

# Great Customer Experience

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# A New Mindset: Viewing Cyber as an Enabler of Business Growth, Improved Customer Experience and Innovation

By Eldon Phukuile | Great Customer Experience



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## Introduction

Historically, cyber has been viewed as a preventative program - one that mitigates threats to existing technologies and infrastructure. However, as the corporate landscape and world becomes more connected, the importance of cyber has become unparalleled. Cyber is defined as a characteristic of the culture of computers, information technology, and virtual reality.

To put it into perspective, the cost of financing a cyber-attack is only US\$34, while the cost to the business affected is much greater, reaching upwards of millions of dollars. The financial implications can be staggering, yet businesses view cyber just as an IT issue. This has prevented organizations from realizing the untapped potential a robust cyber program can offer to enable businesses to achieve their objectives.

It's time business leaders view cyber as an enabler of business growth, which leads to endless possibilities, improved customer experiences and innovation.

In a recent study, "[2019 future of cyber survey](#)", Deloitte polled more than 500 C-level executives to

understand the existing outlook toward cyber. The results were insightful, revealing that over 90 percent of respondents allocated less than 10 percent of their cyber budgets to digital transformation efforts. These include initiatives such as cloud migration, Artificial Intelligence (AI)-driven products and software-as-a-service (SaaS), which not only increase business efficiencies, but enable the implementation of next-generation capabilities into existing systems, forging new “connected” territories.

The survey results also show that there is still a hesitancy around cyber. Even though “cybersecurity vulnerabilities” consistently rank as a top concern among business executives, this hesitation is stopping the pursuit of connected initiatives, such as AI-based programs, perpetuating a vicious cycle that is stifling progress, customer experience and innovation. The current cycle shows that businesses believe that pursuing connected technologies opens the door to new cyber vulnerabilities. Due to these potential threats, businesses then slow down innovation to implement more robust cyber programs, or often halt the process altogether to avoid any potential risks and cyber implications.

But this cycle must be broken or else businesses will fall behind, ultimately hurting growth and preventing innovation before it even starts. If leaders incorporate cyber into their strategy from the start, they can address these risks across the organization, making the pursuit of digitally connected technologies possible and shifting the cyber mindset from one of risk mitigation to innovation enablement.

### **Navigating a new “digitally connected” frontier**

Businesses need to explore new ways to restructure and redesign internal strategies and systems with cyber at the forefront. Digital transformation initiatives must be at the cornerstone of any growth strategy, which by default must include cyber. With the proliferation of connected technologies across entire businesses, cyber initiatives reduce technologies and systems risk, but also reduce risk associated with errors and omissions caused by people.

Examples of how cyber has permeated the corporate and business landscape are endless. There is no industry or type of organization exempt from the cyber revolution. From financial institutions managing personal customer information to healthcare systems implementing smart technologies into patient care, organizations of all kinds must make cyber a priority to protect itself and its customers, differentiate from the competition and keep up with the pace of technology.

With this in mind, cyber can no longer be siloed within IT. It has spread into Operational Technology (OT), demanding the need for integration across departments. The most effective way to implement cyber across multiple business functions is to make cyber a C-suite priority and responsibility. This will help weave cyber into the fabric of a company’s overall strategy and encourage cross-functional collaboration. The organizations that embed cyber everywhere are the ones that will lead the charge in successfully implementing advanced technologies across every facet of their business. These companies will be the vanguard of innovation and digital transformation.

### **The path forward**

The picture is clear: viewing cyber as a core C-suite priority and as a driver for innovation, improved customer experience and growth, businesses will excel. By only examining the incidents cyber can prevent, businesses are preventing themselves from tapping into their full potential, strangling innovation and slowing must-needed digital transformation efforts to a snail’s pace. Incorporating cyber as a cross-functional collaborative priority makes the pursuit and implementation of next-generation technologies possible. It opens the door for trial and error, ultimately driving innovation and helping businesses grow by staying ahead of the ever-changing connectivity curve. The time is now to drop the cyber stigma and take full advantage of its endless possibilities.

# Complain! Namibian Minister tells customers

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Sometimes, just sometimes complaining can be a very good thing!

With specific regards to the area of customer service, a customer's complaint basically refers to an expression of dissatisfaction on a customer's behalf to a responsible party (usually the service provider; but this could also be a lobby organisation).

All things being equal, the service provider in question should always take customer complaints positively.

Customer service writer and expert Ron Kaufman says customer complaints can be good for you and constructive for any organization in three major ways, namely:

Customer complaints highlight key areas where your product needs improving, your systems need updating or your service needs upgrading.

Customer complaints can identify staff members who need more training, a refresher course, or closer supervision.

Customer complaints help you monitor service levels and consistency between shifts, departments, locations and teams.

That is perhaps why Namibia's Minister of Environment and Tourism Pohamba Shifeta wants customers to be a little bit more proactive.

"Take video cameras, and record any of these wrongdoings. Some of these employees do not know what they are doing, and that the consequences of their actions will damage the reputation of the establishment.

"If the owner sees the recording, perhaps they can do something and offer training to their people," said Minister Shifeta during an engagement with the country's tourism players last August.

And perhaps he is absolutely right.

Because for a country like Namibia, where the tourism sector is one of the main anchors of the economy, a bad service by tourism players had much wider implications.

It means, for instance, that poor service affects the tourism industry and causes direct revenue losses for Namibia.

"If the business fails, you all lose. Customer care should not be neglected. Take it seriously if you want to remain in business." Our appearance, attitudes, approachability of the waitresses, officials and management will bring tourists back to Namibia, and they will tell others about their good experiences, which will result in more tourists and more revenue for the country," said the Minister.

## **Correlation between 'brands' and good customer service: The Dangote example**

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For something to be called a 'brand', it basically means it has stood the test of time. But more importantly, it follows that the 'brand' has emerged from consistently very good customer service, customer experience and/or consumer satisfaction.

Experts say 'keep it consistent and you'll have customers hooked on your brand!'

Nigeria's Dangote was recognised as the most valuable brand among the top 50 brands in Nigeria.

It's a sign that Dangote has as its bedrock, excellent customer service and customer experiences, which results in the group developing close ties with its customers.

The latest award, which came at the end of 2019, just over 3 months after the Dangote brand was adjudged the most admired brand of African origin by Consumers in brand rating coordinated by South African based Brand Leadership in conjunction with Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE).

Brand Nigeria, the Agency that coordinated the survey in Nigeria, in its report lauded the efforts of the handlers of the Dangote Brand because this was the first time a Nigerian brand would be achieving the feat since 2013.

According to Taiwo Oluboyede, the Head of Brand Nigeria, the top 50 brands in Nigeria are the brands that have succeeded in delivering their promises to the consumers.

"They are fast growing in value and they are the drivers of our economy. The top brands this year are those that have been able to analyse needs, see opportunities by creating solutions to them and communicating same to the consumers.

"They have also become so good at it that the consumers often refer to them with the name of the need they meet that is their products or services. These brands have found how to deliver something special often times."

Giving insights into how the evaluation of the top 50 brands was carried out, Oluboyede said:

"We used the Brand Strength Model (BSM index). It is a model that measures a brand's ability to deliver on its promise to the consumers from the consumer's point of view. The model uses basic qualitative

elements and there are seven variables that go into the BSM model”.

The variables start with a test of people’s knowledge and affinity with the brands operational in Nigeria. A top of the mind survey where people mentioned brands that easily came to their minds or brands they could easily recall was conducted.

“Other variables in the model are innovation-this is to test how innovative a brand service delivery is; Quality-this checks some factors that enhance consumer’s confidence in product delivery; Category Leadership- this is a classification of brands within their industry; Online engagements-this checks how active the brand’s online platforms are and how engaging it has been from last evaluation; National Spread-this checks operational presence of a brand across the country.”

Chief Corporate Communication Officer of the Dangote Group, Anthony Chiejina said the management was not surprised at the ranking because the company has continuously deepened and delivered on its core values is to be a world-class enterprise that is passionate about the quality of life of the people and giving high returns to stakeholders.

“And this philosophy is driven by values, which include customer service, entrepreneurship, excellence and leadership. In any of our subsidiaries, the focus is to provide local, value-added products and services that meet the ‘basic needs’ of the populace.

Through the construction and operation of large scale manufacturing facilities in Nigeria and across Africa, the Group is focused on building local manufacturing capacity to generate employment, prevent capital flight and provide locally produced goods for the people. “The expansion of our business especially the Cement which has operations in 14 African countries including Nigeria, Benin, Ghana, Senegal, South Africa and Zambia, among others has added to popularity of our company and the products,” said Mr. Chiejina.