

WARC

Press Release

For immediate release

The CX battleground - WARC Toolkit 2018

53% of brands and 58% of agencies prioritise customer experience within their digital transformation strategy

Global, 22 January 2018 – Lying at the intersection of conventional marketing and tech, customer experience (CX) will be a key focus for many brands in 2018, finds WARC, the global marketing intelligence service, following a survey with more than 600 marketing and advertising professionals around the world for its Toolkit 2018 report.

At a time of low sales growth, fragmented communications and commoditised products, delivering a positive experience to customers is increasingly considered a way to build brands and stand out versus the competition.

David Tiltman, head of content at WARC, comments: "Many companies are now actively making efforts to improve CX through a better use of data and more rigorous attempts to 'map' the customer journey. Over half of brand (53%) and agency (58%) respondents to WARC's Toolkit 2018 survey cited CX as a priority in 'digital transformation'.

"Once a marketer understands the most important connections and touchpoints influencing customer behaviour, these insights can inform everything from product development to communications planning," added Tiltman.

The rising importance of CX – a term used to summarise all consumer connections and interactions – is instigating structural change within brands as well as across the wider marketing services industry, with both traditional ad agency groups and management consultancies keen to position themselves as brands' digital and marketing partner of choice.

Large global management consultancies – such as Accenture, Deloitte, IBM, KPMG, McKinsey and PwC – are acquiring creative talent and digital capabilities to offer CMOs end-to-end data, marketing and customer experience services. Creativity, in this model, forms part of a broader chain of services.

Mark Sherwin, managing director of Accenture Interactive, says: "Experience is the battleground for brands today. I think we can all broadly agree on that. Consumers, and even business buyers, have the ability to pick and choose more freely than ever. And industries are being disrupted constantly to give new choices."

Sherwin goes on to advise: "Any given person is only a 'customer' for a small percentage of their life. To create more meaningful experiences, appeal to them as the people that they are for the 99% of the time, not the customer they are for the 1%."

John Sills, Director, The Foundation, added: "Brands need to start looking at the customer decisions that have the biggest impact on achieving their commercial ambitions, and then start to manage their customer journeys."

Other key findings from WARC's Toolkit survey show that:

- 21% of marketers plan to adopt CX-focused technology in 2018
- 34% of agency respondents agreed that their counterparts at consultancies have the edge when it comes to digital transformation services, showing a level of concern is spreading through the agency world.
- 38% of brand respondents agreed that management consultancies are better placed than agencies to help them achieve digital transformation.

The CX battleground is one of five key brand concerns in the year ahead, outlined in Toolkit 2018, which also includes a guide to best practice, potential pitfalls and video interviews with industry leaders to help overcome the challenges.

On 12 February, WARC will be running a webinar: 'Toolkit 2018 - How brands can respond to the year's biggest challenges.' Key priorities, opportunities and obstacles which marketers have highlighted for the year ahead, and how to tackle them will be discussed. Register [here](#)

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