B2B Marketing | PROPOLIS

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# Marketing has a vital role in improving customer experience:

## CX INVOLVEMENT CAN PROPEL MARKETING TO A MORE STRATEGIC ROLE







HIGHLIGHTS REPORT

*(full version available to Propolis members only)*

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**On Propolis – our exclusive community for B2B marketers – you can download a larger version of this report, which also includes:**

- *Analysis and advice on the marketing imperatives that can also drive CX.*
- *An interview with Sam Hill, Propolis Hive ambassador for CX, and director of customer experience at Infinity. Here, our analyst asks Sam the big questions.*
- *Insight from Lauren McCadney Williams, director, marketing delivery, CDW. Here, Lauren outlines the three questions you must ask yourself to improve CX!*
- *CX competency assessment framework. This handy grid helps you map exactly where you are on the path to CX maturity. Are you fledgling, or are you well on the way to excellence?*

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SECTION 1

# Marketing and CX: One or two processes?



**PETER O'NEILL,**
lead analyst,
B2B Marketing

Staying on top of cutting-edge CX platforms and practices is essential in this new commercial world. In a recent survey of 1500-plus business professionals in over 20 countries across different industries and position levels by the software vendor Oracle, over 90% of respondents agreed that CX is a primary focus for their company.*

However, the same survey also reported that 46% of respondents were "concerned they don't have the CX they need for the future." That claim suggests a degree of helplessness. After all, the customer's experience is spread out across a number of touchpoints controlled by several departments. These include marketing, sales, customer service and more – basically, anyone who interacts with customers. All it takes to upset the customer's experience is one accountant who sets up a badly-worded dunning letter, or one legal officer who restricts the response to a critical support issue because of possible liability issues.

A decade ago, initial CX programmes focused on the descriptor 'customer', and were mostly about product usability and after-sales service quality. Most of the early adopters were B2C companies in retail and financial services. As a Forrester analyst in 2014, I remember congratulating the German drugstore DM-Markt on their customer-friendly shops, in which you did not have to insert a coin or token to release a trolley, and which had magnifying glasses installed for those senior citizens that needed them to read the product descriptions. The chain also featured generously-spaced supermarket lanes where you could choose your own route through the shop and not be forced to look at everything on offer. The overriding concept at that time was 'ease of doing business'.

Afterwards, B2B companies like Maersk and Henkel adopted the same mantra, and implemented improvement programmes. These programmes focused on helping shipping agents book their container transport much easier (Maersk), and helping procurement and project managers to replenish inventories of industrial adhesives with the minimum of bureaucratic fuss. So, the CX imperative began to move implicitly over to the buyer journey as well.

Now, the well-publicised digital expectations of the latest generation of B2B buyers and users have pushed CX to the top of most companies' digital transformation agenda, and this has only been accelerated by the pandemic. Numerous surveys report incessantly about large percentages of digital buyers turning away from a website – or even a company as a whole – in response to a difficult experience during their buyer research, let alone working with a product or service directly.

CX is, therefore, now a vital factor for both sales and marketing, but how much CX does B2B marketing cover? Do they take responsibility for CX optimisation, or do they just play a cameo role in the company's overall CX endeavour? Many would argue that marketing has a distinct advantage of collecting the most holistic view of the complete organisation-to-customer and brand-to-prospect relationship, uniquely qualifying them to own the strategy around CX.

**Oracle, 'Global Customer Experience Insights Report'*

## 1.1. B2B MARKETING SURVEYED MARKETERS TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THEIR CX WORK

This report is based on findings from our Q2-2021 survey of nearly 100 B2B marketers from companies of all sizes, small and large, and across all industries. The survey reveals B2B marketers' understanding of CX tools, activities and performance measurements, as well as an assessment of their involvement in various aspects of CX. It provides an overall snapshot of B2B's CX initiative, the level of understanding of CX principles, and reveals some of the challenges faced by B2B marketers.

The survey respondents were senior marketing professional, with 59% being the head of marketing for their organisation, and a further 23% in the first line of reporting to the head of marketing.

An interesting 9% of this B2B Marketing survey cohort were explicitly named director, VP, or head of CX, with half of them working in marketing, and the other half working in sales. Of course, there are heads of CX working in other departments, but this research did not reach that audience.

For each section of the survey, we have documented the answers with appropriate descriptive commentary. Some insights are then provided about these results when applicable. The report also discusses what roles and responsibilities a marketer should adopt in order to achieve CX success across their organisation.

While this report will reveal some industry secrets, plenty of statistics and peer-to-peer advice, its main aim is to ignite a conversation by providing actionable advice. The advice given can help to open up the debate in your company about the challenges and ambitions behind marketing's contribution to ensuring their company provides that cutting-edge CX that is so desired by CEOs across all B2B sectors.

**Insights from this report include the following:**

- The state of CX in practice.
- An industry audit of how much B2B marketing is doing around CX.
- Advice on how to develop a marketing-led CX programme and what it should entail.

*"Now is the ideal time for B2B marketers to step in and lead the delivery of a customer experience from end to end to deliver a marketing-led customer experience"*

**BARBARA STEWART,**
CX and marketing consultant,
and Propolis Hive expert for CX

SECTION 2

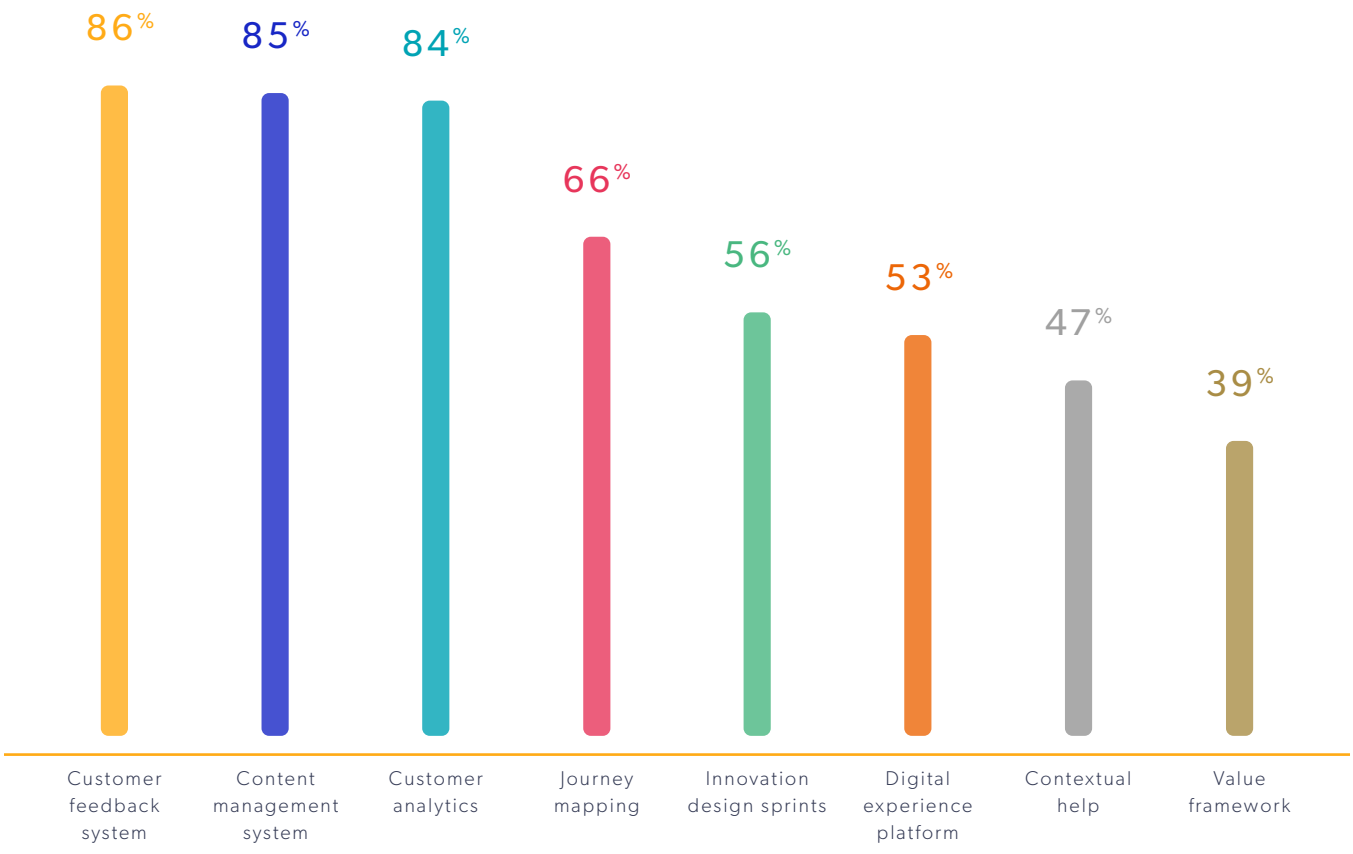
# CX is definitely important in B2B companies

## 2.1 MOST COMPANIES NOW TAKE CUSTOMER FEEDBACK AND CX SERIOUSLY

When we asked about the tools and methods deployed to optimise CX, there was a strong majority that used many of the suggested tools.

The most commonly declared tool was a customer feedback system, with 86% of respondents using this. The content management system in the context of CX was next highest (at 85%), supported by most teams with the deployment of journey mapping methods (66%). Using a digital experience platform to optimise CX was selected by just over half of the respondents.

Q. Does your company leverage any of these tools or methods to optimise CX?



## 2.2 MOST WANT TO IMPROVE CX, BUT SOME ARE A LITTLE HESITANT

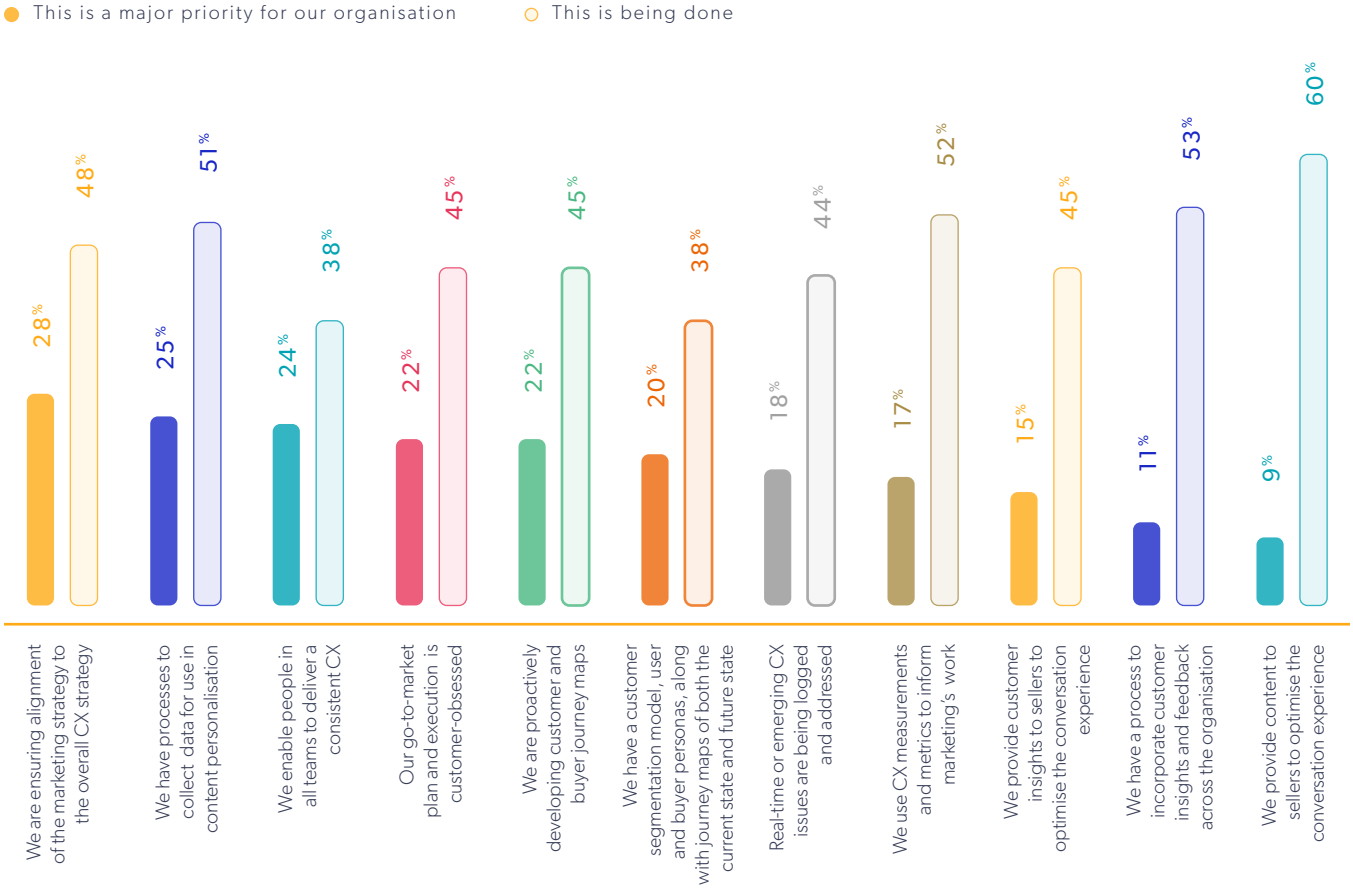
The next list we provided in the survey was a menu of activities that could improve CX programmes if implemented. We asked the respondents to indicate if they were doing each activity at all, and which ones were seen as a major priority for the organisation. Just over three-quarters of the survey cohort (76%) were ensuring that their marketing strategy aligned with the overall CX strategy, with 28% even citing this as a major priority.

The same proportion is collecting data for use in content personalisation, including a 25% major priority recognition. All the other activities were recognised by the vast majority of respondents (between 58% and 67%), with important major priority call-outs for: enabling people in all teams to deliver consistent CX; proactively developing customer/buyer journey maps; and ensuring that the go-to-market plan and execution are customer-obsessed.

The survey also asked if an activity was not being done, and three options were marked as such by 30% or more respondents. These were:

- Having a customer segmentation model, user/buyer personas and journey maps for both the current and future state.
- A process to incorporate customer insights and feedback across the organisation.
- Using CX measurements and metrics to inform marketing's work.

Q. How significant are any of these activities to improve your CX programmes?

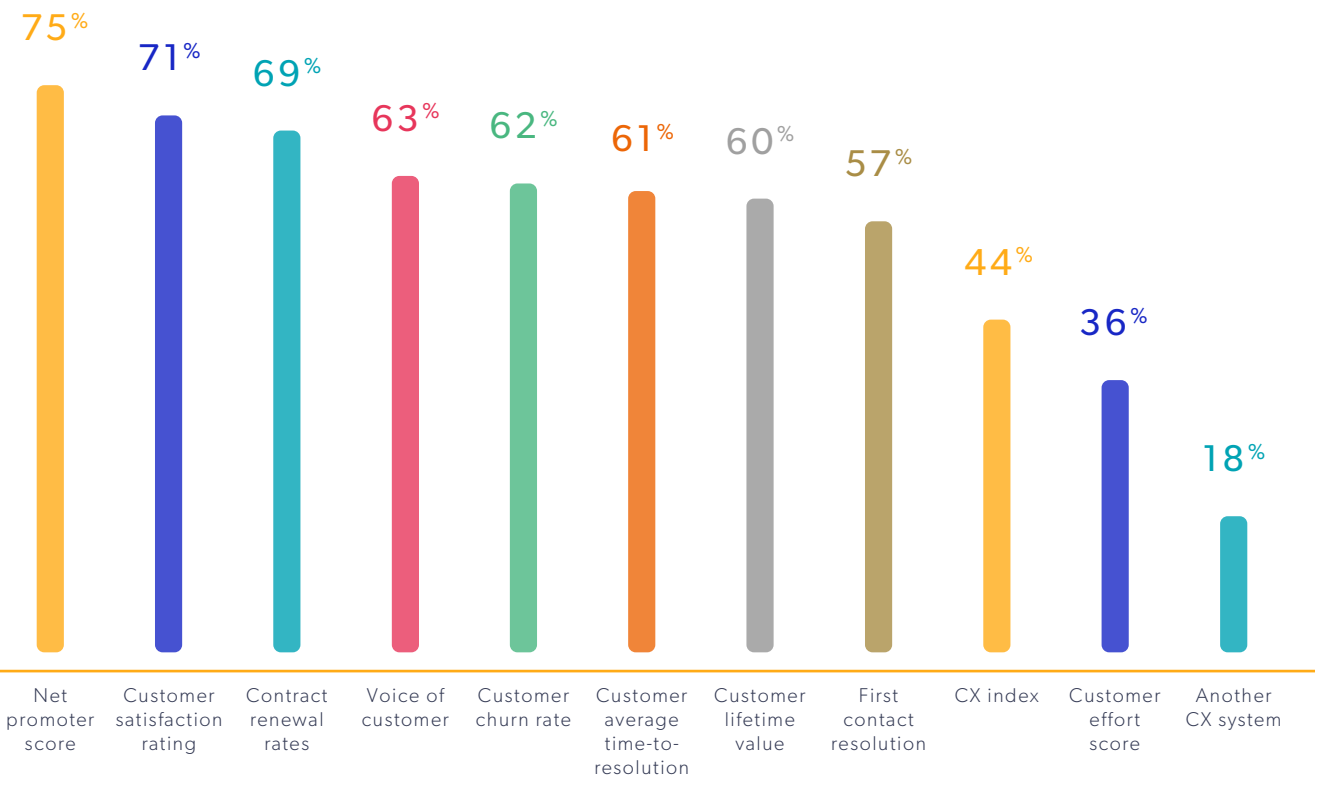


## 2.3 CX IS BEING MEASURED ACROSS MOST B2B COMPANIES

When we asked about the measurement of CX, we presented a total of 10 possible CX metrics systems. Some of the terms may have been unfamiliar to generalist marketers not close to the CX discipline, but, impressively, eight of the metrics were acknowledged by over half of the respondents. The most common metric in use is the net promotor score (NPS) at 75%.* The next three most-cited metrics are: customer satisfaction rating (71%); contract renewal rates (69%); and voice of customer (63%).

**Net promoter, net promoter system, net promoter score, NPS and the NPS-related emoticons are registered trademarks of Bain & Company, Inc., Fred Reichheld and Satmetrix Systems, Inc.*

Does your organisation have systems in place to record these CX metrics?



SECTION 3

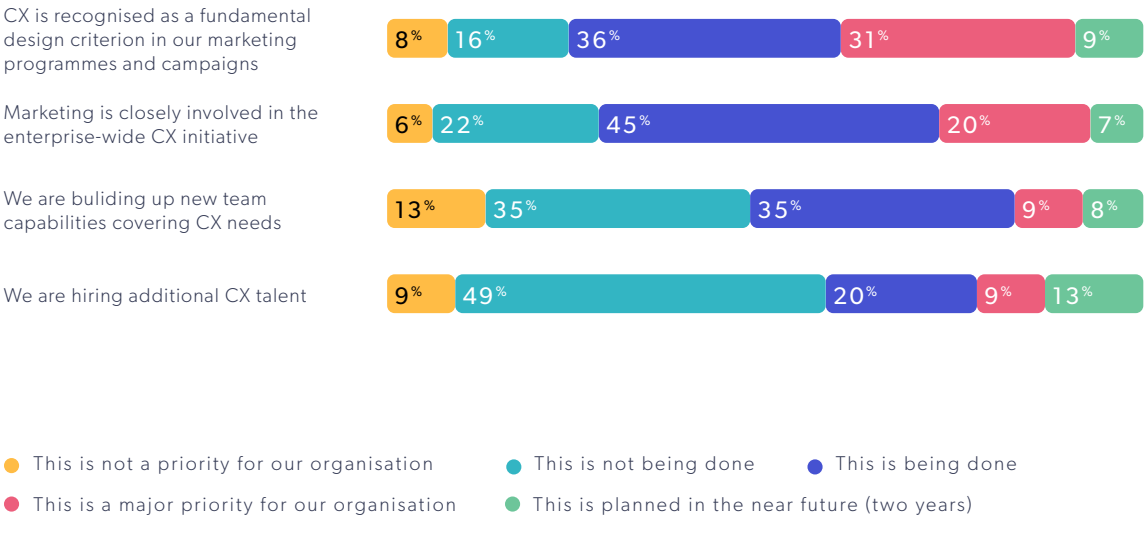
# Marketing professionals see the importance of CX

The next section of the survey asked about marketing resources for performing CX-specific work, including the necessary skills, staffing and training. We also revisit the improvement and measurement programmes listed in the previous section for more marketing context.

## 3.1 MARKETING'S CX INTENT SEEMS TO BE HIGH

The survey discovered a clear statement of intent: exactly two-thirds of marketing professionals confirmed that CX is seen as a fundamental design criterion for marketing programmes and campaigns, with 31% even stating that as a major priority. Almost all of those executives are involved in an enterprise-wide CX initiative. Nearly half (44%) are even building up new team capabilities covering CX needs, and over a quarter (29%) plan to hire additional CX talent.

How significant are any of these considerations around CX?



## 3.2 CURRENT CX STAFFING IS LOW

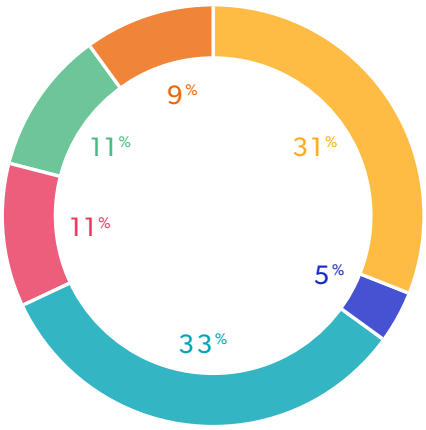
The statement of intent is important, but a little harmless because, when asked if the marketing organisation currently had specialist CX staff, a clear 64% of the respondents admitted that they did not. Half of the 64% selected the consolatory status that their generalist marketing team did have 'some CX know-how'. An interesting 11% reported that they are given CX feedback and advice from another department on a regular basis.

Within the 31% of companies that do have CX specialists, the survey shows that this numbers between one in ten and one in eight of the overall marketing team in terms of staffing. Half of the CX teams report directly to the CMO or marketing director, and another 10% to a chief experience officer, while the other specialists are spread around the marketing organisation.

## 3.3 THE CX OPPORTUNITY FOR MARKETERS

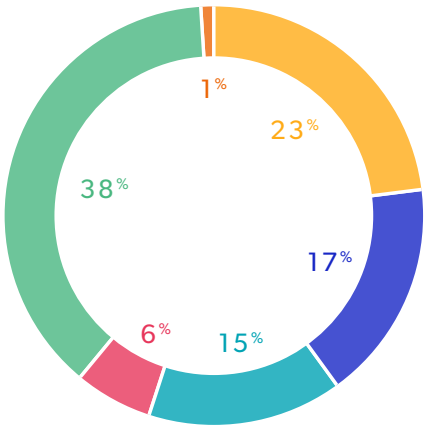
Just one-quarter of the companies reviewed have CX training and coaching materials available for the marketing team while, in 15% of the companies, it is 'expected' that all marketing team members build up CX competencies. However, 38% of the marketing teams have no CX training/coaching materials at all.

### Does your marketing organisation have specialist CX staff?




- We do not have CX specialists
- We currently outsource our CX requirements
- Some generalist marketers have some CX know-how
- We have some CX experts to support the wider marketing team when asked to do so
- Marketing is provided with CX feedback and advice on a regular basis by (an) other department(s)
- We have a dedicated team of CX specialists in marketing who measure and monitor CX

### Do marketing team members have the opportunity to improve their CX competencies and how?




- Yes, there are training/coaching materials available
- Yes, building CX competencies is a development option for marketers
- Yes, we expect all marketing team members to build up CX competencies
- Those who prefer to focus on CX are encouraged to join that group at some point
- There are no training/coaching materials offered to the marketing team
- Other

## 3.4 MUCH OF CX IS OUTSIDE MARKETING

This reluctance to support CX processes within marketing at the moment can be explained when you consider how most companies deploy their CX methods and tools. Of the 86% of companies running a customer feedback system for CX, half of those respondents specified that the system was run outside of marketing. Even a marketing-orientated process like customer analytics, named by 84% of respondents as being used for CX, is being done in over a third of the cases (31 of the 84%) outside of the marketing organisation.

There is a similar picture with the CX measurements systems that are in place across the companies. Only the customer lifetime value and voice of customer metrics are managed more than 50% of the time by marketing. All other systems are collected outside of marketing in the majority of cases.

*Even for those marketers who do have CX training materials available to them, the question is: are they being given time to invest in that material?*

## 3.5 KEY INSIGHTS

- Marketers are clearly stating that they want to build up CX resources and competencies. But the data about training, coaching and even career opportunities for marketing professionals does not suggest an overwhelming impetus.
- Even for those marketers who do have CX training materials available to them, the question is: are they being given time to invest in that material?
- The fact that many CX systems and measurements are run outside of marketing probably makes sense. Customer service and other post-sales departments have greater access to customers to be able to collect the data, but this should not mean that marketing takes little responsibility for CX.

Sam Hill, director of customer experience at Infinity, a SaaS-based call-intelligence platform, and also B2B Marketing's Hive ambassador for CX, had this to say: "Generally, B2B marketers tend to be too broad when considering CX. The broader you go, the more diluted and challenging the job becomes towards deriving quality outputs. They need to be targeted in their approach, e.g. look at a particular customer segment/persona and a particular stage of the customer journey/lifecycle."

SECTION 4

# Now is the time for B2B marketing to lead CX



**BARBARA STEWART,**
Propolis Hive expert for CX

In today's ultra-competitive, on-demand business environment, CX is a differentiator that can spell success or failure for an organisation. Nearly every business acknowledges that they need to do CX better.

However, there exists a need for companies to shift their approach to CX, from siloed to holistic. Instead of looking at just the experience of the product or service, the focus must be on the customers' entire engagement with the organisation. Sales, marketing, product design and customer support must all contribute towards the promise of a singular, unified customer experience. To do so, businesses need to align disparate departments, invest in CX initiatives and ensure that the products and services being offered meet or exceed customers' expectations.

CMOs have a distinct advantage of a holistic purview of the organisation-to-customer and brand-to-prospect relationship, uniquely qualifying them to own the strategy around CX. So, now is the ideal time for B2B marketers to step in and lead the delivery of a CX from end to end to deliver a marketing-led customer experience.

Marketing-led CX improves on traditional CX by addressing the fragmentation that happens when the customer moves through various organisational functions (marketing, sales, support, operations, etc), and replaces it with a coordinated, end-to-end experience that is overseen by marketing.

For the customer, it results in a more cohesive and intuitive experience. For the organisation, it results in a clear line of sight across every customer interaction, which, in turn, drives higher revenues and deeper market insights. And, for the marketer, it enables the ability to demonstrate marketing's impact on revenue and brand equity.

According to McKinsey & Co., over 80% of CEOs expect CX growth to come from the marketing teams, which means marketing leaders need to think differently than they have in the past. Their scope now covers every touchpoint and experience across the full customer lifecycle. To be successful, the CMO and marketing team must have all the information needed to understand and nurture the customer-business relationship to secure a sale, drive repeat purchases and increase the transaction sizes.

*Sales, marketing, product design and customer support must all contribute towards the promise of a singular, unified customer experience*

To move toward CX-centricity, marketers must unify silos and understand how to build a CX-centric culture, team and operating model to lead change from within. To help achieve the organisation's CX goals, all senior-level executives must collaborate with the CMO to create a consistent customer-centric mentality across departments. It's this unified approach, combined with an acute focus on data and analytics, that moves the needle.

SECTION 5

# Recommendations

One of the major challenges in improving CX in B2B is the need to generate a customer database that is sufficiently segmented to be able to personalise the experience of each customer based on their exact position in the sales funnel. What's more, technology and personal experiences in the B2C world have created high expectations for the B2B purchasing process.

Marketers can help solve this challenge by expanding their customer insights programmes to incorporate all phases of the customer lifecycle, analysing not just buying behaviour, but all reactions of their customers in their interactions with the company. Then, marketers could provide these data back to the responsible peer organsations – the one executing the customer touchpoints in question – in order to encourage and promote a better overall CX. In addition to this, the marketing programmes listed previously also offer a strong opportunity to play a major role in CX success:

*"Over the last decade, marketing has developed advanced technical skills and a deeper connection to the customers. Marketing has emerged as the discipline best positioned to serve the needs of customers as they seek deeper, more supportive relationships and of the internal business as they navigate the new digital landscapes ahead. Although CX is a company-wide responsibility, marketers are best positioned to shepherd their organisation through this transformation and beyond."*

BARBARA STEWART

### › Sales enablement

Improving the conversations between sellers and customers is an integral component of CX. These programmes could also be extended, when relevant, to assisting business/channel partners in their customer conversations.

### › Customer advocacy

Marketing can fully develop these programmes from just identifying and assisting delighted customers to support brand promotion, to also leverage these more secure relationships in testing and trialling new products and new marketing approaches.

### › Customer success

Many B2B customer organisations seek a true value-based relationship with their most important suppliers, and marketing's involvement with the customer success programmes will also serve to optimise the CX for those specific customers, plus all other customers if the experience gained in these programmes is applied across the company.

ABOUT

# B2B Marketing and Propolis

Powered by the community, for the community.

Established in 2004, B2B Marketing is now the number one go-to resource for B2B marketers across the globe.

Right from the start, we had a clear mission that remains as strong and clear today: to provide marketers at business brands with the tools, insight and inspiration they need to grow and succeed – as both individuals and businesses.

To do this, we need to continually evolve to make sure we are delivering what you need.

This is why Propolis was born – our community for B2B marketers.

We're proud to serve as the focal point for the B2B marketing sector, and to be a force for greater connectivity, enabling marketers and leaders to share experiences and learn from one another.

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