Chief Experience Officers

Chief experience officers are influencing the strategic direction of their companies to address the needs and wants of their customers.

JULIE ADRIAN

Customer Focus

"Get closer than ever to your customers. So close that you tell them what they need well before they realize it themselves." This quote is from Steve Jobs — a guy who we can all probably agree has done a pretty good job at customer experience, or CX.

At W2O, as we evolve into an even more tech-enabled healthcare innovation company, we know that listening to customers has never been more important. If we are tone deaf to them, not only will we be left out as a partner today, but also, as a trusted advisor for the future. The chief experience officer role is about keeping that customer voice front and center in everything that we do.

Consider some statistics: According to Forrester, companies that lead in customer experience outperform laggards by nearly 80%, and customer-centric companies are 60% more profitable than companies that don't focus on customers, says Deloitte. There's no doubt that CX is critical to a company's success.

In the new experience economy, in which many goods or services are sold by emphasizing the effect they can have on people's lives, it's not enough to just have a client-centric philosophy. The employee experience, or EX, is inextricably linked to a good customer experience. In fact, two recent benchmark studies found that companies that excel at customer experience have 1.5 times more engaged employees. And companies that invest in EX are four times more profitable than those that don't.

W2O undertook a comprehensive survey on U.S. employee attitudes and perspectives toward COVID-19 to understand overall perceptions of the pandemic from an employee standpoint, including concerns, interests, and beliefs. The study also examined how companies are addressing these issues and how they are shifting over time as society and business moves to the next phase of this public health crisis.

The results show that companies have even more at stake in this current experience environment and must adhere to the most stringent standards of authenticity and transparency, which includes relating to their employees and customers on a totally new and connected level. We are working closely with our clients to ensure we listen to them and they, in turn, listen to their customers in a deeper, more meaningful way.

PAUL BALAGOT

Utility as a Metric

In this position, you need one person dedicated and accountable to what I think of as the important metric of the user experience — utility. Utility is the metric that drives me daily; our clients live and die by it. I ask myself every day if we are helping our clients make the lives of patients and HCPs better and easier, and are patients and HCPs using and adopting our clients' offerings because they realize they make their lives easier and better.

There is a lot of frustration when people interact with the healthcare system. I strive to remove that frustration. You do it by defining challenges clearly, using the right data to make informed decisions, and then using the right technology to maximize utility. Technology is pervasive when dealing with the healthcare system. Technology focus such as telehealth, mobile apps, wearables, and digital therapeutics, for example, are coming about faster thanks to COVID-19.

You can't ignore technology, but you can't over-index on it either. You must consider human factors so great solutions get adopted. So once you understand what you need to do, then you ask how technology can be used to better the user experience. This role requires someone who understands healthcare technology and data analytics — and how rapidly all of this is evolving — and someone who has touched the target audiences daily.

The best CXOs are the ones who have "done their time" in other parts of the agency ecosystem — from the account management side, the digital strategy side — and understand how people interact with a brand. And you need someone who can speak the language of programmers and data scientists so that you can bring about the technology solutions, informed by insights, that result in real utility.

A Broad Set of Data Types

Many factors influence treatment decisions beyond patients and HCPs. CXOs need to understand and work with a much broader set of data types and variables that influence the brand. The narratives we build will be powered by more nuanced data science and machine learning which will better inform the next best action that should be taken.

The healthcare data engine is about to get larger, and we need to get our heads and hands around it now. The CXO will be the person most able to tease out insights coming from the growing "data swamp," and make the data actionable so that it can be used to generate more value to HCPs and patients. It is classic "what is the problem we want to solve and the experience we want to create," and "how can we use cutting-edge data and technology to solve it." This is the essence of creating the best user experience.

DAN CHICHESTER

Moving Beyond the Status Quo

Tradition can exert a powerful hold on agencies, creative, brands — even technology. The chief experience officer (CXO) role is the counter to that status quo. It's an insistent questioning of "why?" and "why not?" — challenges meant to enable, inspire — even goad — transformation from "listen here" to "lean in." The CXO is there to foster the teamwork that builds amazing, meaningful interactions — even a relationship — based on the audience participating; this is the essence of experience. The CXO encourages the right researchers, designers, developers, prototypers, creative minds, and makers to create that moment that heightens concentration across multiple senses. Ultimately, it is not the role that is important, but that which it helps to make real: memorable experiences of science, emotion, and digital that inform and activate patients and HCPs to achieve healthier outcomes.

What's Ahead

The future questions often don't age as well as we like. But I'll offer two alternate timelines of tomorrow. The evolved CXO is a "partner" with (or servant of) the AI and machine-learn-

The Call for Chief Experience Officers

Customer experience (CX) and employee experience (EX) are now two of the driving forces of business. Independently, each function leads to valuable relationships — with customers and employees — but when CX and EX are managed together, they create a unique, sustainable competitive advantage. Companies should consider integrating the two disciplines and installing a chief experience officer to lead the combined effort across the entire organization.

CX has become the new marketing. It influences brand perceptions and impacts business performance just as strongly as traditional marketing such as media advertising and price promotions once did. A good customer experience makes a person five times more likely to recommend a company and more likely to purchase in the future. Forrester reports that 76% of executives say improving CX is a high or critical priority and many companies have established a C-level position to oversee it.

But the customer is only one half of the experience equation. The employee experience is similarly important, and it can often go overlooked. EX — the sum of all interactions an employee has with an organization, from recruiting to an exit interview — also significantly impacts business performance. EX involves far more than human resources functions, including facilities, internal communications, IT, and even corporate social responsibility. Research by Gallup shows that work units in the top quartile in employee engagement outperformed bottom-quartile units by 10% on customer ratings, 22% in profitability, and 21% in productivity — and they experienced lower employee turnover, absenteeism, and safety incidents. Companies that MIT researchers classified in the top quartile of EX developed more successful innovations, deriving twice the amount of revenues from their innovations as did those in the bottom quartile. And their industry-adjusted Net Promoter Scores were twice as high.

Source: Harvard Business Review

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ing technologies that will become easier to activate, natural to interact with, and more integrated with our creation tool set for bringing increased (even true) personalization to engagement.

The evolved CXO loses the "C" and a singular status — because "experience" becomes the heightened expectation of all working in service to our brands and customers. The innate goal for every discipline will be in probing the questions, "How is this an experience?" and "Is this the best experience it can be?" And ensuring that the answer to, "Will this experience matter?" is an emphatic, enthusiastic, "Yes!"

AMY HEYMANS

Understanding the Needs of the People

As technology evolves and becomes more ubiquitous, we have learned the importance of designing every interaction such that it is useful, usable, and desirable. However, designing effective experiences is not just about optimizing interactions with technology. We need to understand the needs of the people our organizations serve, what are their contexts, goals, frustrations, jobs to be done, such that we can effectively tailor a value proposition and service offering that meets their needs. This includes the digital experiences we deliver, but also the services that we design and the capabilities we offer.

A chief experience officer can focus on understanding the people served by an organization and formulating a strategy and road map for meeting those needs and well as driving business results accordingly.

Creating Value

The chief experience officer role is of critical importance to an organization in that it fortifies the creation of win/win experiences whereby people inside and outside of the organization benefit and value is created for the business. The role focuses on orchestrating external touchpoints as well as addressing internal factors which affect experiences such as policy, people, process, and culture.

Driving successful future outcomes in this role will be dependent upon a high level of collaboration and coordination with many areas across the business from digital, to call center, product, operations, sales, and marketing. Going forward, it will be interesting to see how CXOs integrate experiences and decision-making horizontally across the business. **PV**

The Commanders & Chiefs

JULIE ADRIAN
Global Chief Experience Officer, W2O
Driven by data, W2O applies proprietary analytics and best-in-class technology to build insights that power creative ideas and concepts.

PAUL BALAGOT
Chief Experience Officer, PRECISIONeffect
PRECISIONeffect goes beyond standard healthcare branding by charting out the decision-making process for doctors, patients, and payers, then focusing on the places where it can most effectively change behavior.

DAN CHICHESTER
Chief Experience Officer, Ogilvy Health
Ogilvy Health makes brands matter by keeping our audiences' health, healthcare, and wellness needs at the center of every touchpoint.

AMY HEYMANS
Founder and Chief Experience Officer, Mad*Pow
Mad*Pow is a purpose-driven, strategic design consultancy working with industry leaders to create social impact.