

2017: The year of taking your business from Gen X to Gen CX

 By Leigh Andrews

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On the day of love, Tuesday, 14 February, BrandLove fittingly held the much-loved Cape Town version of its CX trends update for 2017 at 360 Business Parks in Paarden Eiland.

This is the third year in a row and they have “changed the shape” of the session. It’s effectively a container for you to feel safe in, learn from others’ experiences, think about your own business, and challenge some of the thoughts at the back of your head that you’re too busy to tackle. The workshop is effectively a chance to co-create and collaborate, and instead of your conventional PowerPoint presentation filled with theory, it is super practical and makes you think, feel and do. So while my event feedback won’t do the live attendance justice, I hope the below is enlightening and gives you an idea of top customer experience or trends for the coming months...

Imagine the iPhone of 2021

BrandLove’s customer experience strategist Chantel Botha said while it can seem overwhelming if you’re not sure where to start, just go back to basics: CX is all about the customer, so that’s where you start. But don’t focus on your current in-store or online shopper, rather lean into the future and imagine your client of five years from now. Go all out, focusing on potential technological change (imagine what the iPhone of 2021 will include as special features, for example), and how you can meet these new customer needs. While this can be a fun exercise in itself – we did ours in small groups with Lego, strategic consultants, tech-heads and business owners alike – Botha says in doing so you also learn to innovate so that you leapfrog from the present to those specific trends that make you most excited or most uncomfortable, and fully embrace them.



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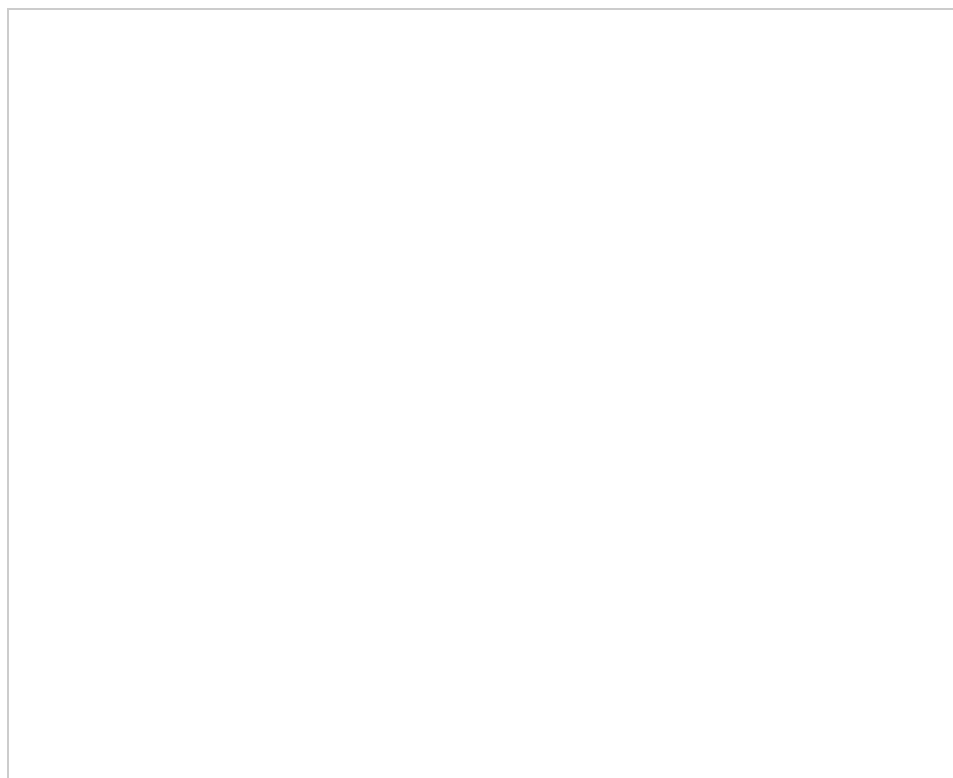
Hinting at some of these trends, Botha said augmented reality will be the new reality, as she spoke of changing ways of buying and how we’re influencing buying in ways tailored to personal needs. This means advertising in particular must be interactive and embedded, as the consumer of the future expects to double tap on everything for more information. If they like what they see, they will help spread it and even co-create with you. But be careful – don’t overstep the mark by becoming too pushy or chummy as they’ll quickly turn on you by blocking your future attempts. So if you work in marketing in particular, Botha says you’d better start upping your game as you haven’t seen anything like the future consumer.

If you get stuck, it helps to brainstorm and bounce ideas off others. Botha says, “At the end of the day, humans are humans, so we all have the same needs, despite brands offering different solutions.” So the overall business intent is right, but it's overwhelming to consumers, as we all work in our bubbles and forget to put ourselves in our consumers' shoes.

Be your customer, be Gen CX

Botha says it's so easy to just start ignoring you all. This ties in with the unfortunate **disconnect between knowing what constitutes good service and actually delivering on it**. It's even worse when you factor in the siloed office spaces of late, where interacting with different departments is like interacting with different planets, as all have such a different view of the overall customer experience. Botha says to put CX top of mind and design an experience that makes your customer feel good about themselves. Doing so is what will make you jump out of bed in the morning excited to start work. It's about managing specific fears in the most effective way.

I found the below Slideshare of the top CX trends Botha has identified most helpful:



Remember: My business is ultimately your business, as we're probably targeting the same extremely niche customers. Being cognisant of these trends will help us meet their needs, now and in the future. While many of us identify with specific generations that correlate to common culture and ways of thinking at the time we're born, Botha says to set this aside. Forget Gen X, we're all Gen CX.

To clarify this statement, Botha asked whether we agree that millennials want free food and beanbags in the workplace, referencing the now-viral *IQ* interview (that's *Inside Quest*, not Intelligence Quotient) with British/American author, motivational speaker and marketing consultant Simon Sinek on managing workplace millennials. If you've not seen it, set aside 15 minutes and watch it now:

I also highly recommend downloading the BrandLove 2017 Trends PDF eBook and browsing through when you have a moment. [Click here](#) to do so, and let us know how you're changing your mindset from Gen X to Gen CX!

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

Leigh Andrews AKA the #MilkshakeQueen, is former Editor-in-Chief: Marketing & Media at Bizcommunity.com, with a passion for issues of diversity, inclusion and equality, and of course, gourmet food and drinks! She can be reached on Twitter at @Leigh_Andrews.

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