

## **Customer Driven Digital Transformation**

The future is changing faster than it can be anticipated. Technology has been and remains the core of this transformation. With the onset of the digital revolution, the pace of this change is getting quicker and the customer becoming more informed, eager and experimental to take on the new. As disruption moves from being the buzzword to something more common, it becomes important to think about what the new age disruptive companies are doing. While they are simply solving customer problems and providing them better user experience, for businesses it is essential to find a point that bridges the gap between business goals and customer aspirations, and eventually come together as one. The description and realm of competition is also changing with an ever thinning line, but what differentiates businesses today is how they treat their customers and their expectations.

The ability to bridge the gap between business offerings and the customer aspirations is what Nihilent's philosophy has always been centred around. Digital transformation which is one of the key areas of focus at Nihilent, is ideally for businesses to understand what the future holds when only working towards targets versus working towards attaining customer delight. Customer focused digital transformation is no longer a nice to have factor, in fact this is going to be the defining purpose of innovators, ideators, futuristic professionals, and is already so.

### **Digital Plumbing or Digital Infrastructure**

According to a Gartner research report of 2018, forty-seven percent of CEOs said they are being challenged by the board of directors to make progress in digital business, and this enterprise wide focus on digital is also being felt by CIOs across industries.

In common parlance, digital transformation entails the technology infrastructure being setup and installed for automating the processes and reducing manual intervention. But ideally, becoming a digitally enabled and capable organisation does much more.

*The fact that the end customer should be focus of every aspect is often overlooked,*

*but as it turns out is the main reason how businesses are able to differentiate and thereby build expertise, brand value, organisational hierarchy and more. As digital transformation moves from being an experiment by the IT guys of the company, to the entire business, the need for all levels and departments to come together is now at the helm for all CXOs.*

So while ecommerce is the new kid on the block, with so many portals mushrooming across various segments and promising the world to the customer, it is only a handful who enjoy the upper edge of customer loyalty through repeated visits, customer delight through satisfying their growing needs, and grow with the customer through detailed analytics of understanding what they actually need at different stages of buying.

### **Evolution of the New Age Customer**



With the internet becoming more of a necessity than a luxurious privilege, right from the solo-socio farmer to small business shopkeeper to an SME businessman owning smart devices, the modern consumer is always connected, makes an educated decision and wants best experience that is above par.

The word customer comes from the term *custom* which means routine or the things that occur on a regular basis. While numerous startups have started, grown and led the revolution of new age businesses being formed, their claim to disrupting the market is rather tall and derived more out of the need for eyeballs than actual

transactions. *They have in effect not been able to create a routine out of the purchase lifecycle of a customer, mostly since the process is uni-dimensional and not multi-dimensional when it comes to thinking about the next steps of a customer's buying behaviour.*

It becomes very important to address and complete the entire customer life cycle for any business. One of the most effective ways to improve customer life cycle is to ensure that there is value addition at every point of interaction with customer. *This requires a blend of cognitive and empathetic approach to the mainstream as well as specialised processes of the customer lifecycle.*

### **Customer Service Vs Customer Delight**

Customer service is just about meeting your customer needs and providing them the products or services that you have to offer. While you might be providing world-class products at the doorstep, that is just a part of the engagement with the customer.

Today, customers are more aware and informed about the options they have and are vocal about their experiences with a product or service. It becomes all the more crucial for a business to work towards what the customer needs on an ongoing basis, than what he wants just then. The fact is, just providing good customer service is not enough in the new age business environment.

*The shift from customer service to customer delight is where digital transformation is of immense importance.* Customer delight is the key parameter of any business now and is essentially achieved when you create the WOW moment for your customer by anticipating their needs and provide them suitable solutions even before they ask for it. And then again, this is not done just once, but is a part of every interaction you have with the customer. It should become a constant KPI for all departments of a business, and resultant of a seamless integration among them.

A small transaction like that of buying a phone can easily be either a one-time engagement or a continuous chain of never-ending solutions being made available to the new phone owner like headphones, screen cover, phone cover, power bank and more. *Understanding the journey map of a customer* and bridging the gap between what the customer wants, what you can anticipate and what he expects eventually in the journey, is what sets businesses apart.



### The Digital Parody

Did the user become aware first of his digital environment or did the technology capture a users' fancy? It is not the ideal chicken and eggs situation but can certainly make for a good debate. While contemplating on this is healthy, *what organisations really need is an end-to-end eco-system to be created for processes among business units to merge and collaborate, with customer centricity at the core of all functions.* A trend in most work places is grounds up initiative to bring about the digital change, but ideally what is required is holistic mechanisms to be put in place instead of addressing digital selectively.

While the adoption rate is much higher in media and telecom industries as per statistics, other major sectors like banking, retail and healthcare struggle to find a footprint in this arena. With the future consisting of AI, Blockchain, IoT as front runners in the technical space, it is becoming imperative for even the most traditional business to understand, implement and review digital nuances in everyday working like never before.

## **The Cloud around Digital Transformation**

Right from deploying digital technologies, to improving workflow processes to transforming the entire business model, digital transformation is the response from businesses facing challenges in today's fast paced era. *It is the synchronization or integration of digital technology into all functions of the business; essentially changing and improving how businesses operate and deliver value to customers.* It also incorporates cultural changes that the organization goes through while keeping focus on the customer needs and aspirations. Often, it goes through the long-standing processes followed by businesses to bring in new practices that enable every department to function as an integrated unit. This is to constantly challenge the status quo by identifying customer pain points and utilising digital technology at every step of a customer lifecycle. The objective of digital transformation is to move from being merely customer facing to customer driven organisation.

Transformation of any organisation is bound to be faced with resistance and challenges, as anything new being induced into the system takes time and effort to adapt to. *What works best in this scenario is an in-depth and immersive market research of what the past trends have been, how has the customer responded previously, where has the loop of customer relationship broken, what aspects have made him come back to the business and more.* The way these processes then get defined are not only more informed, but also a result of an extensive understanding of the end user by each and every person handling a role in the organisation.

*The boundryless effect within the organisation gives a larger picture to every stakeholder involved, and that has a ripple effect in the business in general.*

## **Involve and Evolve**

The best way to understand someone is to ask them what they think, what they want and what they do to make things happen. *Involvement of not just every employee of*

*your business in the customer's lifecycle is enough, but also getting involved in the way a customer thinks is of importance.* Market research is ideally what entails this, and is not restricted to just surveys about purchase trends and possible product likes, but going in depth about what really guides their decision making.

An IT department is no longer just the backend person working on coding and designing, but an active listener of consumer demands through this digital transformation. At Nihilent, we work with various enterprises spread across industries to bring about a transformation in this exact manner. Every person is a customer facing representative of the business and no longer retired to a cubicle or desktop with just one role. Getting out on to the field, and understanding the needs of the end customer for role specific design is the ultimate way of bring about a change in the business. *The biggest advantage of this, is that here the people in the organisation are driving the change thereby reducing the resistance and resolving challenges and problems real-time.* Using digital technology at every stage of the business might help you prepare your organization work at higher efficiency and productivity. However, bringing all systems and processes together to integrate them seamlessly in order to deliver superior customer experience is the real KPI to be worked around.

In a typical scenario, an organization has multiple functional teams focused on market research, product design, product development, marketing and customer service. The general scenario is that all these teams work in isolation and the only interaction they have is when the project is handed over to the next department for further processing. In the absence of an integrated approach, the end product may be a technological marvel but may not be solving the problem that the customer is facing. A simple phase wise approach described below would make the digital transformation more meaningful and customer focused.

- *Understand customer requirements and pain points*
- *Identify gaps in process design*
- *Set up digital transformation goals*

- *Develop seamless user experience*
- *Integrate product and systems design*
- *Process mapping and integration*
- *Product/Service delivery*
- *Improve customer life cycle through single touch points*
- *Define and Create Benchmarks for Customer Delight*

A research and then integration of these aspects puts together something which is most valuable to any business- **data**. This is the oil with which any company functions in today's day and age, and needs to get focussed on deriving results through it rather than have a one-time use.

*Data is the peach of every outcome a business desires, which goes beyond basic maintenance and analytics also. It is the only outcome of every step in the process of what an enterprise works towards namely.*

Actions ➡ Concerns ➡ Monitor ➡ Implement ➡ Assist

For an online business, every action the user takes whether it is just viewing or actually buying a product in the form of clicks versus purchases, every concern that is recorded in the form of bounce rate per page, every visit monitored per customer, every actual transaction completed and the number of times a query is addressed to assist a customer, transpires into some very invaluable data being collected, which can provide tremendous insights into future business development and even current business acceleration.

### **Making Digital Transformation a Reality**

Being a digitally robust business requires more than just implementing technology in all processes. *The key to making it a success is getting consistent validation from the customer, right from the first touch point till the last. Following the rule of the Ethos, Pathos, Logos learning, Ethos is ideally built with regular feedback coming in from the*

end customer and churning out responses as part of resolving any friction in the process. This can be achieved with setting a process right and regular monitoring.



*What is more difficult and in fact missing in the entire eco-system is the pathos side of learning and doing, which is reflective of the emotional and more humane side of the business.* The underlying purpose of all activities come around one objective of understanding the customer and asking him what they aspire for and providing them the same. In business as in real life, this asking needs to be done and not assumed or worked around in numbers through the data only. It needs a two way street which is not so much of a challenge as anticipated to be. Once this is established as the core of any business, it becomes easy to derive the most important answer a business is providing – What Values Does an X business provide which is different from the others in the market?

This is where establishing an emotional connect with the end customer is required. While it might be a long haul game, but when created in mini-series, it can be very easy, insightful and equally engaging for the business. Nihilent's MC cube framework followed by 14signals technology for Customer Loyalty Evaluation are patented structures which have enabled enterprises to leverage digital for all their functions. This has been possible with the formulation and implementation of:

1. Digital Business Strategy
2. Industry Assessment of Digital Footprint
3. Digitization of the product and service

4. Preparing the digital infrastructure
5. Incorporating the digitisation with the customer lifecycle
6. Emphasis on personalisation of digital metrics

The above is more than a set of documents and instead handled best with a design thinking perspective. This stems from the trends, history, buying behaviour, points of customer interaction but translates into establishing values which differentiate businesses in the wake of experiences they entertain.



### **Using Design Thinking Approach in Digital Transformation**

Design thinking in many cases is also referred to as human-centric design. When we talk about customer driven digital transformation; design thinking approach becomes critical in the entire process. This approach can help identify right problems and offer a range of potential solutions that would meet user expectations and improve chances of acceptance.

Fundamentally, *design thinking approach assists in designing experiences that make sure of effective human interaction with product or service.* A good user experience will surpass the expectations of the user and it is not restricted to only one aspect of the customer engagement but rather runs across the entire cycle.

### **The Essence of Personalisation in a Digital World**

As per research, at any given day a user is exposed to around 4000 advertisements globally but to keep our sanity we have devised a way to screen these down to a mere

100. The fact that 75% of Indian consumers prefer personalised communication from businesses or brands, according to Adobe Digital Insights, is a validation of how essential it is to create an emotional connect in everything we do. Customers today have a lot of digital noise around themselves and the only one thing that sets another apart, is the experience you leave the customer with. This is where the importance of personalisation through technology plays a vital role. Emotional connect in product design is at the core of the design process, which enables a user to connect with the business and vice versa.

*Businesses can produce technologically excellent products but when it comes to emotional level, a close and constant interaction with customers would help businesses build products that are fulfilling customer expectations.* When businesses build strong relationships with customers, they are in a better position to understand the problems and expectations of customers. This includes observing the actions of your customers at each level of purchase, use and post usage.

Including the customers in the product design process is the highly important here which can be done through evaluating and observing a customers' reaction to various prompts in the business cycle.

### **The Nihilent Advantage – End-to-End Digital Transformation**

Nihilent is a global consulting and solutions integration company using a holistic and systems approach to problem-solving. It provides end-to-end digital transformation services to companies who want to become customer driven and set up systems and processes, which align their business values to the experiences their customers interact with, in order to create a digitally robust enterprise.

With world-class expertise and cutting-edge patented technologies and frameworks, Nihilent is poised to be the perfect transformation partner that enables an enterprise to not just change top-down but through overall integration as well. We begin with

the end as we create the impact you want to create for your end-customer first, and then work backwards in what is needed to accelerate that digitally.