5 Ways B2B companies can achieve CX transformation

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Customer Experience (CX) transformation is one of the most powerful strategic changes an organization can undertake. Consultants at [McKinsey & Co](#) say that "A fundamental change of mind-set focusing on the customer, along with operational and IT improvements, can generate a 20-30% uplift in customer satisfaction, a 10-20% improvement in employee satisfaction, and economic gains ranging from 20-50% of the cost base addressed in the various journeys."

We typically associate CX transformation with the B2C space: think Apple in-store experience, DPD delivery precision, ease of Amazon returns, Starbucks' customer service.

Large B2B companies also face their own legacy CX challenges. Services are inherently complex and long-lasting. Key contracts can often be put at risk through misunderstanding evolving customer needs.

At Fujitsu we know this from our own experience. Our understanding of customer relationships and the way we reacted to customer feedback were not where we wanted them to be. That's why we commenced an extensive CX transformation program led from Europe and now rolling out globally.

With little relevant guidance available in the B2B space, we believe we have identified five things that B2B companies should do to achieve superior B2B CX with profitable, long-term customer relationships.

You can't improve unless you know where to start
Fujitsu had conducted Voice of the Customer surveys for some years but saw this mainly as a box-ticking exercise and conducted little transformational activity using results.

Then in 2020 we adopted Net Promoter Score (NPS) as our worldwide global CX metric to track overall customer engagement and the linkage to financial performance.

To drive CX transformation across Europe, Fujitsu set up a new Customer Experience Performance Centre (CXPC). We took a blended approach to key hires, appointing CX Coaches from the existing colleague population who had a clear passion for CX. These roles were balanced with qualified CCXPs (Certified Customer Experience Professionals) employed from outside the organization.

The CXPC team immediately developed a CX Framework, delivered engagement workshops, provided best practice communications across the region and sought pilot accounts to work with.

NPS can work in B2B
NPS can be a tough sell in a B2B organization. Previous attempts may have produced little benefit or meaningful results, due to smaller feedback sample sizes and customer relationships that are more complex than in B2C.

Instead of single transactions, like buying a cup of coffee in Starbucks, B2B companies may deal with complex, multi-year, $ multi-million contracts containing many micro-transactions, covering customers in different countries and verticals, supported by Master Services Agreements with SLAs baked into the delivery model. There isn't one unique customer journey and parts of the customer's business might not even connect with or care about each other.

The seniority of the person providing feedback really counts in B2B. You have to work hard to obtain the right contact details from your account teams – maybe they are not interacting with the right people, which tells you something important right away. And you should aim to survey customers responsible for at least 80% of your cross-portfolio revenues.

In fact, it's better to assess feedback in terms of "Account Experience"; multiple respondents from the same customer business, rather than single survey results from one individual. More responses are more statistically valid.

You might also find that respondents who provide feedback do so because they have a problem. That's actually a good thing. At least you are going to find out about it (if you have an alert system), hopefully in time to sort things out. The quicker you react, the more positive the impact on NPS results, protecting customer loyalty over time, since a neglected Promoter might decline to become a Passive or even a Detractor over time.

Having put actions in place to manage customer feedback effectively, Fujitsu's European NPS has now moved forward by 21 points based on whether customers would recommend Fujitsu as a trusted ICT partner, and by 22 points based on recommendation as a Digital Transformation partner.

Decide on your CX transformation model and assemble your team
Many CX frameworks are aimed at B2C businesses and Fujitsu concluded that none was perfect for the unique challenges of B2B. Instead, the CXPC team developed a B2B Customer Experience framework with unique features:

- A country-specific approach. We started in The Netherlands with a CX coach in-country working with the country MD, prioritizing key accounts. This resulted in early turnaround case studies, helping to accelerate roll-out to other countries.

- CX Coaches in every country in the Europe region. Putting coaches into accounts "at eye level" is the best way to find natural points of resistance, leading also to referrals across the business.

- "CX Check-Ins". Diagnostic sessions which CX Coaches work with the entire supporting account teams (and sometimes with the customer too).

- Account-specific areas for improvement. Driven from CX Check-Ins, these could be something simple like communications with customers when things go wrong. Or more complex issues, like the lack of a customer journey map, which means we are not fully delivering effective processes or correctly understanding customer pain points.

- Objectivity is key. The Fujitsu CXPC is not a part of marketing or delivery, for example. It is one-step removed from typical business operations and deliverables, therefore able to make targeted business recommendations in the best interests of customers.

Get buy-in across the organization
One of the best ways to cement CX in an organization is to start doing it. Waiting for permission from various hierarchical sources is counter-productive.

There are risks with this approach, of course. The natural talents of the CX team are vital in avoiding internal resistance such as: "Don't tell me how to handle my customers". Once tangible benefits start coming through, then stakeholder buy-in increases.

By creating CX training for existing staff and all new on-boarders, the importance of CX is elevated far above the "nice to have" level for all employees.

Early buy-in made CX an agenda point across the senior leadership teams (LTs). Based on results, performance, and evidence of change we then asked for and received top-down support and validation, including from Fujitsu's European and global CEOs.

Don't let momentum drop
Creating a visible CX team structure is the final step towards success. In Fujitsu's case, initial success bought the latitude to

grow the CX team across operating territories and industry verticals, so that the Fujitsu CXPC now comprises 11 CX coaches embedded with more than 30 key accounts in 8 European countries.

Industry validation came when Fujitsu won Gold for "CX Team of the Year" at the European CX Awards in June 2022. Being recognized by independent judges also helped to create a mutually-reinforcing cycle of success.

There are sometimes overblown claims about how CX relates to ROI. For B2B companies this is especially problematic to evidence. From Fujitsu's experiences, we can now see a positive correlation between customer feedback and loyalty alongside performance measures such as profitability, contract extensions, account growth, sales wins, renewals, and the overall perception of Fujitsu as a Digital Transformation partner. As with all CX transformation this is a long journey, and our ambition is to become a brand which is considered to be synonymous with great CX worldwide.

As well as transforming experiences for its own customers, Fujitsu works with organizations wanting to create consistent experiences that exceed expectations. Find out more here.

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Ben Phillips is a Certified Customer Experience Professional (CCXP) with a 20 year background in the industry. He has worked for research, technology and financial services business in senior and leadership CX positions and has been voted a Top 25 CX influencer by industry peers in consecutive years. He is author of "The CX Dictionary" and was a contributor to the Amazon best-selling books "Customer Experience 1" and "#Remote Working". He leads a team of CX Coaches at Fujitsu, and his team won the Gold award for "CX Team of the Year" at the European CX Awards in July 2022.