
DO
CUSTOMER
EXPERIENCE
MASTERS
REALLY
EXIST?
dotmailer
IMAGINATION...DELIVERED






IN THIS WHITEPAPER, WE EXPLORE THE BRANDS PUTTING CUSTOMERS AT THE CORE TO ANSWER THE QUESTION **DO CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE MASTERS REALLY EXIST?**






If customer experience will overtake price and product as the key brand differentiator by 2020, what are companies doing to drive their businesses towards a customer-centric model?

(Source: Walker, Customers 2020)

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"In 2016, CX will be among the top ten critical success factors determining who will win and who will fail in the age of the customer."

(Source: Forrester)

WHAT DOES **CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE** REALLY MEAN?

What is customer experience?

Customer experience (CX) is a customer's journey with a brand. Through a culmination of positive interactions over time, across multiple channels, the customer naturally develops a long-term relationship with the company. This sense of attachment is driven by the brand's commitment to fully understanding the customer's needs and desires.

The time is now

Delivering exceptional customer service isn't a new concept: it was surely born out of the capitalist revolution. But with the rising expectations of consumers and the ever-increasing number of marketing channels, it's never been more significant for brands to keep abreast of the CX landscape.

Customer experience marketing can appear complex, because it crosses entire organizational and communication channels. This feeling of convolution is reflected in a 2016 Digital Trends Report, which revealed that 37% of companies, across a range of global markets, said the complexity or number of touchpoints is the greatest barrier to improving customer experience. (Source: Econsultancy/Adobe).

At one time, when the technology was simply unavailable, brands could fire out one-size-fits-all communications and customers responded. There were fewer channels – or no digital channels – to keep on top of, meaning it was the norm to take a less personal approach.

With the advancements in technology, it's clear that marketing is evolving to a customer-centric "pull" approach, using personalized, valuable and relevant content that aligns with customer's experiences with your company. CX marketing uses all of your digital channels to listen for your customers' signals, to create messaging that acknowledges, responds to and informs them as their brand relationship develops.

The questions are: do you have the right infrastructure in place to deliver the new-age customer experience? And who's responsible for making it happen?





WHO'S RESPONSIBLE FOR CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE?

In a report by Adobe and Econsultancy, 32% of advanced companies say their entire organizations are responsible for managing CX and are more likely to have a CX team in place.

Let's first consider who has access to the customer. Call center teams, front-of-house staff and other customer-focused roles are all at the coalface, but in many instances it's the marketing team who have the most frequent and concentrated contact with customers. Marketers are at the forefront of customer centricity. They're the ones building and nurturing relationships with prospective and existing customers, whether it's via email, social media or ads.

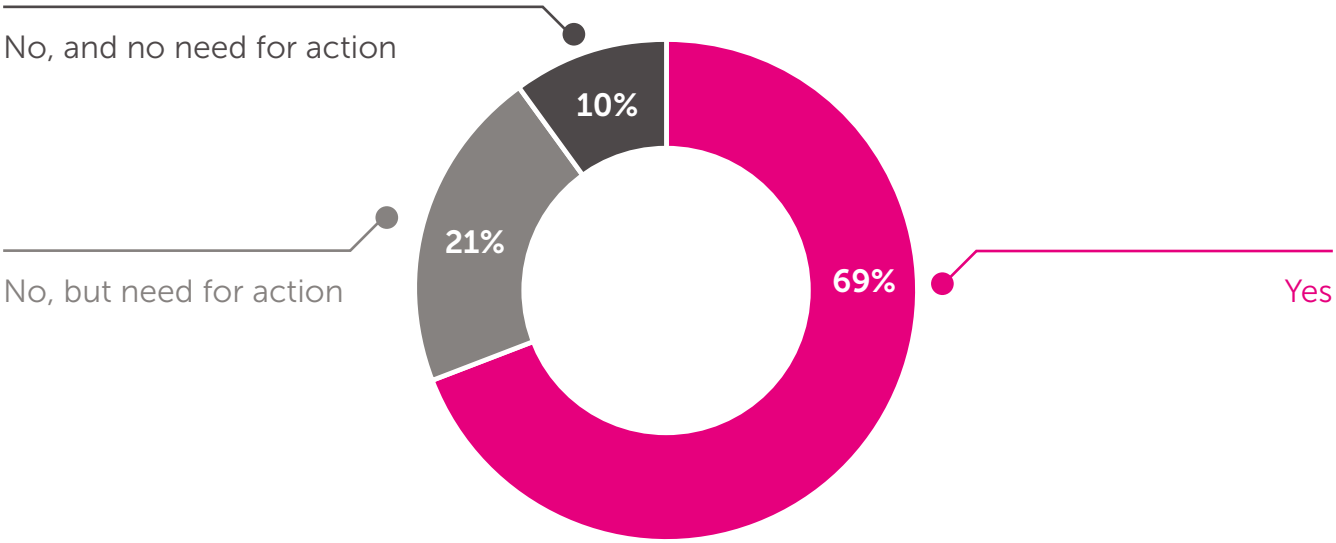
Jonny Stewart, the Head of Ecommerce at ELEMIS, shares his thoughts on whether CX should be the responsibility of an internal champion or team, or if it requires a company-wide transformation:

"It's entirely both, and I believe down to how a company evolves over time.

"A large number of highly successful products or services are created to improve upon an existing customer experience in one market. The customer experience masters, as it were, are the ones who have kept this at the heart of the brand. Look at a business like Uber: it was born out of creating a much higher level of convenience and ease of use.

"The problem for a lot of companies is that this can get lost along the way and focus turns to purer commercial activities. We start to build for the business and not the customer specifically, and at that point a cultural change is needed."

Is customer experience a strategic issue addressed at top management level in your company?



Source PAC Holistic Customer Experience in the Digital Age

Everyone needs to be on board to succeed

Firms like Uber have constructed their whole business around customer experience and exist because of it. For larger, mature organizations, a cultural shift towards customer centricity is undoubtedly necessary. Without an individual or a team driving change, the organization will continue to operate as it always has.

Let's look at the retail banking sector, for instance. At one time it was the status quo for high-street banks to only open during normal working hours. Now, customers expect an anytime, anywhere 'on-demand' service, with fully-functioning apps and branches opening on weekends and for late-night appointments. This demand by customers for better service has challenged the banks to bring in new skillsets, upgrade technological infrastructures and implement new working practices. And many of them have delivered on and continue to exceed that expectation.

As you can see, customer experience is influenced not only by front-of-house operations but also by backend functions; everyone has their part to play. A study by PAC – titled Holistic Customer Experience in the Digital Age – found that in 50% of companies surveyed, the collaboration of these departments in relation to customer focus is deficient.

The PAC study also delved into employee's perceptions around who's responsible for strategic CX change within their organization.

As you can see in the above chart, 69% of the respondents said that CX transformation is addressed by top-level management within their company, whereas 21% said that there's a need for those at the top to take action. This shows that many companies are already taking steps to improve CX, yet there are some that are still lagging behind.

Unfortunately, organizational silos can put up roadblocks in front of even the smallest of changes, and this limits the ability to provide a consistent experience throughout the customer journey. Therefore, for companies where customer centricity has not always been at the core, there needs to be a champion.

CONSIDERING THE **CUSTOMER TOUCHPOINTS**

Today, customers expect brands to be available via live chat, on the end of a phone, checking Twitter and monitoring the main inbox. They want to choose how and when they connect, and they want a consistent experience when they do. The more channels – or touchpoints – companies can successfully support, the bigger the positive impact on customer service and the greater the overall impact on customer experience.

But there are also the times when you want or need to reach out to your customers. This brand-initiated customer journey – the path from prospecting to purchase to longtime loyalty – is an essential aspect of customer experience marketing.

Every journey has common touch points: first contact, seeking information, comparison shopping, etc. What keeps your customers on the path? What knocks them off it? Knowing these will help you structure messaging and support that aligns with your customers' starts, stops and pauses.

You can read your customers' signals through data, as subtly as someone watching your product videos on YouTube. Even "no signal" generates a data signal, like when a subscriber doesn't open your emails.

CX-driven communications

In CX marketing, almost every communication should be informed by a customer-initiated action. For example, delivering a welcome email as a result of a newsletter sign-up, following up on an abandoned cart or sending an SMS to notify the customer that their order has been dispatched.

Many CX communications may well be automated however, because they're personalized, the customer is not likely to view it in that way. Have you ever received multiple updates on something you've ordered – from the initial confirmation email to a text telling you the time it'll be delivered – and thought 'This was good service'?

There are also times when things can go wrong during the customer journey. For instance, a customer may have received a number of communications from a company since signing up, including a series of welcome emails to tell them about the brand, with a discount. The customer was happy because they were introduced to the product range and got a money-off code, which inspired them to buy.

All the way up until the product was delivered, the customer received updates via email and SMS on the status of the order. However, when it arrived the product was damaged and needed to be replaced. A few tweets to the customer services team and they were able to quickly identify the customer and get a replacement sent out, with consistent updates on its progress.

A week later the customer received an email request to provide feedback on the experience and the product. Through a combination of human contact and digital communications following up on an issue, the customer feels as though they've been listened to.

The savvy brands that use the people and tools at their disposal are the ones that can turn these kinds of negative experiences around.

Therefore, great CX is not necessarily about having a physical presence at each point in a customer's journey. It's about putting in place a mechanism to make it seem as though they're the one and only, whenever and however they touch your brand.



DORMIFY'S CONTENT IS ALWAYS CUSTOMER-FOCUSED

Dorm décor brand Dormify was born out of a customer need, set up by mother and daughter Karen and Amanda Zuckerman. After searching high and low for fashionable décor for Amanda's soon-to-be university dorm, the pair realized there was a gap in the market.

Nicole Gardner, the brand's COO, explains how customer centricity has always been at the heart of Dormify: "Because our business started from the customer, every single thing we do is really done with the customer in mind.

"Taking a personal approach makes sure that they receive the content they're interested in. For example, we include specific call-outs for the Greek sorority buyer in larger email campaigns and then create a segmented list, based on which customers are clicking on and engaging with that content."

This strategy reflects the customer focus that has always been at the heart of Dormify.





THE **RIGHT TECHNOLOGY** IS ESSENTIAL

After ensuring the CX mentality has been instilled in the company, technology is the next crucial step. Customer experience encompasses many different elements, and a considered digital user experience and the right systems are key players.

It's difficult to make strides forward without the right infrastructure in place and, in an ever-advancing landscape, it's wise to have a tech setup that's synchronized, flexible and scalable. Can you easily plug in a live chat tool to your current web content management system? Is your checkout process optimized for mobile? Does your email marketing platform sync with your ecommerce software, enabling you to intelligently automate emails?

Data collection, automation and personalization enable brands to create unique messages that reflect each customer's interests and actions, and anticipate, react and seek to manage their actions. One of the ways that this can be achieved is by introducing an email marketing automation platform that stores data or seamlessly connects with a piece of ecommerce software.

dotmailer for Magento has been vital in helping ELEMIS build closer relationships with its customers, as Jonny explains:

"Our standard newsletters, even utilizing segments and dynamic content, are now a piece of traditional marketing. Our automated email programs allow us to have personal conversations with our customers. This is the key difference, in that we are much closer to emulating the in-store experience of talking with a salesperson. Just as a salesperson will try to glean information from the customer and adapt the conversation accordingly, our automations work in the same way.

"dotmailer's WebInsight provides us with the ability to be more reactive to what a customer is looking for. Not only does this help fill the gaps where we can't collect data, but it's also a strong marketing tool.

"In 2016, we aim to use this tool to tie our offline activity and online activity closer together. So if a customer who only purchases our skincare product books a treatment for the first time, we can reach out to them either with information on where their nearest spa or salon is, or even recommend a treatment to them based on their transactional history. Should they book an appointment for a consultation, the consultant can use the customer's behavioral data to tailor the session."

Customer service underlines every aspect of a good customer experience. It makes emails, websites and mobile apps easy to navigate and act on. It guides customers smoothly before the sale to help them buy the right product, and resolves problems quickly if something goes wrong. Therefore, the remit of customer experience extends even further than customer service departments and marketing, to product and web development teams.

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IMPROVING CX
IMPROVES CONVERSIONS

Customer experience transformation can feel like a mountain to climb. Anticipating the value and possible returns can prevent progression but, in small increments, change is more manageable and makes it easier to quantify the ROI that enables ongoing development.



However, it's no revelation that happy customers spend more. Once you've spent the time and money acquiring your customer, you want them to come back again and again (and tell all their friends about the great experience).

In the 2014 Global Customer Service Barometer by American Express, 68% of Americans said they were willing to spend more money with companies they believe provide excellent customer service. And according to a study by Infoquest, a "totally satisfied customer" contributes 2.6 times as much revenue as a "somewhat satisfied customer."

Jonny describes how customer experience is delivering bottom-line benefits for ELEMIS:

"Our reliance on simply offering promotional value has decreased significantly. Our Welcome Program had a nearly 50% higher conversion rate than our Black Friday campaign last year, as it is purely focused around trying to help customers discover the right product or service for them.

"Adding guided content over and above faceted navigation saw an increase of 30% in conversion rate through the category. Above all, our number of repeat purchasers has increased significantly compared with our other ecommerce channel."

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If your website and app is getting decent traction, you're driving customers to your stores and you've got all the channels and touchpoints covered, this is great. But don't stop there; the bar is always moving and there's always more you can do to improve the experience.

Positive experiences will hopefully stick with your customer. For instance, making them feel like a VIP is a tried and tested tactic to driving lifetime advocacy. Points-based loyalty programs, which can be set up and automated using dotmailer for Magento, help to increase purchase frequency, cart value and overall customer lifetime value.



“By giving customers the feeling that you are really actively helping them, we have seen a dramatic improvement in their loyalty to the business as well as hard cash benefits.

CUSTOMER INSIGHT DELIVERED
COLD HARD CASH FOR FAIRFX

Currency specialist FAIRFX uses dotmailer's WebInsight tool to keep track of what visitors are reading on its website. Lisa Stone, FAIRFX's Head of Online Marketing, explains how the tool has helped the brand to deliver outstanding customer experience and conversions:



"We found that the FAQ section was generating a lot of traffic around how best to use our currency cards. By creating a series of emails that effectively answers these questions before people ask them, we are able to reduce helpdesk calls and improve customer service.

"By giving customers the feeling that you are really actively helping them, we have seen a dramatic improvement in their loyalty to the business as well as hard cash benefits. Within just two days of launching this program we generated additional turnover running into five figures. Gross that up over a year and we're talking the potential to generate millions of pounds of additional revenue from a totally automated service."

Good CX is proving to deliver huge benefits to the bottom line and, as result, it's the retail sector setting the pace. Those on the road to introducing the right mindset and technology are leading the way – and those who don't will simply be left behind.

"In our experience the best CX programs are those supported by the whole company, not a single person working in a silo. And without question the most effective communication tool for delivering CX is email marketing automation."

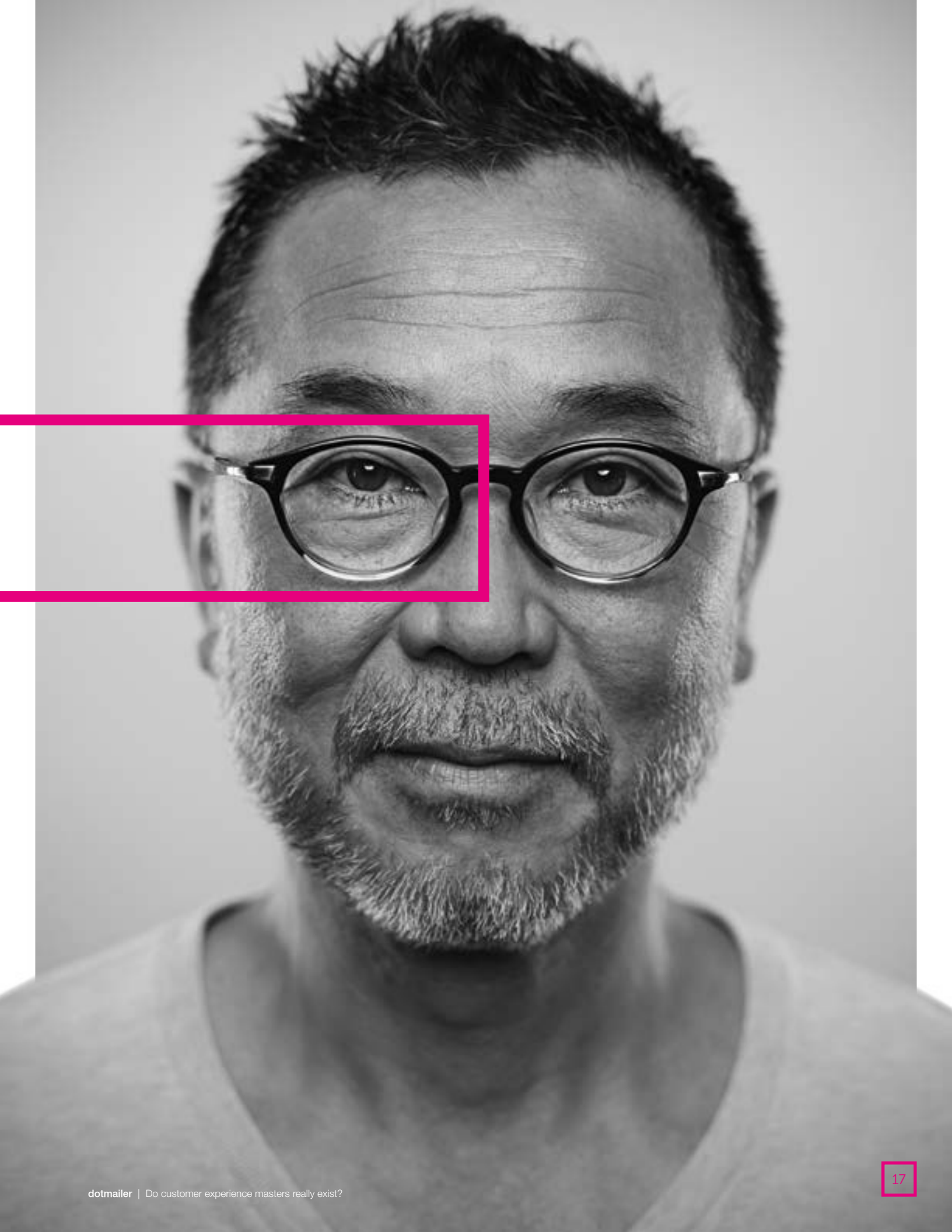
Tink Taylor, Founder and President, dotmailer

DO **CX MASTERS** REALLY EXIST?

As you've seen, improving customer experience is a continual process; like anything, there'll never be an equilibrium. Consumers are demanding more from brands and the technological landscape is forever advancing. No company will ever be perfect.

Brands that have built a truly customer-centric business from the ground up are in a fortunate position in this new era of intensifying customer expectations. These companies and their people live and breathe the customer experience values; it's why they exist. If that isn't you, don't give in. Take inspiration from brands like ELEMIS, which are making great strides towards giving customers the experience they expect.

The customer experience masters are the brands that adopt all of the tools at their disposal to understand and act on what consumers want. Those operating in established organizations, who are able to change the mindset and technology that enable this to occur, are the customer experience heroes.



About **dotmailer**

dotmailer started in the UK in 1999 and has grown into a global company with corporate and SME clients across 150 countries and 200 staff.

Today, the group is solely focused on email marketing automation and an acknowledged leader in the provision of intuitive Software as a Service (SaaS) email marketing and multichannel tools.

Through our Platinum partnership with Magento, we continue to provide ecommerce and marketing teams with the innovative, user-friendly technology they need. From surfing to selecting, shopping to shipping and everything in between, we've taken every step to ensure every customer's experience is captured segmented and personalized.

It's why dotmailer for magento is the premier email marketing automation platform. And also why Magento chose dotmailer as the first, and only global Platinum Technology Partner for email marketing automation.

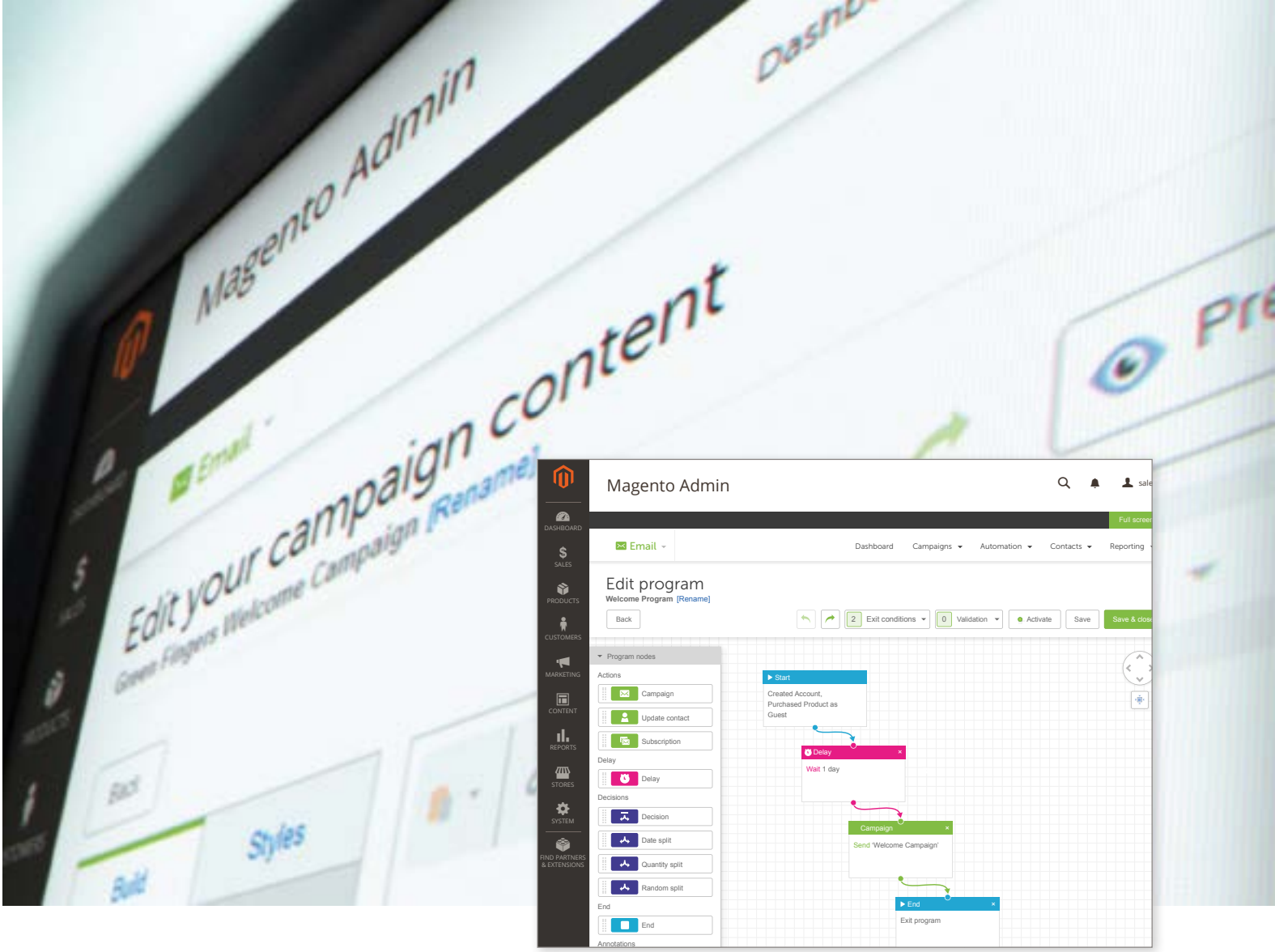
We're there on merit, not credit.



"dotmailer is in complete alignment with Magento's strategy of making ecommerce as easy as possible."

Mark Lavelle, CEO, Magento

Just some of the great companies we work with:



The Premier email marketing automation platform

dotmailer is the most feature-rich extension for Magento in the market. From surfing to selecting, shopping to shipping and everything in between, we've taken every step to ensure every customer's journey is captured, segmented and personalized. dotmailer can be used to build or send all of these:

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- Preference center
- Advanced segmentation
- Welcome series
- Abandoned browse
- Abandoned cart
- Recommendations
- Product replenishment
- Transactional emails
- Loyalty campaigns
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