

"Bang bang, feel the pain" if you don't know what customers want

 By [Carmen Murray](#)

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What our customers want is the biggest trend for the 21st century and for years to come. It's not about us anymore.

What businesses want, is to connect, engage, influence and transact with customers.

What *customers* want is: "Help me to do what I want, when I want, where I want and how I want to do it."

It is not about how you want to sell but how your customers want to buy.



Carmen Murray, founder of Boo-Yah!

Trends, there are no secrets to what they are. You know them. You've heard about them and you're going to hear about them.

Over the years, dealing with hundreds of marketers, I identified three common denominators as to why marketers are losing their way:

1. They are chasing the new
2. They are overwhelmed by the pace

3. They are focused on tactics, not strategy

For many years businesses were in the driving seat. Businesses weren't built to change. Businesses established what works really well and implemented the 'success formula'. They then built systems and manuals to replicate the success and stack trends on an old-fashioned business model.

Let's think about this for a second by using this metaphor of hair. In order to obtain healthy hair, you should only wash your hair once a week. The reason is that the roots become oily. People who wash hair every day end up needing to wash their hair daily, because it gets oily quicker. This is due to the build up of product that makes the hair more and more oily.

This is exactly the same thing that happens when we stack trends on a weak foundation. It only appears healthy for a short period of time, until you need to stack the next trend. We need to get back to the basics and go to the root of the problem for a healthier business.

This is why businesses are making customer experience their number one priority in 2019 and 2020.

Dion Chang, CEO of Flux Trends, says businesses are not just focusing on CX journey mapping but employee experience journey mapping. "According to a recent Oracle Report, 93% of executives say that improving the customer experience is one of their organisations' top 3 priorities in the next 2 years, and 91% wish their organisation was considered a customer experience leader in their industry. However, many organisations are stuck in an execution chasm: 37% are just getting started with a formal customer experience initiative, and only 20% consider the state of their CX initiative to be advanced."

In my experience, working closely with businesses on their CX, the auditing process unravels all of the vulnerabilities in the business, which we think our customers don't recognise, but in fact, it's the very reason they don't transact with us.

The secret to leading a customer-centric business is rooted in the L-factor:

- **Love:** We need to be obsessed with our customers, take interest and express empathy towards their wants, their needs, their frictions, and solve the problems that keep them up at night. Customers are the beating heart of our businesses and employees are the blood that flows through the veins. This is a true human brand that knows before we can love, we need to love ourselves first. We should harness our human capital. Simon Sinek says it so well:

“ Customers will never love a company until the employees love it first. ”

Customer obsession is a culture thing.

- **Learn:** Co-creation is the most powerful tool to learn from customers and allow them to guide businesses and shape products and services they want to buy. Invite customers to give attribution to a prototype or an idea. Instead of marketers deciding who wins the advertising pitch, why not your customers? Learning from customers requires less segmentation and more LSM-A (Let's Stop Making Assumptions). The only way by doing that is focusing on customer behavior and not old-fashioned segmentation models.
- **Listen:** As marketers we have been conditioned to "listen with the intent to reply, but not with the intent to understand" – a famous quote by Stephen Covey. Only 4% of your customers will complain, the rest will do it when you are not in the room. When customers complain, find the root of the problem and get it fixed. They are not wrong.

In closing, Jeff Bezos says:

“ The most important single thing is to obsessively focus on the customer. It's our job every day to make every

important aspect of the customer experience a little better. ”

If you want to be the hottest brand, follow the trend of the 21st Century and lean in to a customer-centric business that puts humans first. Focus on your customer experiences and apply the L-factor and your customers will guide you with clarity of trends to apply.

ABOUT CARMEN MURRAY

Carmen Murray is one of the most influential modern marketers in South Africa. Her strong background in content, digital, mobile, innovation, and data analytics allows her to identify emerging trends and conceptualise disruptive communication strategies deployed with precision. The customer and their needs are always at the heart of her approach.

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