIFY (269-6439) | axonify.com

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