

HOW TO CREATE A CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE CULTURE IN YOUR ORGANSISATION

PREPARED BY



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Ever since the pandemic, people are more connected than ever. And while this is a positive in many ways, it has created new business challenges in others.

The online review culture and our ever-connected world mean that clients and customers are increasingly expecting outstanding service. Remember, it is easier than ever to share experiences – both good and bad – with the rest of the world.

The organisations that deliver the best customer experience will be the ones who succeed, while others will struggle to compete in our online review age. Organisations can't get away from the fact that it is getting harder to win customers since the pandemic.

Have you found this in your company too?

Food manufacturers of all shapes and sizes have been affected. The difficult times we have lived through have contributed to some significant challenges.

People have been re-evaluating many aspects of their lives and consequently their business decisions. Long-standing clients might have had budgets cut, or their needs have now changed, all while still needing to deliver products and services in an unsettled environment – it hasn't been easy.

In this report, we will look at the importance of customer experience (CX) for manufacturing firms and how to create a 'customer services experience' to give you the edge over your competitors.

Ready to get started?



Scott Williams
Director, Food Recruit



Customer Experience, Customer Service and Customer Care – What's the Difference?

Customer service is one of the original differentiators between food manufacturing businesses, but it has been given an upgrade, first for the 21st century and now for the post-pandemic world.

Since the rise of social media, customer service has taken on an essential role for businesses – the advent of our review society and the ability to leave feedback about companies online has created a new focus for every business and a new function for customer service representatives.

Customer service is no longer solely about the care given at the point of service – it became a broad measure where customers could rate the businesses with which they interact at all levels.

Customer service evolved into customer care – in the last decade, there has been an explosion in the number of 'customer care' roles as businesses look to gain an edge over their rivals by going one step further for their customer base.

And more recently, customer care has evolved yet again into the 'customer experience', which describes the overarching relationship manufacturers have with their past, current and prospective customers using various communication channels.

The increasing volume of 'customer success manager' roles demonstrate how seriously businesses are taking the customer experience.

A customer success manager is responsible for finding the solutions to customer's pain points, nurturing the transition between prospect to customer, and maintaining customer loyalty. Their role is more than just about giving 'great' service to existing customers.

While the customer success manager (CSM) is still a relatively new role, their function is rooted in traditional customer service and a 21st-century twist. Contrary to popular belief, CSMs are employed in sales divisions; their position is in the new customer experience sphere.

In your food manufacturing team, do you have a dedicated customer success or customer service employee or team?

If you don't, there's no need to worry – you can still deliver a CX experience by instilling these values throughout your organisation, and you will learn how throughout this report.



How Can We Define the Customer Experience (CX)?

The CX is the combined experience of each customer's interactions with your organisation at every stage in their customer journey.

Global customer relationship management (CRM) company [Oracle defines customer experience as:](#)

"how a business engages with its customers at every point of their buying journey, from marketing to sales to customer service and everywhere in between"

Some businesses think of customer experience as something that only applies to large scale companies with dedicated customer care departments. But CX is now something that all companies must deliver, no matter their size or location.

Why CX Matters in Your Food Manufacturing business

A good customer experience is something all customers are looking for from the companies they interact with, which comes from the broader review culture I mentioned earlier.

In our digital age, your reputation is more crucial than ever. Online reviews and the ease with which people can share information means that all manufacturers are under the spotlight.

A recent [Trust Pilot report](#) has found that a totally satisfied customer contributes 2.6 times as much revenue as a 'somewhat satisfied' customer and 14 times as much revenue as a 'somewhat dissatisfied customer'.

Impactful data, isn't it?

The more you can please your customers, the more value you are ultimately adding to your bottom line.

When you fail to provide an excellent CX, you don't only risk losing this particular customer; you also jeopardise damaging your company brand and reputation.

A recent [Deloitte report](#) found that, in general, trust in businesses is fading. Fewer than 1 in 10 people now trust companies they buy from, whereas 1 in 2 consumers trust family and friends for honest feedback, highlighting the need for transparency and honesty in your CX.

Companies with higher CX scores retain customers for up to 6 years and who then [spend 140% more than businesses with a lower rating](#) – improving your CX is a win-win for your company and your customers.



What Makes a 'Good' CX?

The biggest and most prominent manufacturers have bigger budgets to improve CX, which tricks other, smaller companies into believing that they have the monopoly of customers.

But when we think about the recent changes in the commercial world, we see a different picture emerging. New factors include:

- Our 'always-on' culture has led to increased customer needs and expectations
- New, disruptive technology is making it easier for businesses to connect with customers
- The ease with which customers can now access brands through social media means a level playing field for organisations of any size.

Looking at these factors, we can see that the CX landscape means any food manufacturing organisation can deliver an outstanding CX.

A [recent survey by professional services firm Engine](#) found that 62% of customers said businesses should focus on launching 'simpler, flexible and more affordable customer service options' to do better.

An example of this for a smaller food manufacturer would be to ensure you have a dedicated member of staff who regularly connects with people who have reached out on social media – this is a relatively low-cost and easy-to-implement strategy to improve your CX.

The same survey also found that 58% of those surveyed suggested that businesses provide better training and performance incentives for customer-facing staff. This finding suggests that over half of customer interactions with public-facing representatives of any given company is sub-standard.



While all employees in your business who interact directly with customers must have the best customer service skills, CX goes deeper. It is about building an excellent CX strategy throughout all teams, even those you don't think need to be involved.

In the following sections, we will look at building CX into all areas of your manufacturing business.

1. Construct a Clear Vision for Your CX Strategy

There isn't a universal template to create a CX strategy in your business – your customer experience journey should be unique to your company.

Think about what you do better than your competitors – and start from there. When creating your CX, put yourself in your customer's position and aim to deliver an outstanding service that you would be delighted to experience.

The following are some areas to consider:

- Is there a gap between what your customers expect and what you regularly provide for them?
- In which areas do you deliver better than your competitors?
- Is there a crucial point in your CX to focus on where you know you can make a massive impact? Such as a greater focus on marketing communications immediately after a customer transaction.
- Do your employees have the right skills and abilities to support an excellent CX? If not, what training can you provide to ensure their skills move to the next level?

Every customer journey should be one you are proud of as an organisation. There need to be contingencies and robust systems in place to ensure every customer is nurtured in a way that elevates your position in the market.

2. Provide a Universally Uplevelled Service

Perhaps the most significant part of your customer experience is the way you connect and interact with customers.

I'm sure if asked, you could recall the last time you were unpleasantly surprised by a negative experience with a company. Whether it was a rude or inexperienced customer service representative, slow service or unclear communication, we all have stories to tell.



Some food manufacturers focus so much on one part of their business, and they lose focus on the customer experience. For example, a company that focuses on delivering a fast service may cut corners when it comes to customer care. Or a business providing a discounted service doesn't then have the resources to handle customer queries.

Delivering an excellent CX requires asking for, and taking on board, regular feedback from your customers. Some organisations fail to take the time or spend the resources on finding out what their customers want. Over time, they become disengaged with your services and brand, and they end up migrating to a competitor who is offering them what they want.

The following are ways to keep on track with your customer expectations:

- Carry out and analyse customer satisfaction survey results
- Identify the rates and reason for customer turnover
- Ask for customer feedback on products and features
- Identify and rectify the source of any recurring complaints

It is essential to remember that a large part of how customers experience a company is based on how an interaction makes them feel. Emotions drive human beings, and our decisions, particularly our buying decisions, are rooted in feelings rather than detailed reasoning.

We base a lot of our experiences on how we were feeling at the time. A customer might purchase a great product at a low price point. Still, if the experience has created a negative emotion, such as feeling frustrated, confused or even angry, they are unlikely to repeat the process.

3. Get the Whole Team On Board

Looking after customers is no longer the sole responsibility of one small subsection of your business – CX is something that all employees must address.

It is imperative that your team are engaged and hold responsibility for the various elements of the CX process, including delivering fast and accurate service, clear and timely communication, and upholding the high standards of your business - always.

Have a conversation with all employees about their role in the CX process, and build these elements into their role profile.



The following are some points to consider when you introduce the concept of a company-wide CX to your team:

- Invest in personal development training for all team members – improving their personal and professional skills and increasing their emotional intelligence will naturally increase your CX.
- Create a culture where employees are encouraged to solve problems on their own
- Train employees on the importance of 'active listening, listening with engagement, empathy and understating rather than simply listening until its time to get their point across!
- Promote company-wide knowledge – some food manufacturers can contain insular departments. The more information your whole team has access to, the better the service they will provide.
- Encourage empathy and patience in your team and lead by example.

Companies with high-ranking CX scores are the ones who instil its importance at all levels through their business.

4. Introduce Technology to Improve Your CX

In light of the recent remote working revolution, having the latest technology to enable your team to deliver a great CX from home has been a focus for many food manufacturers.

In our post-Covid world, where remote working has not only become the norm but is expected, your remote employees need to be able to deliver the same service as their office-based counterparts. Technology can provide a seamless communication process for your employees and your customers and enable a seamless service.



And the great news is that food manufacturers of any size can introduce technology to enhance their CX.

The good news is the latest digital project management tools can streamline customer relationships. Slack, Trello and Monday.com are all robust project management software tools.

A smooth internal process is critical to an excellent CX. Do employees struggle to share files between the office and home? Any delays in your internal file-sharing systems are passed on to customers. Speed and accuracy are vital in equal measure. Are your team up-to-date with digital file-sharing skills?

Keeping employees up to speed with all technology within your business will enhance your CX.

As well as project management tools, using a CRM is one of the best ways technology can enhance your CX. Once thought of as software aimed at sales-heavy organisations, CRMs are now widely used in manufacturing businesses of all sizes.

[Salesforce](#) is the most prominent global CRM. This platform exists to enhance customer relations and increase revenue from this. There are many other CRMs available; for a comprehensive list, [click here](#).

5. Utilise Feedback to Develop Your Food Manufacturing team

In an ideal world, your business will continually elicit feedback which is implemented as you improve your service and employee skills. However, in reality, it's not always as simple as that.

Training and development can slip down the list of things to do in your busy organisation, but remember that the more you work on developing your CX, the better it will get.

Hold employees accountable for delivering their part in your overall CX strategy. This can be achieved by building CX deliverables into a review process and updating employees regularly on good and developmental feedback. Doing this means they will see the impact of their actions on the CX they deliver.

The key to using feedback to improve your CX is to have a process to capture timely response and use this to report back to your employees.



The following are some ideas around capturing customer feedback to score your CX:

- Email contact forms on your website
- Customer feedback forms
- Customer testimonials and interviews
- Communicating with customers on social media

Next, let's look at how to measure your companies' customer experience so you have guidance on what to improve while sharing this data to attract even more customers through your sales and marketing.

How to Measure Your CX

Measuring your CX is critical to assess whether the strategies you have in place are working, and there are several ways you can do this.

Net Promoter Scores (NPS) – this is given as a percentage, and the score is the likelihood that a customer would recommend your company to a friend or a colleague. Organisations across the globe use this particular assessment.

Customer effort scores (CES) – a type of customer satisfaction survey that measures the ease of service experience in your organisation.

Customer satisfaction score (CSAT) – this term is frequently used in marketing and is a measure of how your products and services either meet or surpass a customer's expectation.

Improving your customer experience score will ultimately add value to your business. It is essential that you measure and document changes to your CX score for your business's continued success.

Hiring to Improve Your CX

Something critical to how you deliver your CX experience comes down to having the 'right' team in place who can provide your ultimate CX vision.

Since the pandemic, competition has increased in the food manufacturing sector. It is imperative you are doing everything you can to stand out from your competitors and win new business while you win the loyalty of those all-important current customers.

Training will help, but sometimes hiring new manufacturing recruits is necessary to bring about the positive change you want.



If you would like to know more about how we can help find you the CX stars you need to improve your service and strengthen your organisation, get in touch with me by calling [07835426149](tel:07835426149) or emailing hello@food-recruit.com and let's start improving your customer experience

Scott Williams
Director

What to do next?

Connect with me on LinkedIn



To book a confidential call, please click here





About Food Recruit

With a proven blend of knowledge, research and contact network, we source candidates who meet your specific needs.

Helping Blue Chip, SME & Start Ups source their critical hires. We identify and nurture the best Food Manufacturing talent across the UK and internationally.

Matching both your expectations and candidate aspirations, we ensure you are the right fit for each other providing a professional and personal service.

Over 10 years practical Food Supply Chain & Business Development experience. Over 5 years search & selection and CIPS (Chartered Institute of Purchasing & Supply) certified. We have an unrivalled industry network allowing us to source exceptional candidates that meet our clients needs

Whether you are looking to fill a void left by a departing senior colleague, you are looking to up skill the team or looking to grow or diversify your board – Please get in touch to arrange a discovery call.



About Scott Williams

I started my career in the Food Manufacturing industry back in 2007 as a Forecast Analyst for one of the worlds largest value-added food producers. Progressing through the business, I oversaw the £90m supply of poultry, duck, seafood and dim sum into Manufacturers, Foodservice, Retailers, Cash & Carries and QSR Restaurants.

Wanting to round my CV with a more commercial perspective, I moved to a competitor as Business Development Manager looking after the same market.

Fast forward to 2016, and unfortunately, I found myself redundant due to my home working role becoming office-based.

It was at this stage that I was approached by a reputable local Automotive and Engineering recruitment consultancy, looking to establish a footing in the Food & Drink market.

Although I had not previously considered recruitment as a chosen profession, as experience as a hiring manager and indeed a candidate, I knew my market well, and so it made a logical step to take.

Progressing through the business from Senior Consultant to Group Business Development Manager, I honed my skills and provided leading talent to Food Manufacturers in an industry I had worked in my whole career.

A similar story to most, the pandemic then hit, and I had a chance for some self-reflection and I took the opportunity to launch my business Food Recruit – Search & Selection in September 2020.

I partner with clients from startups to SME's through to Blue Chip brands across the UK and abroad. My professional, flexible and solutions-driven approach has enabled me to work with the industry's well-known names, staying humble and hungry for success.

It is this hunger that drives my service and determination to disrupt the market and make Food Recruit – Search & Selection the go-to name in the Food Manufacturing sector.



Testimonials

What you need when you are recruiting is someone who understands your requirements, who can put themselves in your shoes as they sift through the masses of CVs for the candidates that are appropriate for your needs.

Anybody can throw CVs at a client, but very few can throw the right ones and the certainty that the skillset and cultural fit are aligned to the client's needs.

With Scott, you get someone who has the industry knowledge within Procurement & Supply Chain, he just gets it because he has done it, he also has integrity in abundance, something that can be overlooked as we play our part in the "recruiting game".

Other recruitment organisations should take a good look at themselves and understand you don't need salespeople to recruit, you need subject matter experts who know what their clients are seeking.

Would I use Scott again? Absolutely, in a heartbeat!

ANDY NEILSON FCIPS, FCILT

It is an absolute pleasure to work with Scott.

Open, honest, collaborative and communicative, Scott mixes utmost professionalism with humour and personality which makes the (often painful) process of finding top talent a pleasant experience.

Scott takes the time to fully understand the needs and personality of the organisation before recommending candidates but still delivers within often very often tight timescales.

I look forward to working with Scott again and have no hesitation in recommending him to support your executive search.

HEAD OF HR