A Digital Marketer's Guide To

Building High Converting Websites

How to Drive Constant Improvements with Customer Experience Optimization

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CHAPTER 1:
RETHINKING CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE DRIVES GROWTH

Stop the Guesswork

What does a 1% growth in online sales mean for your business? Or 3% or 10%? How about a 30% gain in conversion rates? For many companies, these small numbers add up to millions of dollars in revenue. How can you consistently make improvements to grow a business?

Companies using omnichannel marketing to grow their business know that improvements can be made, it's just not always clear how. This is the core issue faced by most business owners, executives, and marketing departments.

Customers Expect More

Because digital marketing is changing so fast, and customers expect a great experience, company leaders feel pressure to keep ahead of competitors. So the marketing and IS teams start rebuilding their apps and websites, hoping for the best. Most likely this will help, but this is the wrong strategy!

We need to understand what this *"guesswork process"* is costing us, alter our growth strategy, and **take the guesswork out of the customer experience.**

*We must learn to adapt our marketing in **real-time** to meet **customer** needs.*

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The Core Problem

Most companies rebuild their website and apps every two to three years from the ground up. The resources required to go through that process can be financially and emotionally straining for any company. Companies use the data and analytics they have to try and make the best decisions on improvements to the customer experience and they study competitors to get ideas they can copy or do better.

Google Analytics Is Not Enough!

Most decisions about customer experience are more emotional than based on fact. So executives try and use metrics from their analytics platforms to make the best decisions they can, but this is simply not enough to make the right decisions that will consistently grow online sales and lead generation.

Decisions need to be made on how visitors engage with your brand across all channels (not just web) and what drives sales. Just because a website has 1,000 visitors a day, it means nothing unless you can convert them into paying customers and loyal fans.

Understanding customer engagement is the key. Customer experience can be measured and continually improved with a Customer Experience Optimization strategy.

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Customer Experience Optimization

The idea of testing the customer experience has been around for a long time. Those of us who have been around since the 80's have seen the TV commercials pitting Pepsi against Coca-Cola in taste tests. The idea is a simple one, but getting large enough numbers to be significantly accurate is really hard offline. As an example, just look at the election polling campaigns that go on during election season, the inaccuracies are significant.

Customer Experience Optimization is a process developed by Click over the last 10 years that focuses on the continual growth of the business by analyzing how visitors engage with a brand and use that data for constantly improving to drive more sales and leads.

Around 2006, with the release of Google's Optimizer, website testing became much more available to businesses. A/B testing is a very straightforward concept. You test one design element against another to see which one works better. It could be a graphic, a button, text, or any element that can be put on a page. Then, as visitors interact and achieve the desired goal, eventually you will have a winner. Though A/B testing is a great starting point to improve the user experience, it isn't enough, which is why we created *the Customer Experience Optimization Process*.

Testing the customer experience can improve lead generation by an average of 70% over typical processes.

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5 STEPS TO CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE OPTIMIZATION

"In this age of the socially empowered customer, having just a marketing focused website is no longer enough."

Defining the Customer Experience Optimization Process

Customer Experience Optimization is the process of using UX data to create constant improvements in the customer journey that increases value for **both** the customer and the business.

Moving from a rigid website to an adaptive one requires a change in how we approach publishing content, digital marketing, and web development.

Rather than a series of creative projects and campaigns, customer experience optimization is focused on constant change, based on measurable improvements and not guesswork. Adaptive web design moves marketing and IS from a scheduled rollout strategy to real-time validation of ideas.

*Customer Experience Optimization means **knowing what <u>really</u> works** and not just accepting the **opinion** of experts.*

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Step 1:
Assume You Know (*Almost*) Nothing

One of the things that may be difficult for the digital marketing team is that you have to abandon what you think you know as best practices. Of course, we all "know" what the best practices typically are when it comes to campaigns and web design. They are called best practices for a reason. **Best practices are generalizations that may or may not work for your business**. They don't work for every business which is why it is important to be cautious about expert opinions. What you need to adopt as a team is the idea of **continually testing the customer experience**.

Whether selling widgets, providing services, or educating an audience, all digital communications should lead visitors to take some type of action.

Without measuring customer engagement and understanding their needs, we don't have a starting point. When we do make changes, visitors are basically "voting" with their interaction, with their data, and ultimately, with their pocketbooks.

Main Point:
How visitors engage with your brand online will guide you to make smart decisions on improving their experience.

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Step 2:
Start Measuring Everything

While you are gaining an understanding of your visitor's needs and giving your customers a voice, there is a wealth of information available to you through analytics. Ways of determining visitor behaviors can be gleaned from:

1. Web Analytics
2. Heatmap and Scroll Analysis
3. Form Analysis
4. Click Events
5. Video Recordings of Visitor Sessions
6. Online Surveys
7. Email Metrics
8. Chat Messaging
9. Funnel Analytics
10. Keyword Rankings
11. Keyword Trend Analysis
12. Social Reputation
13. Social Metrics
14. Campaign Effectiveness

In other words, we have a whole bunch of tools that can really generate a lot of great data so our digital marketing teams can dig into what drives visitor behavior. These are some of the core things you have to look at in order to understand what needs changing and what you are missing.

Main Point:

Develop a practice of measuring to reduce the amount of guesswork you are doing to increase sales and leads.

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Step 3:
Engage Visitors for Insights

At the heart of Customer Experience Optimization is a focus on gaining an understanding of your target visitors and keeping their information fresh in your CRM. Therefore, gaining an understanding of existing customers helps you gain a better understanding of **possible customers**.

If your business works with consumers, enhance the data with appropriate information to use segmentation to communicate more effectively. If you are a B2B and doing *Account Based Marketing*, there is a wealth of information on the business and the employees at the business you are trying to reach. Use this data to your competitive advantage using segmentation.

Embrace Social Engagement

Giving your customers a voice on your product or service will enable them to feel like their opinion matters. Of course, you can't respond to everyone, but it's the engagement that is important. It enables you to ask customers more important questions to learn more about them. This can reveal a number of possible surprises about your customer base, especially for those companies that have limited personal face time with their visitors.

Main Point:
Get to know your customers online any way you can. Engage with them and gain fans.

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Step 4:
Validate Your Customer Journey

Take a hard look at the content you have and how visitors interact with it before converting. Is it mostly fluffy marketing material or does it provide value? Either way, it should point the way for visitors (the customer journey) to their goal _and yours_. Your job is to determine if your content is guiding people through their journey and into your sales funnel.

Are people taking the time to engage with your content (text or video) or are they quickly leaving?

If they aren't taking the action you hoped for, such as clicking on a link to read more content, adding an item to their cart or filling out a form, then something is wrong with the content or the journey itself. It could be the content or the desired action isn't obvious to them, or they feel you can't solve their problem (according to the visitor). Using the data you have been collecting, focus in on the issue and test changes with future visitors to drive up your conversion rates. Remember, the goal is to make constant improvements based on what you are learning from your data.

Main Point:
Create steps that visitors can take which help them and create sales for you.

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Step 5:
Start a Customer Experience Optimization Team

The 5th component to adopting the needed processes to drive growth is to create a **Customer Experience Optimization Team**. When possible, this should be a cross-functional team (IT, Marketing, Customer Support, Analytics, Sales) that is responsible for constantly reviewing the performance of online communications and visitor experience. This team ensures that experience optimization is being accurately run and that the results are quickly implemented. The Customer Experience Optimization Team is responsible for ensuring the business is constantly improving so that visitors have the optimum experience and greatest chance at converting.

The key metric that all other metrics impact should be the **Growth Rate** of the business.

At a minimum, this should be at least a 1 or 2-person team and have access to all the tools necessary to impact the growth of the business. Additionally, this team should have enough creative freedom to test ideas and challenge the status quo of digital marketing.

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Take Your First Steps

Find out how you can start taking your first steps to using our Visitor Optimization Process to **grow your lead generation and conversion rates**. **Get an audit** of your website to determine if there are SEO or User Experience improvements you can make now to drive sales.

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