

Welcome to part 1 of our series
focusing on Return on Experience.

The Return on Experience: For Business Success, Create Human Success

Many companies see metrics and KPIs as the drivers of success, when in fact they are the results of a less tangible force—experience. When companies make delighted customers their primary goal, they will see that business results follow.

Providing great experience means delivering things that matter to people, in ways that matter to people.

The subject of experience is often talked about, yet its connection to business results is poorly understood and most often equated with customer satisfaction score (CSAT) or net promoter score (NPS) surveys. The trouble is, we don't always have the right data or feedback to *prove a clear, causal relationship* between great experience and great business results.

Without tying back to the bottom line, experience will rarely be more than a 'nice-to-have' in the boardroom. And, as you know, nice-to-haves walk on thin ice when tough investment decisions are being made, particularly if successful implementation is uncertain.

But our recent research on the subject has significantly advanced our understanding of what the data can tell us. It has confirmed that nothing drives outstanding business results so much as an amazing customer experience—and nothing creates positive customer experiences like design.

The resulting breakthroughs are already opening up a great many possibilities to identify and manage the areas of experience that matter most to customers, and that, by extension, offer the greatest opportunity for companies.

According to Gartner, **“More than two-thirds of companies now compete primarily on the basis of customer experience—up from only 36% a decade ago.”**

The success of human-focused companies such as Virgin Atlantic, Citibank and Apple is not by accident but by design. In a world of increasing competition and commoditization, companies that are driven from a customer experience perspective gain competitive advantage and sustained relevance.

Jim Marous of the Financial Brand states that, **“Victory on the new battlefield for customers in the banking industry depends on leading-edge CX. With the differences in products and services offered continuing to be slight, improving the customer experience will be one of the most powerful differentiators in the future.”**

For companies to compete successfully, the key is to understand their relationship to their customers in ways that allow those customers to achieve their potential and satisfy a need. Companies that deliver successfully on this through good experiences create a competitive advantage for themselves, because experience is the metric that determines value.

The more directly, easily or fully a need can be fulfilled by a company, the more valuable that company is to the customer. And in a world of infinite choice and constant demands, customers will spend time—and money—accordingly.

When companies get it right and create things that matter to people, in ways that matter to them, it leads to great business results—the by-product of great creative solutions.

These business results are the reward for fulfilling a human need, and become part of a symbiotic relationship between the brand and the customer that perpetuates over time. This connection, between successful human outcomes and successful business outcomes, is what we call the **‘Return on Experience’**.