

# Role of Operations in Designing A Better Customer Experience

Nirmal Syam

T2, Operations, MBA, CET School of Management,  
Affiliated to KTU

Dr. Sini V Pillai

Assistant Professor, CET School of Management,  
Affiliated to KTU

**Abstract:-**The article gives an overview about the role of operations for a better customer experience. Advancement of customer experience helps the business to maintain their customers and bring up more new customers . Customer experience advancement helps the businesses to provide its customers with the best out of business and that too in an efficient manner. Effective operational management provides a way for businesses to let their products reach the end users and also it helps in reducing the various layers between the companies and the customers. This article helps to identify the significance of operations in designing a better customer experience.

**Keywords:-**Customer Experience, Operations, Author, Customer Response, Digital Advancement, Market Research.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Great customer experience starts with customer operational excellence, companies usually misinterept customer experience as something that lies at the last point of sales. They train and sales people to be customer-centric create the best online and invest in social engagement and listening. However, all these investments are futile if the initial operations are not equipped to support the customer journey. Provisioning reliable data to operational systems is crucial for their efficiency.

Operation being this important for improved customer experience, this article will give an outlook on how the operation becomes important.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. The article ‘How to design a better customer experience was prepared by Gina Gerdeman (year 2017). Stefan Thomke, Professor of Business Administration at Harvard Business School was consulted for preparing the article. He has considered the incident that took place at GE health care. The scanning machines introduced by GE had all the modern facilities in it but the design of the machine created a fear among the small children so that the children were sedated before scanning. But, they had

conducted a survey among the parents and children and reworked accordingly and the end result was a structural change with the scanner that attracted the children and reduced the fear they had which helped in a huge drop in usage of sedation among the children .The companies’ operational wings timely act helped them achieve so.

**Thomke Says-**“Experience Designers Are Told To Follow Standard Operating Procedures And Provide Customers With Programmed Responses”.

- B. The article is on the topic ‘Amazon, Whole Foods Deal a Big Win for Consumers’ prepared by Jose Alvarez and Len Schlesinger(year 2017). According to Alvarez, the Amazon’s decision to expand the areas operation opens great opportunities for them if they are executed properly. Amazon fresh ( the grocery wing of Amazon) needs to have 400 outlets to be opened by Amazon around its operational areas since the items they deal with Amazon fresh are perishable in nature. This will help Amazon to expand their other business too. Currently the online food supply chain satisfies only 1% of the total needed but Amazon is trying to satisfy the whole which is quite challenging but possible and has a wide scope. Schlesinger- The most common reaction of the public to the news of the Amazon-Whole Foods acquisition was surprise. Amazon always follows ‘test and learn’ operational approach where which the chances are going right than going wrong. This approach of Amazon always make them the leader and make others follows them.
- C. The article ‘Where did my shopping mall go?’ was done by Sean Silverthorne (year 2015). In this article Silverthorne raises a question- What is happening to the shopping mall? According to mall researcher Green Street Advisors, more than 20 enclosed malls have been shuttered over the last few years with another 60 on the endangered list. Though the operations of the malls have changed according to time for the advancement of customer experience but still they find it difficult to mark their future safe. The main reason behind this is the introduction of online shopping system that has entirely different operation pattern compared to that of offline

malls. Customers need not visit shops or malls in person to do their purchase all they need is a Smartphone or a system with internet connectivity. Malls are classified as A-class malls and B-class malls. A-class belongs to luxury items and focus on rich and high class people, these malls with movie theatres and other entertainment facilities are still safe as the customers they focus really values the customer experience they are given with, the issue lies with the B-class malls were they focus on middle income people. The future impact of this is- “All These Changes On Jobs, Tax Base, And Blight As You Lose Thousands And Thousands Of Stores Around The Country?”

D. The article ‘How much does online customers really value free product return’ is done by Guangzhi Shang (year 2017). He has done the project with respect to the product return policy of eBay where identical products are sold with different return policies. He analyzes both the return policy drivers from the retailer's perspective and the return policy value from the consumer's perspective. While other retailers offer full refund for the returned product eBay offer full, partial and no refund for identical products depending upon the seller. The results suggest that the value of a full refund policy to consumers may not be as large as one might expect, and it also exhibits a large diversification across buyers with different levels of online purchase experience.

E. The article ‘ Why and How organizations are adapting for Digital Customer Experience’ was prepared by Brian Solis (year 2014). Over the last year, Solis had spent time with some of the most recognized companies in the world to study how the roles of new customer behavior and disruptive technologies are influencing how organizations evolve. Specifically, he has set out to learn how digital technologies are impacting customer behavior and in turn how businesses are responding to these changes. Flying under a banner of “Digital Transformation,” these companies are focusing efforts on understanding the digital customer experience to make the case for change.

Some of the interesting findings of the study include:

- Social, mobile, real-time, and other disruptive technologies are aligning to necessitate bigger changes than initially anticipated.
- Digital transformation is quickly becoming a priority for many leading organizations.
- Mapping and understanding the customer experience is becoming critical in guiding transformation efforts.
- While gaining momentum, digital transformation as a formal process is still in its infancy.
- Digital transformation is driven partly by technology and also by the evolution of customer behavior.

- Three key elements that form the compound upon which digital transformation efforts are built:

- ❖ It is most effective with pointed vision and supportive leadership.
- ❖ Optimizing the digital customer experience becomes the initial objective.
- ❖ Change materializes through the formation of a digital transformation team.
- ❖ A list of best practices will serve as a checklist to help strategists take the next steps to beginning digital transformation or optimizing current efforts.

F. The article ‘Customer experience begins before sale’ was prepared by JIM BASS (year 2014). Wikipedia defines Customer Experience as "the sum of all experiences a customer has with a supplier of goods and/or services, over the duration of their relationship with that supplier. This can include awareness, discovery, attraction, interaction, purchase, use, cultivation and advocacy. It can also be used to mean an individual experience over one transaction." There are other definitions but this one matches the article. Regardless of your technology of choice, if your experience becomes difficult, slow or unappealing, there is a high probability you will go somewhere else to make your purchase and you will probably never go back again. Not just marketing but the operational activities that takes place with a good or service post and pre production also makes a product appealing or unappealing. Eg; for a well marketed software, if then software fails to meet the customers' expectations it's because of the companies fail in their operation.

G. The article ‘10 reasons why companies fail to improve their customer experience’ was prepared by Rick Conlow (year 2014). Conlow says- Every year, a top five priority for most companies is to improve their customers' experience and loyalty. Unfortunately, most fail. The findings of Conlow as the reason for fail of companies to improve customer experience are as follows:

- *Ignorance is Bliss*

Recently, a company executive proudly shared that they survey customers twice a year. (What if this company only looked at sales or profit numbers that often?) The company leaders always talked about service but made no serious changes and kept experiencing the same issues with customers and competition.

- *Vision without Vitality*

One company President said, "We don't want to be the biggest company, only the best service provider." The President gave a five-minute speech everywhere he went; however, no plan or action ever followed. The company floundered.

- *The Panacea Approach*

One CEO decided to use a Just in Time production strategy because it worked for his buddy's company. He did it exactly the same way but failed. As a result he had to lay off a lot of people, and within two years lost his job.

- *Frontline Fanatics*

A major airline responded to customer complaints by notifying customers of their new "Customer First" initiative for employees. In reality, employees weren't partners they were scapegoats. The airline's service never got better. It eventually went bankrupt, and was merged with a larger competitor. (According to service gurus, 85-95% of service problems are management related not employee related.)

- *Do It All and Have It All*

One leader happily reviewed with his team three flipchart pages full of customer service improvement initiatives. Not surprisingly, employees were overwhelmed and business stalled. They had no focus and ended up with negative sales results.

- *I am a Rock – I am an Island*

A \$27 billion company has tried to improve service for a decade, but is still rated near the bottom of their industry. They refuse outside help or assistance. They have settled for dismal service, low stock prices, poor profits and meager growth. Their strategic goals outline a commitment to the customer, but they don't really mean it.

- *Drive by Training*

Many leaders send their employees to an online course or to a class to get "fixed." They never tried to upgrade organizational design, systems, processes or cross-departmental collaboration. Even though training is a vital pit stop on the way to success, it's not a one-stop solution.

- *The Secret is Technology*

One retail organization spent millions to improve customer retention through expensive new technology primarily because a big six accounting firm told them to do it. It didn't help. Their sales growth continued to spiral downward. Investment and support of their people was an afterthought. Now, they are merging with a competitor to survive.

- *The Tool-Chest Dilemma*

One company executive told that they have consultants for everything. Take your pick from TQM, Six Sigma, The Goal, ISO, Kaizen and numerous other approaches to get better. These multiple efforts were seldom executed well or sustained. Employees were drowning in meetings, data, paperwork and confusion. Guess how well they give service to customers?

- *The Perils of Poor Execution*

How often have you been in a company that implemented a grand strategy but failed to achieve the desired result because of poor execution? The promises of change become false exhortations, which of course demonstrate a lack of integrity. The trust within and around the organization dies. Conlow believe companies need to get back to basics of focusing on understanding customer needs and wants, and valuing their employees.

H. The article 'Five Steps to Walking the Customer Experience Talk' was prepared by Jonathan Becher (2014). Becher says Companies want to deliver an incredible customer experience there by turn a profit, increase market share, and engage their employees. Companies that outperform their peers in customer experience are likely to turn customers into repeat customers, and repeat customers into loyal brand ambassadors. Business leaders must dig into the fabric of their organizations, revamping structures, processes, systems and mindsets to create a consistent customer experience. This takes more than writing a new mission statement. The findings of Becher says that the followings steps helps in increasing customer experience:

- *If it's not Broke:*

Improving customer experience doesn't mean ripping the organization apart. Sometimes it just means looking at information you've already collected. UK toy retailer The Entertainer is a great example of using existing data and information to drive new outcomes. By combining its view of inventory for online sales with that of its bricks-and-mortar stores, the retailer delivered two new services which transformed its customers' experiences and increased online sales by 32%:

- *Map the Customer's Journey:*

Customer journey maps can help an organization capture the interactions between your customers and brand across time, channels, and touch points. Kerry Bodine, a vice president and principal analyst with Forrester, has taken the concept one step further with what she calls ecosystem mapping, which helps companies identify the complex relationships that shape these interactions.

- *Remodel Your Metrics :*

Many organizations say they want to reduce average call times in their call center. This may be operationally efficient, but it's not really customer-centric. Instead of measuring how quickly a call center rep helps a customer, try tracking how frequently the customer calls back. This incents an agent to take a little extra time to ask, "Is there anything else I can help you with?"

- *Add Glue:*

Every organization needs a champion to ensure silos are connected, or better yet, destroyed. I've written before about

how one of marketing's core responsibilities is being a force multiplier that transforms a bunch of departments and titles into one, holistic entity. Rather than completely reorganizing the structure, marketing should be the glue.

- *Form a SWAT Team:*

Employees generally want to do right by their customers – but often don't have the support to do so. "There's a huge untapped resource among employees who wish they had some way to help solve customer issues, but they can't because so many companies have a huge infrastructure with boundaries that no one is supposed to cross," Bingham said. These types of bottom-up "SWAT" teams could help organizations deliver a seamless experience.

### III. FINDINGS

The findings observed on doing this article are listed below:

- Customer experience is no longer something which can be dealt by the front line employees alone, the whole business from the point of operations of the business itself should start working on experience enhancement
- The business who only points out on lastpoint customer satisfaction cannot withstand over a period of time as the customers has handful of other alternatives.
- Not just surveys but further indeep studies ,researches ,observations etc are to be seriously conducted on the study of Designing a better customer experience
- Realizing the need and importance many around the world has already started and many has completed studies and researches on this topic
- The b-class shopping malls should try out with new advancements to hold on their customers who are about to conserve on to online shopping
- More business should come forward to adopt the policy of try and test like that of Amazon as the rate of getting positive result is more than that of losing.

### IV. CONCLUSION

Not just the customer experience, but the advancement or designing of a better customer has become inevitable for a business to exist in the current market. The major reason for the companies that fail in maintaining customer experience is because they consider customer experience as something that is left with the front line employees to be dealt at the point of sales, but those who failed to maintain this has realized that customer experience is something that is to be considered from the initial operational stage itself. This has resulted in conducting more surveys, researches and studies regarding the need and importance of designing a better customer experience. Being a topic that has a great future relevance, I thought of opting this topic for this article.

### REFERENCE

- [1]. How To Design A Better Customer Experience- by Dina Gerdeman was published on hbswk.hbs.edu during 2017.
- [2]. Amazon, Whole Foods Deal a Big Win for Consumers- by Jose Alvarez and Len Schlesinger was published on hbcwk.hbs.edu during 2015.
- [3]. 'Where did my shopping mall go?'- by Sean Silverthorne was published on hbcwk.hbs.edu during 2015
- [4]. 'How much does online customers really value free product return' - by Guangzhi Shang was published on science direct during 2015.
- [5]. ' Why and How organizations are adapting for Digital Customer Experience' -by Brian Solis was published on linkedin during the year 2014.
- [6]. 'Customer experience begins before sale' by JIM BASS was published on linkedin during year 2014.
- [7]. The article '10reasons why companies fail to improve their customer experience'-by Rick Conlow was published on linkedin during 2014.
- [8]. 'Five Steps to Walking the Customer Experience Talk' - by Jonathan Becher was published on linkedin during 2014.