# TABLE OF CONTENTS

4. Customer Experience Design  
5. Top Challenges  
6. Gaining a Competitive Advantage  
7. Rating Overall Success  
8. Most Effective Design Elements  
9. Impact of Ineffective Design  
10. Most Effective Touchpoint Style  
11. Touchpoint Style Use  
12. Areas for Improvement  
13. Ascend2 Research Programs
Ascend2 benchmarks the performance of marketing strategies, tactics and the technology that drives them with a standardized online questionnaire and a proprietary 3-Minute Survey format.

This survey was fielded to a panel of marketing professionals and marketing research subscribers.

**SURVEY RESPONDENTS**

**Primary Marketing Channel**
- B2B 32%
- B2C 46%
- B2B and B2C equally 22%

**Number of Employees**
- More than 500 16%
- 50 to 500 19%
- Fewer than 50 65%

**Primary role in company**
- Owner / Partner / C-Level 57%
- Vice President / Director / Manager 30%
- Non-Management Professional 13%
CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE DESIGN

Customer experience design is a strategy to optimize all touchpoints of a customer journey to bridge the gap between customer expectations and the product or solution that an organization provides.

But how are marketers designing effective customer experiences today and in the year ahead?

To help answer this question, Ascend2 and our Research Partners fielded the Customer Experience Design Survey. We thank the 327 marketers who responded to this survey during the week of March 21 - 28, 2021.

This Survey Summary Report, titled Customer Experience Design, represents the opinions of all the market segments responding to the survey. Specific market segments from the survey are reported on separately and exclusively by our participating Research Partners.

This research has been produced for your use. Put it to work in your own marketing strategy. Clip the charts and write about them in your blog or post them on social media. Please share this research credited as published.
TOP CHALLENGES

An existing or potential customer interacts with an organization through a variety of different channels, departments, and processes making the customer experience particularly difficult for marketers to manage. Finding adequate time and resources required to design and implement a strategy to improve customer experience is a top challenge reported by 42% of those surveyed.

WHAT ARE THE TOP CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH DESIGNING A STRATEGY TO IMPROVE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE?

- Lack of time and resources to execute: 42%
- Insufficient budget: 37%
- Difficulty creating engaging content: 26%
- Lack of a defined strategy: 26%
- Lack of quality data: 23%
- Difficulty making data actionable: 20%
- Lack of appropriate technology: 18%
- Difficulty attributing ROI: 18%
- Siloed data: 12%
- Lack of organizational/executive buy-in: 11%
A positive customer experience can be a major factor in a customer’s decision to use one product or service over another. A 93% majority of marketers agree that designing an effective customer experience is important to gain a competitive advantage. Only 2% say that customer experience design is not at all important in gaining an advantage over the competition.
RATING OVERALL SUCCESS

When it comes to achieving strategic goals associated with customer experience, the majority (75%) of marketers are finding some success, but only about one-in-five marketers view their customer experience strategy as very successful, or best-in-class, compared to the competition. Only 4% of those surveyed would call their customer experience strategies unsuccessful.

**How would you rate the success of your (or your typical client's) customer experience strategy at achieving associated goals?**

- **Very Successful (Best-in-Class)**: 21%
- **Somehow Successful**: 75%
- **Unsuccessful**: 4%
MOST EFFECTIVE DESIGN ELEMENTS

By nature, the customer experience spans many facets of an organization and is comprised of a wide variety of design elements. When asked which design elements play the most critical role in creating an effective customer experience, marketers reported that creating high quality and relevant content (53%) as well as a personalized experience (46%) top the list.

WHICH DESIGN ELEMENTS CONTRIBUTE MOST TO CREATING AN EFFECTIVE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE?

- Quality Content: 53%
- Personalization: 46%
- Efficiency/Response Time: 41%
- Brand Trust: 38%
- Ease of Interaction/Ability to Make Purchase: 31%
- Consistency Across Channels/Touchpoints: 25%
- Product Reviews and Testimonials: 20%
- Convenience of Support: 20%
IMPACT OF INEFFECTIVE DESIGN

According to nearly two-thirds (65%) of marketing professionals surveyed, failing to deliver on these critical design elements directly impacts their organization’s bottom line by creating missed opportunities for revenue. Wasted staff time and resources is also a major cost associated with an ineffective customer experience according to 46% of marketers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT ARE THE GREATEST COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH FAILING TO DELIVER ON THESE DESIGN ELEMENTS?</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MISSED OPPORTUNITIES FOR REVENUE</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WASTED STAFF TIME/RESOURCES</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIGH CUSTOMER CHURN</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEAKENED/DAMAGED BRAND</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INEFFICIENT USE OF BUDGET</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOWER EMPLOYEE MORALE</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CROSS-DEPARTMENTAL TENSION</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In today’s digital world, it is tempting to automate interactions across the entire customer experience to create a consistent and efficient process. But are automated experiences as effective as live interactions? According to an 89% majority of marketers, human interactions allow an organization to be more effective at meeting customer expectations.
Knowing that live interactions are more effective than automated experiences, are current customer experience strategies reflective of this? According to this research, the answer is yes. Though automation does create efficiencies, 83% of marketing professionals report that human interactions still represent the majority of their customer experience strategy.

**Touchpoint Style Use**

*Live/Human Interactions: 83%*  
*Automated Experiences: 17%*
AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

For marketers, the customer experience should always be evolving. In the year ahead, 45% of marketing professionals say they will be focusing efforts on optimizing their brand's website. Refining social media presence as well as creating more personalized experiences also rank at the top of the list of areas to improve according to 44% of those surveyed.

WHICH AREAS OF THE DIGITAL CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE WILL YOU FOCUS MOST ON IMPROVING IN THE YEAR AHEAD?

- Website Optimization: 45%
- Social Media: 44%
- Personalization: 44%
- Email Marketing: 30%
- Mobile Communication: 24%
- Digital Advertising Programs: 23%
- On-Site Chat Communication: 15%
- Order/Purchase Process: 14%
PERSONALIZED B2B RESEARCH TO GROW YOUR BUSINESS

Receive a Research-Based Content Blueprint that provides proven strategies on how to demonstrate thought-leadership, engage prospects, acquire new customers, and generate media coverage.

Research studies by BuzzSumo, MarketingProfs, and eMarketer finds that original research is the #1 type of content to engage prospects and convert leads to sales. Find out how you can add research to your marketing mix.

GET STARTED WITH A FREE STRATEGY SESSION
OUR RESEARCH PARTNERS ARE INDUSTRY POWERHOUSES

PUT THIS CONTENT TO GOOD USE!

This Survey Summary Report is part of a series conducted in partnership with our participating Research Partners.

You may adapt, copy, distribute and transmit this work. However, you must attribute the work as produced by Ascend2 and its Research Partners, but not in any way that suggests that they endorse you or your use of the work.

When you share this content, please provide a link back to ascend2.com