

Crafting Customer Experience Strategy

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Crafting Customer Experience Strategy: Lessons from Asia

EDITED BY

SAPNA POPLI

Institute of Management Technology, Ghaziabad, India

BIKRAMJIT RISHI

Institute of Management Technology, Ghaziabad, India



United Kingdom – North America – Japan – India – Malaysia – China

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About the Contributors



Ashita Aggarwal is a Professor of Marketing, a branding enthusiast, consultant and researcher of consumer–brand relationships. Dr Ashita has over 21 years of experience in corporate and academics. She is a consultant in the area of strategic branding and has been involved in research assignments and training of senior professionals with organisations across various sectors including FMCG, services, industrial products, pharma etc. Her current research focuses on brand reprieve and consumer pardon, brand personality and customer experience management. She is an Economics graduate and MBA (Marketing – gold medallist) and pursued an executive programme in Branding at Kellogg School of Management (USA). She has published in journals of repute in the area of branding and higher education and has written many award-winning case studies circulated through HBSP and Ivey and used across global business schools. She is regularly quoted in marketing periodicals including *Forbes*, *Brand Equity* etc. Dr Ashita is Harvard Business Publishing trainer for ‘simulations as pedagogy’ in India and has presented her research across the globe. Her PhD is in the area of ‘branding of management education’, which is one of the first works done in India in this area.



Anindita Banerjee has worked with companies including IBM, Microsoft, Tata Motors, Unilever, Vodafone, Schaeffler, BASF, Merck, Johnson Control and L&T on consulting and training assignments around D&I, change management and insighting. She is a Director at Renaissance Strategic Consultants (www.renainet.com). Her qualifications include MSc in Mathematics, MBA and PhD (in Cross-cultural Management from BITS Pilani). She has published her research work in national peer-reviewed journals. She has presented at various international conferences like SIETAR and Community Business D&I conference. She has been a visiting faculty at IIM-Calcutta and has also taught undergraduate courses at the Symbiosis School of Liberal Arts on 'Multicultural worldview'. As the strategic partner of the Cultural Intelligence Centre (www.culturalq.com) for South Asia, Anindita leads implementation of CQ, i.e. Cultural Intelligence-based projects for this region. Anindita is a globally certified ZMET® (Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique) interviewer and part of the Global Partners Network at Olson Zaltman.



Meena Bhatia has over 22 years of experience, which includes both corporate and academic experience. She is an academican, trainer, researcher and consultant. She has presented her research work at internationally acclaimed institutions

such as Harvard University (Boston USA), University of London, IIM (Ahmadabad), IIT (Delhi), IIT (Kharagpur) IIM (Lucknow), etc. She has publications in national and international journals of repute. She also provides research guidance to PhD scholars. She is on the editorial board and reviewers' panel of *South Asian Journal of Business and Management Cases* published by Sage Publications and on the reviewers' panel of many Emerald and Inderscience journals. Her research interest and contribution include topics covering financial markets, value relevance, corporate governance, disclosures and financial reporting. Dr Bhatia is passionately involved in management development and training programmes. She routinely conducts training and development programmes in costing, finance, accounting, analysis and investments for executives and leadership of private and public sector enterprises in India. Besides holding an FCMA, CFA, MBA and BCom (Hons) from Delhi University, she has a PhD. She is a merit holder of the Institute of Cost Accountants of India and a scholarship holder of the Institute of Chartered Financial Analyst of India.



Sumanjit Dass is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Management at Birla Global University, India. He has an MBA from ICFAI Business School, Hyderabad, and a PhD in Marketing from ICFAI University (Dehradun) in India. He has been the topper (Marketing specialisation) with ICFAI. He has 12 years of corporate work experience with reputed companies like Kotak Bank, Religare Securities and DHFL, where he held senior positions in sales and marketing. He was awarded 'The Achiever's Award', for corporate excellence in DHFL Pramerica from 2012 to 2014. On the academic front, he has worked with the likes of IMT Ghaziabad and IILM Graduate School of Management in the past. He is a prolific writer and manages two websites on corporate lifestyle and marketing (www.markeligion.in and www.markasm.com) as Editor-in-Chief. He is well published with ABDC journals. He is a certified trainer in digital marketing with more than 2500 plus hours of training imparted in the last few years. His research and teaching interests lie in brand management and digital marketing.



Deepika Dhingra is an academician, finance professional, trainer and consultant. She has over 12 years of experience and is currently working as an Assistant Professor (Finance) with Bennett University, India. She holds a PhD in Finance from Faculty of Management Studies, Delhi University, and an MBA from Indraprastha University, Delhi. She has published papers in the area of finance and has also presented her research at various conferences held at IIM Bangalore, IIM Raipur, IIM Calcutta, NMIMS Bangalore, Goa Institute of Management, BITS Pilani, IIT Roorkee and Delhi University. She teaches finance courses to postgraduate as well as undergraduate students. Dr Deepika has moderated panel discussions, chaired sessions and delivered invited talks at seminars. She has undertaken trainings for several PSUs such as Engineers India Limited, NBCC GAIL amongst others.



Smitha Girija is currently a Professor of Marketing at SOIL School of Business Design. She received her PhD in Impact of Organised Retail on Unorganised Retail in India. Her primary areas of interest are qualitative and quantitative social research and consumer behaviour. Her current areas of research are marketing strategy and consumer behaviour of social enterprises in rural India;

mobile applications and customer engagement in India and gaming dependency among Indian adolescents.



Sanjeev Kishore is Fellow of Management Development Institute (doctoral level in Management), Fellow of Institution of Mechanical Engineers (UK) and Fellow of Institution of Engineers (India). He has more than 38 years of association with Indian Railways and has worked all over India. He has over three decades of experience in handling various types of complex projects in diverse organisational settings. He has worked as Divisional Railway Manager of Alipurduar Division during the period 2015–17. He also has vast experience of handling international projects involving transfer of technologies across countries. He is presently working as a Principal Head of the Department of Production, Planning, Design, Marketing and Quality in a production unit of Indian Railways. He was the recipient of all four gold medals, including the Prime Minister's Medal for Best Overall Performance and ITC Medal for Marketing & Strategy in the Fourth National Management Program at MDI Gurgaon. He was also the recipient of the Ministry of Railway's National Award for Outstanding Service in 2003.



Sapna Popli is a Professor of Marketing at IMT Ghaziabad and has close to 25 years of work experience as a teacher, trainer, researcher, corporate executive and

an academic leader. Over these years, she has designed, developed and executed courses, programmes and large learning and development engagements in various areas. Her area of expertise is in services marketing, customer experience management, marketing research and cross-cultural marketing. She has also offered courses as a visiting professor at international universities in La Sabana, Colombia; ESCA, Casablanca, Morocco and at Shanghai University, China, and nationally at SPJIMR and IIT Delhi, School of Management. She is an equally passionate researcher in the service domain; her work has been published and awarded in reputed journals including the *Journal of Service Theory and Practice* (A) and *Journal of Services Marketing* (A), to name a few. She actively engages with industry for design, development and execution of programmes for working professionals across sectors for leading organisations in India. Professor Popli has a doctoral (FPM) in Services Marketing from IMI, New Delhi, an MBA major in Marketing with a graduate degree in Mathematics (Honors) from Delhi University. She has also completed international courses/programmes in Customer Experience Management from *Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM)*, UK, and *W. P. Carey Certificate in Service Experience Management*, Arizona State University, USA.



Pankaj Priya has spent 11 years in the corporate world with Datapro Infoworld Ltd, Singer India Ltd, ESPN Inc. and Birla Corp Ltd, where he was involved in hardcore marketing activities. The area of operations included North and East India. He shifted to academics in 2001. He has a PhD from IIT Delhi in the area of retail branding. He has published in various national and international journals and co-edited one book on communications. He has written a chapter on merchandising in a book published by Czech University in 2010. He is a reviewer for the *Journal for Retailing and Consumer Services* (Elsevier Publications) and *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*. He has presented four papers in national seminars at various fora. He got recognition as a teacher in marketing when he was bestowed with the Best Teacher Award in Marketing Management by Dewang Mehta Foundation at the national level in 2009. He is a member of the course advisory council for

the BVoc course in Retail Management of Ambedkar University, Delhi. He has been a resource person in the MDPs conducted at Central Warehousing Corporation (for their warehouse managers), Construction Industry Development Centre and AMUL Dairy products Ltd (for their distributors), Sleepwell Mattress (for their front line sales supervisors), MMTC (for their staff on floor sales), Women Entrepreneurs Programmes of Goldman Sachs and NTPC (for their corporate communication team), to name a few. He is an Accredited Management Teacher of All India Management Association. He is associated with two prestigious professional bodies, namely, All India Management Association and Consultancy Development Centre. He has supervised a report on stake holder's views on impact of FDI on multi brand retail in India, which was submitted to the Government of India in July 2010 and appeared on the website of DIPP, Ministry of Commerce, Government of India. He has delivered a talk on the same at seminars organised by WASME. He has taught as visiting assignment at IMT Ghaziabad and Pokhara University, Nepal. He has been an examiner for PhD viva voce at GLA University, Mathura.



Bikramjit Rishi is an Associate Professor in Marketing Management at the Institute of Management Technology, Ghaziabad, India. His research interests are in the areas of social media marketing, consumer behaviour and retailing. His research has been published in the *Australasian Marketing Journal* (AMJ), *Journal of Brand Management* (JBM), *Social Responsibility Journal*, *International Journal of Business Innovation and Research*, *International Journal of Indian Culture and Business Management* and *Singapore Management Review*, amongst others. He has edited a book on social media marketing (Routledge) and adapted another book on social media marketing (Sage). He has designed and delivered many training programmes for Hindustan Coca Cola Beverages Limited (HCCBPL), Maruti Suzuki India Limited (MSIL), Apollo Tyres Limited, APL Apollo Tubes Limited, Jubilant Foods and RITES Limited and so on.



Irfan A. Rizvi is a Professor of Leadership and Change Management in the OB-HR area at IMI, New Delhi. In his professional career of three decades, Dr Rizvi has taught at Faculty of Management Studies (FMS), University of Delhi, and has been a visiting professor at Australian National University (Canberra), Shanghai University (Beijing and Shanghai) and at International Management Institute (Senegal), IIM Kashipur, and has been recently invited to teach at Burgundy School of Business, Dijon, France. He offers courses around organizational behaviour, leadership, change management, communication and negotiation skills, coaching and mentoring, and competency management and development. In addition, he has been a senior corporate executive leadership coach, NLP practitioner, trainer and consultant. He has done research and publication on the aspects of leadership, change management, performance management, self-development and education.



Devika Rani Sharma is an Assistant Professor in the area of Marketing Management at IILM University, Gurugram, India. She has more than 10 years of teaching and research experience. She has published research papers in reputed international and national journals. She has also presented papers in international

conferences. Her broader area of research is consumer behaviour in emerging markets.



Dinesh Sharma comes with diverse experience in marketing – as practitioner, researcher and teacher. He has published papers in many peer-reviewed international journals and also written case studies. He is a Fellow of MDI Gurgaon and has more than 25 years of teaching, research and industry experience. His areas of interest in teaching are marketing strategy, marketing research, brand management, sales and distribution management. His areas of interest in research are marketing strategy, consumer value and brands.



Vandana Srivastava is a faculty of Information Systems and Management. She is currently associated with the School of Business and Management, Christ University, Bengaluru, India, as an Associate Professor in the area of Business Analytics. She obtained her doctoral degree from Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi, India, and Master of Technology in Computer Applications from Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Delhi, India. She has more than 20 years of

teaching and training experience. Her areas of research interest include technology management, artificial intelligence, information systems, spreadsheet modelling and business analytics. She is presently engaged in research work in the domain of applications of artificial intelligence, e-waste management and allied topics. She has several publications in national and international refereed journals. She was the recipient of CMO Asia's Best Professor in Information Systems Award (2010). She was invited as a special speaker to the World Congress on Outsourcing (WCOS)-2014 at Dalian, China, where she presented a talk on 'A Knowledge-Based Approach to Managing Quality in Outsourcing of High-End Services'.

List of Contributors

<i>Ashita Aggarwal</i>	S.P. Jain Institute of Management and Research, India
<i>Anindita Banerjee</i>	Renaissance Strategic Consultants, India
<i>Meena Bhatia</i>	Birla Institute of Management Technology (BIMTECH), India
<i>Sumanjit Dass</i>	Birla Global University (BGU), India
<i>Deepika Dhingra</i>	School of Management, Bennett University, India
<i>Smitha Girija</i>	SOIL School of Business Design, India
<i>Sanjeev Kishore</i>	Indian Railways, India
<i>Sapna Popli</i>	Institute of Management Technology (IMTG), India
<i>Pankaj Priya</i>	Birla Institute of Management Technology (BIM-TECH), India
<i>Bikramjit Rishi</i>	Institute of Management Technology (IMTG), India
<i>Irfan A Rizvi</i>	International Management Institute (IMI), India
<i>Devika Rani Sharma</i>	IILM University, India
<i>Dinesh Sharma</i>	Shailesh J Mehra School of Management (SJMSOM), IIT Mumbai, India
<i>Vandana Srivastava</i>	Christ University, India

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Foreword

In the last decade or so, the focus on customer experience (CX) management has increased exponentially. The ongoing changes in the business outlook across the globe, with the added impact of COVID-19, have made it even more pertinent to design and deliver exceptional CXs. Historically, while organisations and leaders bought in to the importance and need for investing in CX, there remained gaps in actual implementation and whole-hearted execution. The siloed mind-set and existing organisation structures continued to keep CX in a corner or house in customer support. Even when an organisation invested in capturing the ‘voice of the customer’ it was hardly shared organisation wide, let alone integration with other metrics from operations and finance. But as the customer got into the driving seat, competition increased and the need to focus on executing a perfectly crafted CX strategy has increased manifold.

Organisations today are starting to understand the impact of the CX on the top line as well as the bottom line. The understanding of the CX has started to move beyond customer care and marketing to operations, human resource management and board rooms. In organisations which are at the top of the CX maturity ladder, each employee works to break the silos within the organisation to deliver the best experience to its customers. The organisations are trying to understand the in and out of the customers by working closely on the customer journey, customer emotions and the CX at all the touchpoints. The customer journey elaborates on the pre-purchase, purchase and post-purchase engagement of a customer with the brand. An adequate understanding of the customer journey helps a brand to design an excellent brand experience aligned with the brand promise. At the same time, reports indicate that many brands are unable to live up to the customers’ expectations as they cannot understand the customer journey properly. The advent of digital and social media has further increased the complexity of the customer journey, making it more and more interactive and multi-channel.

A *Forbes* report indicates that today 89% organisations compete based on CX. It has become a new weapon in the hands of marketers to fight the competition. The report also showcases that 80% of the organisation believe that they deliver a ‘super’ CX, but only 8% of their customers agree. It means there is a massive gap in what the organisations are providing versus what the customers are getting. This gap is also increasing due to the increased number of alternatives the customers have to reach a brand. Traditionally when customers had a problem, they could visit the brand outlet, email or speak to customer care. But now, when the

customers are dissatisfied with your brand, they might tell you and an unsatisfactory or delayed response will soon have a post on social media to say to others, which negatively impacts the business and arouses negative emotions in prospective customers' minds.

Asian economies differ significantly from the developed markets in socio-economic and cultural variables. The variance leads to the difference in their customer's behaviour, expectation and experiences. The majority of the CX research contributions specially in the form of a book have come from the developed world mostly the United States and Europe, which left out many aspects that may be relevant for the Asian markets. This necessitates a dialogue where researchers and practitioners operating in these economies to share their experiences and coalesce on a research agenda related to the customer experience. The book on the theme *Crafting Customer Experience Strategy: Lessons from Asia* purports to provide a platform where these experiences, insights and thoughts have been assimilated to approach a unified understanding of what (re)defines customer experience management.

Sapna Popli
Bikramjit Rishi

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Sapna Popli
Bikramjit Rishi
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