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As the second in a four-part series, this research document highlights the importance of mastering fluency of customer experience (CX) interactions to delight clients, grow revenue, and ensure operational efficiency. It uncovers activities and technologies CX leaders must use to implement one of the four steps for total CX excellence: orchestrate intelligent customer journeys.

Infuse Intelligence into the Customer Journey

Personalization has long been a key pillar of CX and contact center programs. That's for good reason, as customers – regardless of their demographic status – expect businesses to make it easier to address their unique needs. The traditional approach for personalization has been analyzing the behavior and expectations of customers with similar attributes (e.g., age group, annual income, products purchased)- and following a one-size-fits-all approach to interacting with all buyers in the same group. Not surprisingly, customers expect more from businesses in all industries. Modern buyers expect companies to recognize their individual needs and preferences, and to tailor conversation with each client in a way that's unique to those needs – regardless of the channels or business departments involved in those conversations. Meeting those expectations requires firms to be CX fluent.

> **Definition: CX Fluency**
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> "CX Fluency" refers to companies using all the processes and tools in harmony to meet and exceed buyer expectations across all channels and departments.

> **Best-in-Class Maturity Index**
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> Aberdeen surveyed 307 businesses regarding the key trends and best practices influencing their contact center interactions. The top 20% of respondents were ranked as "Best-in-Class," also referred to as "CX-Fluent Firms" within this research. The remaining 80% represent lower performing firms - referred to as "All Others." The metrics used to evaluate performance and comparative performance results between CX-Fluent Firms, and All Others are as follows:
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> ▶ **Customer Retention Rate:** CX-Fluent Firms: 81% vs. All Others: 63%
> ▶ **Year-over-year (YoY) change in customer satisfaction:** CX-Fluent Firms: 27.3% vs. All Others: 3.1%
> ▶ **YoY improvement in first contact resolution rates:** CX-Fluent Firms: 23.9% vs. All Others: 0.4%
> ▶ **YoY improvement in agent productivity:** CX-Fluent Firms: 22.2% vs. All Others: 2.1%
> ▶ **YoY improvement (<u>decrease</u>) in average handle time:** CX-Fluent Firms: 12.5% vs. All Others: -1.4%
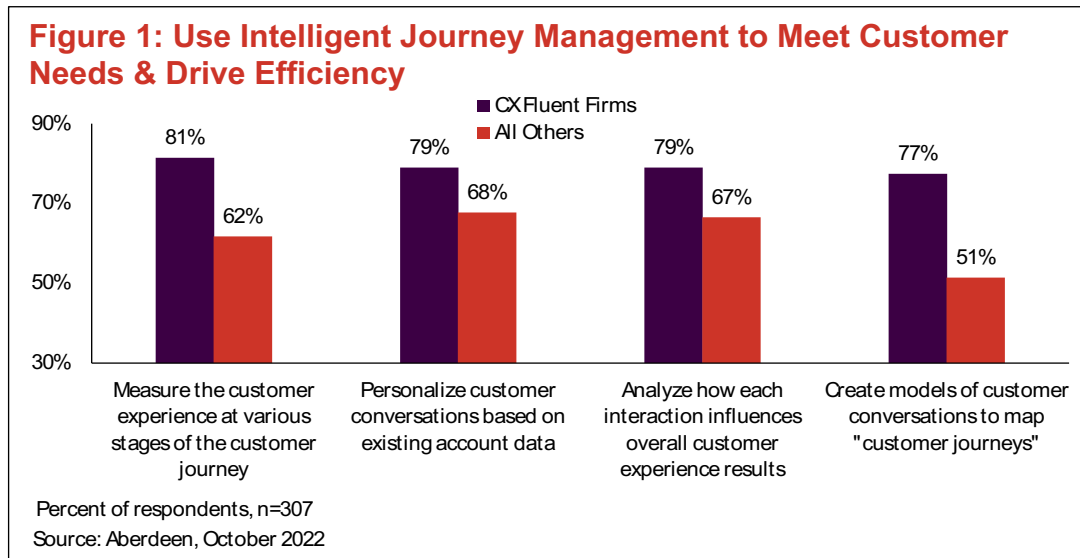
Future-ready business leaders that move beyond traditional methods in favor of modern hyper-personalization do so by building and nurturing a truly data-driven <u>and</u> technology-enabled approach. Specifically, they ensure having connected views of customer and operational data throughout the business to have a truly contextual view of all interactions with clients. This, in turn, allows them to build accurate and timely views of customer journeys – an activity implemented 51% more widely by CX-Fluent Firms than All Others that are stuck with traditional ways of delivering one-size-fits-all tyle interactions (77% vs. 51%).

Mapping customer journeys is not a one-and-done exercise. Journey maps must be dynamic in that they must evolve in accordance with changes in customer expectations and behavior as well as the business conditions. Using such dynamic journey maps, CX-Fluent Firms have a better understanding of the context of each conversation and use these insights to personalize all relevant elements such as engagement channel, message, routing, etc. accordingly. Indeed, data in Figure 1 shows that CX-Fluent Firms are 16% more likely to have this capability (79% vs. 68%). It's important to point here that the reason by CX-Fluent Firms achieve far superior results compared to their peers isn't because they tailor client interactions. Rather, it's because they're better at doing so.

Figure 1: Use Intelligent Journey Management to Meet Customer Needs & Drive Efficiency

Legend: CX Fluent Firms, All Others

- Measure the customer experience at various stages of the customer journey: 81% / 62%
- Personalize customer conversations based on existing account data: 79% / 68%
- Analyze how each interaction influences overall customer experience results: 79% / 67%
- Create models of customer conversations to map "customer journeys": 77% / 51%

Percent of respondents, n=307
Source: Aberdeen, October 2022

To get better than their counterparts in guiding conversations across all phases of customer journeys, CX-Fluent Firms rely on technology. They use workflow management and automation to map workflows throughout customer journeys and use automation to trigger unique workflows based on meeting certain criteria and conditions when analyzing journey insights. They also rely on machine learning and AI capabilities to do this analysis at scale and real-time so they can continuously improve and adapt their hyper-personalization activities.

Using root-cause analysis helps CX and contact center leaders regularly gauge their performance in influencing key metrics such as customer satisfaction, first contact resolution rates, and retention rates across unique phases of customer journeys. This analytical method allows CX-Fluent Firms to be ahead of their counterparts such that they are 31% more likely to observe key metrics across all stages of the customer journey to uncover factors influencing positive and negative results (81% vs. 62%) and 18% more likely to analyze how each specific interaction influences the overall CX so they can identify the unique elements of those interactions that improve or detract from the results that the business is looking to achieve to deliver total CX excellence.

About Aberdeen Strategy & Research

Aberdeen Strategy & Research, a division of Spiceworks Ziff Davis, with over three decades of experience in independent, credible market research, helps **illuminate** market realities and inform business strategies. Our fact-based, unbiased, and outcome-centric research approach provides insights on technology, customer management, and business operations, to **inspire** critical thinking and **ignite** data-driven business actions.

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