

BY LEAH LEACHMAN, DIRECTOR ANALYST IN THE GARTNER MARKETING PRACTICE

# 6 CX TRENDS TO WATCH IN 2024

In the fast-moving world of CX, it can be hard to keep up with the pace of new developments. With so many new trends, technological advancements and the ever-changing priorities of customers to contend with, it can be difficult for CX professionals to know where to focus their energy.

Couple this with limited budgets and stretched resources, and it becomes clear that CX leaders must prioritise the trends that will have the biggest impact on CX outcomes, rather than trying to chase them all.

In this article, I'll highlight the most important trends for CX leaders to get to grips with in 2023 and beyond.



## MOVING "BEYOND THE BUY"

According to Gartner research, 83% of CX leaders agree that their efforts focus on the path to purchase, rather than the end-to-end customer journey. On the other hand, just 4% disagreed with that statement. Budget allocations tell the same story: only 21.3% of total channel spend is focused on driving loyalty and advocacy.

Organisations that focus on CX that goes "beyond the buy" are better positioned to meet customer, and company, expectations, particularly in a difficult market environment. Our research found that

***CX programmes that focus on journey after acquisition, rather than just the path to purchase, are 2.3 times more likely to exceed expectations for their programme.***

Looking beyond the purchase and focusing on the full customer experience is perhaps the most important trend for CX leaders in 2024.



## ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

AI is generating buzz across almost every field, from sales to IT. According to a Gartner survey, 38% of leaders say customer experience and retention is the primary focus of their generative AI initiatives.

AI is becoming integrated into almost every step of customers' journey with a brand, from marketing content to virtual assistants. With growth on the mind of most CEOs, it is important that CX leaders prioritise the use cases that are positioned towards value enhancing experiences. AI is an exciting opportunity for CX leaders, but there are also risks involved when it comes to customer perceptions: for example,

***three-quarters of consumers say it's important for brands to explicitly label content that has been published with the aid of AI.***



## ALIGNING CX AND BRAND

2023 is the year of aligning brand experience and CX. In many organisations, CX and brand experience operate entirely independently of one another, resulting in disjointed experiences that ultimately hurt both. Many marketing-led CX programmes focus on simply removing friction from the purchase funnel, missing the opportunity to partner with brand strategy teams to elevate the importance of overall experience within the business.

In 2023, a growing number of CX and brand leaders are working to align the two in order to drive brand commitment, loyalty and improved customer experience. Brand and CX teams should commit to tracking shared customer outcomes, such as customer satisfaction ratings and reviews.

## VOICE OF THE CUSTOMER (VOC): GO BEYOND SURVEYS



Gartner clients show a growing interest in VoC and how to go beyond the use of surveys.

***By 2025, Gartner predicts that 60% of organisations will adopt analytics technologies to supplement traditional surveys by analysing voice and text interactions with customers.***

CX leaders are also seeking out new ways to communicate their VoC insights. Many CMOs and other CX leaders rarely leverage customer feedback to encourage customer-centric behaviours at an organisational level, but this is changing. CX leaders should tailor unique VoC reports to the specific needs of each function and team in order to maximise the effectiveness of this data and drive CX improvements across the organisation.

By understanding these six top CX trends, leaders can prioritise their efforts for the rest of 2023 and beyond. By gaining a clearer understanding of the changes that are happening in the CX landscape, and what their fellow leaders are doing to improve the function, CX professionals can gain competitive advantage and drive improved outcomes for their customers.

## MACHINE CUSTOMERS



Machine customers are authorised machines that will act on customers' behalf to purchase goods and services. This could be a virtual assistant or any physical object connected to the internet, such as a car or even a washing machine.

According to Gartner research, executives believe that at least 25% of all consumer purchases will be delegated to machines by 2030.

***In addition, Gartner predicts that 20% of inbound contact volume will come from machine customers by 2026.***

Machine customers have huge implications for CX, and will effectively reduce customer effort to zero. Much like AI, the emergence of machine customers means that CX leaders must try to understand how this technology could transform their function and take steps to prepare for its adoption by customers.



## BENCHMARKING: A NEW APPROACH

In 2023, CX leaders are taking a new approach to benchmarking. Many feel that their existing approach isn't working:

***there's a feeling that many metrics lack utility, with no clear connection between a good score and what behaviours employees can exhibit to achieve high levels of customer satisfaction.***

Many CX leaders are also discovering that benchmarking CX scores against competitors can actually undermine CX progress. Gartner research found that 23% of CMOs placed customer understanding and experience management in their top three of internal capability gaps. CX leaders are establishing in-depth VoC programmes, turning to broader sources and comparing scores against past results, rather than against competitors.