



# 4 WAYS TO ELEVATE THE CUSTOMER Experience

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ost of you reading this article have clients coming to you for products and solutions to improve their Customer experiences. After all, it is THE hot priority for all businesses right now. You have mastered the art of helping them, but when it comes to improving your own experiences—well, that seems to be more challenging.

Approaching the entire Customer experience, across the entire organization, would be entirely exhausting. In fact, that's why it usually doesn't get done at all.

Instead, we recommend focusing on marketing first. It's often where a prospect's experience with your company starts, so it makes sense to start your transformation here. It will keep tasks and resources manageable, and you'll have a solid foundation to build on when you're done.

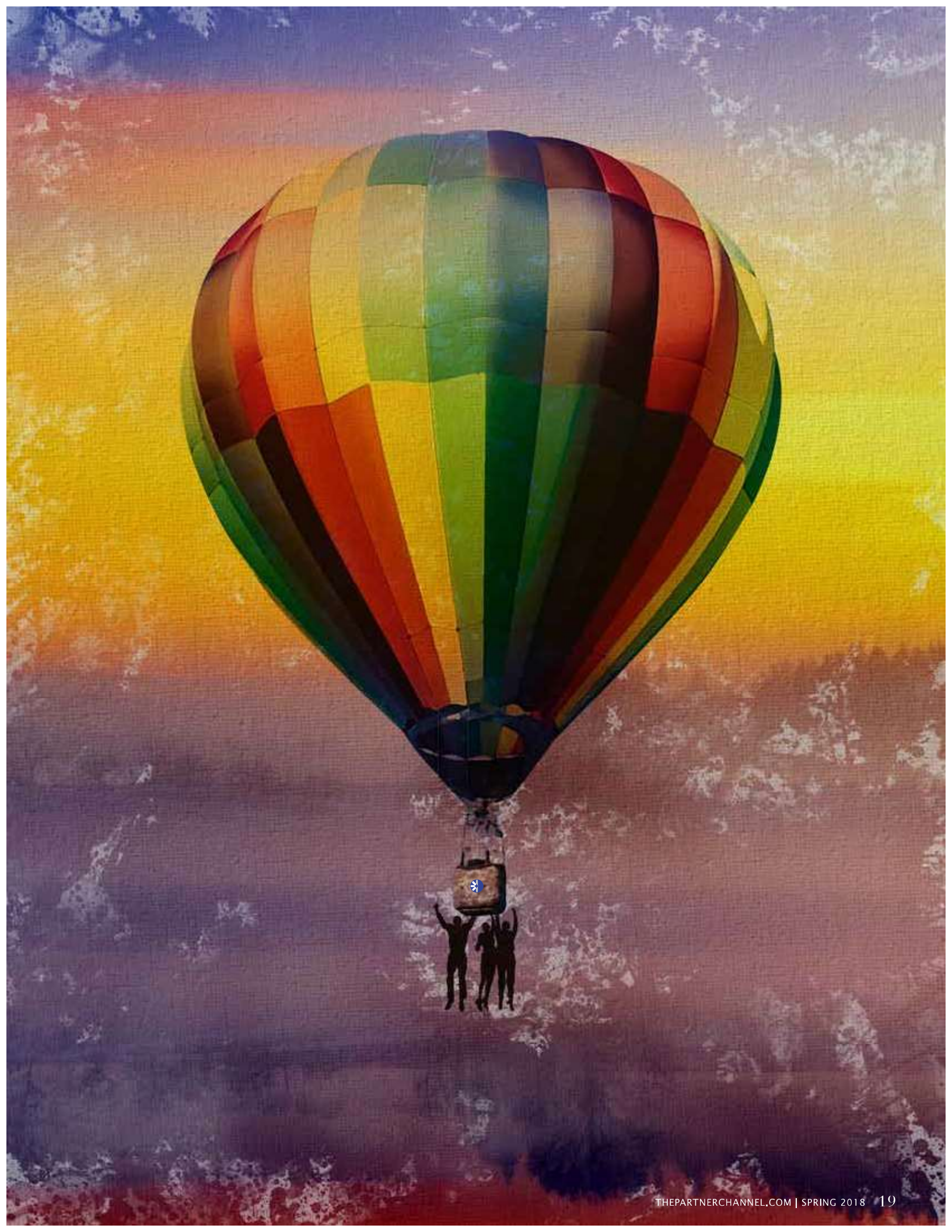
To make it less daunting, our leadership team weighed in with their advice. Here are four things marketers can do to elevate the Customer experience.



## MAP YOUR MARKETING JOURNEY

Customer journey mapping is the first step in designing exceptional experiences, and marketing is no exception. As you map your marketing journey, list each touchpoint and interaction a prospect/Customer will have across every channel and consider how to improve the following:

- » **EASE:** How easy is it for people to find and access what they're looking for? How easy is it for them to take action, initiate engagement, solve their problem, or take the next step? People are too impatient to work for the information they need.
  - Should you move or simplify your web forms?
  - Have you provided quick links and contact information?
- » **CLARITY:** Is it clear what you are offering? What you do? What you are asking them to do? Marketers LOVE to be creative, but don't make your Customers read between the lines. Keep your "real" message clear, concise, and to the point. It should be easy to understand right away—not hidden in paragraphs of copy or a bunch of marketing fluff.
- » **RELEVANCY:** You might have a lot to offer, but that doesn't mean your prospect/Customer can (or wants to) consume it all at once. You can't read a book all at one time, so think of each part of their journey as a "chapter" where information is relevant, short, and digestible. Then tell the full story over time, in a way that makes sense.
- » **ENGAGEMENT:** To understand how your efforts are working, or not working, think through how you can measure engagement throughout your experience. This is an ongoing effort and can be one of the biggest challenges, particularly for small marketing teams. However, you can't fix what you don't know.







## DESIGN YOUR MARKETING EXPERIENCE

When you are designing your marketing experience, keep these questions in mind:

**Is it Personal?** If you aren't empathizing with your prospects and Customers as real people, they aren't buying it—literally. You are designing a human experience. You are fixing people's problems. You build a relationship with a person. The marketing experience has to be more personalized than ever! Consider investing in a messaging framework by role, industry, etc. so you know how to "speak" in a way that makes your Customer the hero of your story.

**Is it Diverse?** You must be where your Customers are, and that means having a very diverse approach. Creating a marketing experience that spans so many channels is overwhelming. Different devices, different social platforms, different markets can each have unique requirements—from layouts and images to content and calls to action. People are educating themselves everywhere, not just on your website. Keep it manageable by determining which channels are the most relevant and valuable for your specific market and focus on getting those completely optimized.

**Is it Seamless?** Test drive your marketing experience from beginning to end so you can uncover any hiccups or bottlenecks and address them. Something as simple as a broken link or a misspelled name on an email can lose a Customer. Test every form, every link, every download. Try to break your system. Test, test, test.

**Is it Mobile?** Today, when creating any experience—marketing or otherwise—you must think mobile first. Don't you check your phone first thing in the morning? Right before bed? We're mobile all day, every day. What looks great on your big office monitor might look terrible on a mobile device. Or worse, not work at all. Another reason to think mobile first is because it makes us find ways to be more concise and streamlined which will benefit everything you do in marketing, mobile or not.



## USE HELPFUL TOOLS

One of the things we touched on earlier is the challenge of being able to deliver super personalized, relevant marketing. This is where you might need some help from technology, and here are a couple of ideas you might want to explore.

### ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE/MACHINE LEARNING

Using artificial intelligence (AI) or machine learning tools will help you not only personalize your marketing experience, but they will also help you increase conversions. How can you use AI?

- » **Website:** There are tools available for websites that can analyze/predict visitor interactions and display the most relevant offers, blogs, content, recommendations, and calls to action. You can send notifications and messages specific to that person's interests at just the right time. If your website is your primary marketing channel, it could be worth the investment in AI to make sure every visitor enjoys a highly personalized experience.
- » **Pay-per-click (PPC)/retargeting ads:** PPC platforms like Google AdWords and LinkedIn Sponsored Posts use AI to display ads and content based on searches and interest. This ensures your messaging and offers are being delivered to your targeted audience so people are getting what THEY want, not what YOU want to give them.
- » **Chatbots:** Chatbots can be an extension of your sales team and very effective, if done right. You can set up common questions and responses, segment them by audience, link them to CRM, and significantly shorten the sales cycle. While chatbots might have seemed impersonal in the beginning, the reality today is that many people don't want to pick up the phone. They would rather interact through chats or text.

### CONTENT TOOLS

Content is a big part of your marketing, and there are new tools to help you present content in a more targeted and engaging way. A couple that come to mind are Uberflip and LinkedIn Point Drive. For example, you can set up a content "hub" with resources, offers, and calls to action just for a particular industry or group. So, when you get a new prospect in healthcare, you can point them there, and they have everything they need at their fingertips with meaningful messaging. It's an excellent way to deliver an enhanced experience and wow your prospects.

It's worth mentioning that all the tools in the world won't help unless you fill the experience with compelling, valuable content for EACH industry or market you are targeting.



## GATHER CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

When you start focusing on getting feedback from your Customers, you'll realize they are always giving it—on the phone, in sales appointments, on social media, in emails, in blog comments, everywhere.

You don't have to send out a formal survey (though you certainly can). I'm talking about just normal, everyday conversation. For example, how many times have you heard...

- » I couldn't find information about xyz on your site...
- » I wasn't sure who to call to...
- » I called/emailed, but nobody got back with me...
- » I hate talking on the phone...
- » I really enjoyed your...
- » I wish you guys...
- » Your hold music is terrible...

To win on experience, you want to be an advocate for your Customer—and you can't do that if you're not listening to them. Knowing your Customers on a much deeper level is the only way you can truly deliver relevant, personalized experiences.

Encourage every employee to document feedback. Even small details matter, but you might provide some guidance on what feedback is valuable and how and where they should document it.

### MARKETERS CAN ELEVATE THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

You don't have to reinvent the wheel or spend a ton of money or time to create amazing experiences. At the end of the day, just refer to the golden rule. We all want to feel special, respected, and acknowledged. The key word there is how you make people feel. Do they feel understood? Do they feel empowered? Do they feel confident?

Marketing is part of the Customer experience at all times. It's what turns a prospect into a Customer, and you should

always be nurturing that relationship. Think about memorable experiences you've had with other companies and incorporate the best parts into your own. And if you really want to find out where the gaps are in your Customer experience, try secret shopping your own company. 🌐

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