

Transcript: Developing creative customer experiences

Welcome to another episode of the Digital Master class Series, part of Glen Eira's Digital Enablement program. Today's topic: creative customer experiences for your business. For today's agenda we're going to look at the impact of COVID on the business landscape; what the modern customer journey looks like; how to develop creative ideas and experiences; storytelling; and finally, we're going to go create something.

Since COVID, businesses have largely been impacted, especially the retail and hospitality industries. Professional services have also been moved to remote working. The entire landscape of how business is conducted has changed a lot due to the pandemic. Currently for barbers, close cuts are inevitable. Cafés have closed their doors and moved online for deliveries. Working from home has now become the new normal. Online streaming workouts and health have started to also become the new normal. The same with education. Businesses, rather than selling their actual menu, are selling inventory. We've seen a surge in online shopping orders through online platforms.

Here is a map of what the current modern customer journey looks like. Essentially, content is the key for producing the best customer experience. Let's jump into this, and see what this modern customer journey looks like.

Because of COVID, online shopping has become very popular. In terms of the customer journey, it starts with who knows about you – what advertising, or what marketing (or anything that you've done to get the word out for people, to know about your business). This could be through sites, through Google search, third-party platforms, word of mouth, social media, TV, radio, flyers and all these other traditional methods to really promote the business. This is the first step of where the customer begins to engage with a business. Keeping that in mind, the modern customer journey today is filled with a lot of choice and a lot of content. Really finding your position in the market is key.

Number two: thinking. In this part I call it: the customer is considering their options, and they're thinking about what people are saying. They're thinking about relevant content. Perhaps they'd also like to ask somebody that they trust and know, before trying to buy a product, or going for a service. Media and infographics, all of these key elements play a role in influencing the customer's decision, when they are in this thinking stage.

After getting past these two stages – the who knows about you, and the thinking (and all this has been executed very well) – there is the service and value building. This is where the customer feels comfortable with everything that they know about the business, and would like to engage and know more about a specific product or service that is on offer. In this knowledge-building journey, it could be through an email, asking questions and going back and forth. It could be on social media, so anybody that has posted something that is relevant could search the hashtag (or something that is related). And essentially, increasing exposure and trust-building. With online shopping, apps and desktop websites are the main platforms for e-commerce. This service and value section is where the customer is feeling very comfortable with everything, and likes to just drill down into the specifics.

After all that is done, there is what we call the purchase stage. They go for the sale and they start putting things in their cart in an online order. If it is a new sort of thing, it can be through a booking system. If they're going to click and collect a product they can go visit in-shop through safe, contactless pickup. Or, if you're in professional services, it could be just a matter of sending over a digital contract and requiring an e-signature.

The customer journey doesn't actually just finish with the purchase. There's also some follow-up that is required from the business, because we want to keep the customer happy. This moves on to what I call the remarketing stage, where the business could follow up with the customer's feedback and see how they're doing, and checking. It could be like sending a thank you email and asking them for a Google review, or it could be for a short survey and rate how their experience was. Or, they could post something on social media to express their satisfaction with the product or service. After all of this has been completed, you'd go into the final step which is called capturing the loyalty. This is where the customer is more willing to share with people that they know. They're willing to engage more for future purposes, and also recommend and give a four to five-star review. Throughout this whole journey, having good quality content is the key for the best customer experience, and really delivering on that value for money side for what the customer's needs are. Here is a graph which you can use to plot where the customer service experience is. On the left, we've got "not satisfied"; to the right, very satisfied. At the top we've got "offer is of high value" and on the bottom is "offer needs work". This is a good way to track one week's worth of reviews and feedback, based on what your customers experience. This can be collected through any sort of method that you'd like to use as your business. It could be through online reviews, it could be through a survey, even word of mouth. The best position to be in is obviously a high-value offer with a very satisfied customer, and essentially working your way up towards this area. You can plot this as honestly as possible because that is the best way to really capture what customers want, and what they need. For something in the middle, it might be an offer that's all right and the customer's gone, "okay, I'm not too satisfied, but I'm sort of not satisfied as well". It's in the middle, it's just something you have to do, but it doesn't seem very fun or the best sort of experience provided. It's always important to keep looking at that customer experience, and getting that as high as you possibly can.

Now we're going to share a quick video on what a business has done in a real-world challenge due to the pandemic, and the creative solution that they've come up with to tackle this problem.
[evocative music].

That was a creative way for one restaurant to overcome the challenge. I've got a quick quiz in here which you can do. The answer to the questions are below. Number one: what was the problem? Number two: what was the creative solution? Number three: how was the creative solution promoted? So, how was it promoted? Number four: what was written in the posts? Feel free to take this quiz later, whenever you can.

I'm going to share another video now, on capturing creativity during COVID. COVID has not only just been a really difficult time for everybody, but there are moments during COVID where we need to adapt and come up with new, creative things. This is a video I found that was very good at doing that, and keeping us busy.

[evocative music]

[Voiceover] "A pandemic has the possibility of bringing us together, in ways none of us would have been able to predict or expect." "I'm so small, said the mole. Yes, said the boy, but you made a huge difference."

That was a creative video, to show how resilient we are, and to show the many things that we can actually do during lockdown (and ways to inspire creativity and develop new ideas). We're going to go through a quick exercise on how to develop a creative idea. You might be thinking, "hey, Vincent, I'm not actually a creative person, this doesn't really apply to me, I'm all about pragmatic stuff, practical stuff, and this is how I am".

Well, okay, have you tried this? And maybe give it a shot and see how you go? In terms of developing a creative idea, let's start with number one: doing something simple. This can be

anything around your house, for work, or even during the weekend, or even if a family or friend has asked you to help with something. It can be a simple thing that you could be asked to do, or something that you'd like to do. Number two: while we always do something simple, there's always a problem that we encounter. So, it could be anything from not enough resources, to not being able to find the right people for the right thing.

So, look around and listen to what people are saying, or you can even look it up online and do a bit of a survey first. While you're doing that, and you're listening and looking around, you want to go on to step five, which is writing it down. Write down that problem, write down that idea with a pen and paper, and use your hands. I find this more productive when I actually write something down with pen and paper. It's more effective than on my phone, because there are so many things on my phone, it's just hard to keep track of everything. With a pen and paper, write down this simple thing and see, "hey, what could you do with it?"

After you've done that, I'm going to show some creative examples of what is done during my COVID lockdown. This is a doodling app on an iPhone, and Android as well. This is a cool birthday message from me. It's what I send to people; and other people have sent me something like this as well. This is in Murrumbidgee. It's a mural, right next to Murrumbidgee train station. It shows the creative side of what the community can do, when they come together during this difficult time. They actually celebrate and put something creative together for the community to enjoy. This was another really interesting way to display flowers. I saw this in New Zealand. Normally you would have florist just putting flowers in batches and batches. But with this one, I can see that there's a lot of time precision and care taken into every detail, of how this has been presented. I thought this was very creative.

Finally, this is a big tea (a big drink that I saw in Taiwan). What's really creative about it is that it not only shows what the product is, but it's a really cool thing to post and take photos of, and promote it on social media. It's just really unique but also inviting. You feel gravitated towards it and it has that effect.

Tying all of this together: the creative ideas; customer journey; the whole delivering value; modern customer service; and the customer journey. The main message here is: content is the key for the best customer experience. By coming up with something creative, your customers will be more willing to go through these first two steps, without too much thinking and without too much going back and forth. They find that you've developed a really good service, and value for money. They'll be more inclined to do that purchase faster, rather than bringing them on a slow journey, giving them too much information all at once, when they haven't had enough time to take all that in. Something simple, something creative in terms of content, is the best customer experience for their journey.

I'd like to sum everything up in one word, and everything that we've seen earlier on creative customer experiences. It's all about: "inviting".

You're creating an invitation to all the people around you (and the people that may not know about you), and inviting them to come and see, and do, and engage with what your business offers. With this invitation, they don't have to feel yes or no, but rather, they feel very comfortable with everything, and want to actually invite themselves and go forth with it. That's how I would sum the creative customer experience journey, all in one word.

So, story time. This is a quick story of something in my personal life. Very recently, due to COVID, a lot of places were not accepting cash as payment. As many people know, many of the older generation prefer to use cash over digital payments. Because of COVID, cash was not really the

safest way, because COVID lives on surfaces for seven days, something like that. On the right, here, is my grandma and she's making a purchase with her card. What happened: the problem was she liked to carry cash everywhere, but they didn't really take cash payments at a lot of places. I had to educate her about using masks, keeping safe social distancing, and how to actually carry out payments in a safe way.

This got me thinking, let's try something new, let's try and use a card and see how she goes with that. I helped her set everything up, through online. I demonstrated myself how I would go about buying something, using tap and pay. And she pretty much just picked it up, really quickly and followed what I was doing. Then, ever since, she's loved tap and pay methods. Now she says "cash is for old people, I'm like the young people now". So this was my creative way to help solve a simple problem. Maybe for a lot of us, we just tap and pay really easily. But for others, it may not be something that's so easy for them, and they may need more time. This is my personal story of how I came up with a creative idea, to make life easier for my grandmother, and safer.

Now, let's go and create something, let's do something. I've got a few recommendations for what you can go and create for your business. You can do something with your brand story. Tell the customers how your journey went and what led you to starting your business, and how far you've come. You can also post something creative on social media. It doesn't have to be art, it could be any sort of practical thing, or even just something that's bright and engaging.

Another thing you could do is: make a change to the front of your shop. If you have a physical store, it could be putting in a new sign, or a new poster, or anything like that. You could also consider making a video if you have the time and resources to do so. Video engagement is a really great way to speed up the customer journey, and give that really good, positive customer experience. You could also create a digital thank you birthday card. There's a lot of software online that can do this for you. It could be for a work colleague, or a family member, or even for any celebration that you have, and for which they'd like a digital card.

The next one would be to follow the [Discover Your Campaign](#). This is a campaign that Glen Eira City Council is running at the moment. Go to your local shopping strips and discover the businesses that you knew were there, but never got a chance to visit. Go out there and support your local business through the Discover Your Campaign, and use the hashtag on social media.

Another one: you could try and draw a comic of something funny, or something that you and your business might be known very well for. Give it a try, put some time into it, give it a shot and see how you go with it, because you never know until you actually try.

Thank you very much for listening to the slide, I hope this has helped your business and given value to it. Thank you very much.