

## Putting Customers At The Center Of Everything

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Today's business environment is constantly changing. The external forces which shape customers' lives, needs, and expectations are ever-shifting, as well. Consumers and business professionals are experience-focused and demand good value. In a fast-paced, digital-driven world, brands must deliver on promises effectively and efficiently. When needs are not met, customers expect rapid response and a personal problem-solving experience.

### From Customer-Focused to Customer-Centric

Customer-focused companies strive to provide consistently excellent experiences at every touchpoint along the customer journey from products and services, to technology, marketing, sales, service, and operations. Customer-centric companies put customers at the center, influencing strategy and key decisions.

The business model shifts from linear to circular: customers are no longer moved along a straight path from interaction to sales, but rather are the hub of the customer journey wheel, with spokes leading from each relevant department or touchpoint. The customer becomes central to the mission, whereby company success hinges upon customer success.

### Transformation From CEO to Intern

Customer centricity must be cultivated at all levels of an organization. It requires a shift in corporate culture, buy-in from leaders and employees, and transformation in mindsets and behaviors. All processes should become "customer-centric."

Technology is crucial to attain efficiency and scalability. Apps, AI, machine learning, and other technology tools can enhance interactions and provide a complete view of the customer. When accessible throughout the company, all departments and divisions become partners in success, acting quickly to address customer needs.

### Consumers Value Experiences, Social Impact, Convenience

EY's *Future Consumer Index*, an ongoing survey of 5,500 respondents across 20 countries, reports 43% of consumers are willing to spend more for better experiences. Over half say they are paying more attention to the environment (56%) and social impact (52%) of their purchases. (ey.com 3/17/2022) Customer-centric companies will capitalize on such data to improve CX, reduce negative environmental and social impact, and enhance convenience in purchase interactions.

### High-Value Customers and Privileged Insights

All customers are not the same, yet many decisions are based on the "average customer." Re-orienting analyses to reveal customer segments based on value allows businesses to focus on high-value, high-profitability customers, and to prioritize their wants and needs. Adopting a customer-value orientation can drive significant growth.

Privileged insights are those that provide intel on customers' specific needs and experiences, which your competitors do not have. Going beyond market research, customer-centric companies embed data collection into every interaction so they are able to provide customers with more relevant content and incremental value.

### Becoming Life-Centric

Consumer behaviors can shift rapidly. In a July 2022 *Accenture* survey of 25,000 global consumers, 60% of respondents say their priorities change based on global events, and nearly 70% say behaving inconsistently is very human and totally acceptable. And nearly two-thirds say companies are not responding fast enough to their changing needs. In a world of 24-7 news, viral social media, and seemingly constant political upheaval, consumer wants and needs will always be evolving. Corporations must move beyond consumer centricity to life centricity – being flexible and responding to customers' full lives with products and services to address rapidly changing life needs.

### Customer-Centric in the Executive Search Industry

According to Jūratė Kubilienė, Managing Partner of IMSA Search Global Partners Lithuania and Co-founder of Simple Search, talent models must also evolve, prioritizing for 'people skills' in all departments. "Companies need employees who can deliver great CX, who can ask good questions, be good listeners, and creatively solve problems in real time."

In the executive search industry, customer centricity means placing the highest regard on confidentiality. "We are dealing with the most sensitive issues, peoples' professional lives intersecting with their personal lives," she adds.

"Most of our clients seek our guidance on the entire search process starting with formulating the ideal candidate profile and ending with the successful integration of a new executive. They also rely on us to direct employer branding and internal and external communications," says Irma Simonkevičienė, Partner of IMSA Search Global Partners Lithuania and Co-founder of Simple Search. "To build trust we maintain close contact, communicate regularly and openly, keep promises and meet deadlines, and pay attention to specific personal needs. Clients expect interactions to feel seamless, simple, and professional, with minimal impact on their operations."

#### About IMSA Search Global Partners

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