

MARKETING

## Innovative brands are more trusted in eyes of consumers

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*Brands need to grow trust with consumers. Image credit: Burberry*

By BRIELLE JAEKEL

NEW YORK As many experts say that customer experience has reached a plateau, practitioners need to drive different business outcomes by taking on new initiatives.

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With the retail environment changing rapidly and drastically, brands, retailers, personnel and partners need to learn how to trust each other. Taking risks and trying new things will be essential to circumventing the customer service stagnancy, but it will take full trust to do so, said a Confrimit executive during Forrester's CX NYC 2019 conference.

"If we want to get people to do something differently we have to make them make that decision," said Claire Sporton, senior vice president of CX Innovation at Confrimit. "Rather than telling them what to do, we've got to get them to make an active decision to try something different and get them to monitor the outcome of that decision."

### Gaining trust

Getting executives and team members in both luxury and mass brands to do things differently will take an exceeding level of faith.

Since the retail evolution, customers have been given the power in the relationship between brand and consumer.

However, Ms. Sporton believes that in 2020 no one will have direct control of the power.



*Power of the transaction has moved towards the consumer. Image credit: Neiman Marcus*

Many brands today have learned to partner to achieve common business goals in retail. Similar to those working together within a brand, partnering companies need to trust each other as well.

For a customer, if he or she has a bad experience in regards to a joint initiative, there is no differentiation between the brands. Both are responsible.

Today, consumers are growing less trusting of standard industry sectors.

Areas that should have consumers' complete faith, such as healthcare and financial services, are really struggling in this area. Retailers and brands need to work harder to grow this trust, and it starts with meeting expectations.

Brands should strive to understand what their customers' expectations are and should admit to and correct any mistakes. They should also communicate to customers that they are acting on their claims instead of making empty promises.

Customer service needs to deliver on focus, balance and momentum.



*Customer service should be as convenient as possible. Image credit: SnoHub*

Retailers must focus on an objective and understand what they are looking towards. However, in addition they need drive strategic change while looking to this objective.

For momentum, brands need to continually keep moving.

#### Branded trust

Italian house Ermenegildo Zegna is considered the most emotionally intelligent men's luxury fashion brand by affluent consumers, outranking Herms and Brooks Brothers in a recent report.

According to Luxury Institute's 2018 Emotionally Intelligent Brand Index, Zegna sets itself apart with its strong consistency in product quality, customer service and empathy. Out of the almost 20 men's brands rated, several succeed in the empathy elements but fall short in terms of quality and vice-versa ([see story](#)).

The notion of trust is even more important in the Asian community.

When entering a new market, the biggest mistake brands can make is failing to alter their marketing strategy for any cultural differences, according to an executive from Export Now.

During a panel at the National Retail Federation's Retail's Big Show 2017 on Jan. 17, speakers noted that brands need

to do their homework before entering Asia, as preferences and consumer behavior can vary greatly from country to country and even within one market. While a brand's core branding should remain intact, as it is what will attract consumers, brands should not be afraid to reposition products or services to better appeal to Asian shoppers ([see story](#)).

"For me, customer experience is in some ways a misnomer," Ms. Sporton said. "We're not about customer; we're not about experience."

"Our job is to help everyone in our organization to make a better decision."

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