



EBOOK

Become an Experience-Led Business with an Agile CX Tech Stack

A guide to choosing technologies that will support your most ambitious CX goals



Welcome

If you ask almost any marketing leader, they will tell you that a positive customer experience (CX) is the lifeblood of their business. But not every company is an experience-led business—in fact, it's not even close. [Research suggests that just 31 percent](#) of companies are truly experience-led.¹

If you're not an experience-led company, you have a major competitive disadvantage. Experience-led companies have 1.6x higher brand awareness, 1.5x higher employee satisfaction, and 1.9x higher average order value. They also have 1.7x higher customer retention, 1.9x return on spend, and 1.6x higher customer satisfaction rates.¹

Plus, experience-led companies are more agile and quick to respond when customer needs evolve. Agility is especially critical now as the ongoing pandemic affects how customers prefer to buy and interact. For example, experience-led companies were among the first to expand their digital offerings so their customers could do more online.

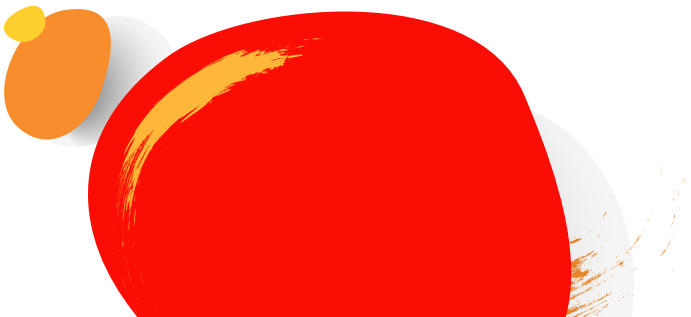
"Experience-led business adapted successfully to the pandemic because they were already highly attuned to their customers' needs," said Adam Justis, Director of Adobe Experience Cloud Product Marketing. "And, once they knew what their customers needed, they didn't hesitate to act on it."

But becoming an experience-led company isn't easy. It requires strong leadership from marketing—and an integrated CX technology stack that combines best-of-breed marketing technologies from multiple disciplines.

Why CX is essential for 2021 and beyond

Today's customers have asked for more from businesses and brands. In a survey of 3,500 consumers, 30 percent said they are using customer service more since the pandemic.² And nearly half of business buyers say that new digital sales and customer service models are less effective than more traditional ones.²

Those numbers suggest that agile, experience-led companies will have an advantage through the pandemic era and beyond.



Essential characteristics of a great customer experience

An outstanding CX is distinctive and memorable. Customers remember it and come back for more. Most great customer experiences have other important things in common, as well. Almost all are powered behind the scenes by an advanced CX tech stack. And almost all have these characteristics:

- **Personalized.** Great experiences are personalized. In fact, roughly two-thirds of consumers expect personalization as a standard of service.³ To deliver a personalized experience, you must analyze and learn from large quantities of customer data in real time. AI and machine learning are increasingly used to power personalization.
- **Connected.** Great customer experiences unify all your channels. For example, in-store sales reps know about what customers have bought online, and digital promotions consider customers' behavior in stores. Not surprisingly, customers who shop both online and in store have a [30 percent higher lifetime value](#) than those who shop using only one channel.⁴ To deliver a truly connected experience, you must have real-time customer profiles that pull data from all the systems and touchpoints your customers interact with.
- **Responsive.** Great customer experiences are responsive. They meet customers wherever they are and evolve in harmony with customer needs. To deliver a responsive experience, your CX tech stack must be agile and able to respond instantly. Already, 36 percent of CX leaders can personalize the customer experience in real time.⁵

Getting the CX tech stack right

It's virtually impossible to deliver a great experience today without an advanced CX tech stack—and that typically means seeking out the best software in many different categories. In fact, research from Gartner suggests that today's highest-performing brands rely on a wide variety of technologies rather than a single "one and done" platform.⁶

But choosing the right technologies and getting them all to work together can be a major challenge. There are more than 8,000 CX tech stack solutions on the market today, up by an astounding 5,233 percent since 2011.⁷ With so many options to choose from, you must be able to identify the features most critical for your business, quickly and accurately compare solutions, and efficiently determine which ISVs are the best fit.

Learn from Adobe Partners

Adobe understands the challenges of developing an agile, best-in-class CX tech stack. Many brands rely on Adobe Experience Cloud to deliver data-driven, tailored experiences across all customer touchpoints. But most of our customers do not run the Experience Cloud in isolation. Instead, they run it with applications offered by the Adobe Exchange, a vast network and ecosystem of independent software vendors (ISV) that further enhance Experience Cloud's capabilities and functionality.

In this eBook, you'll get advice from our Premiere Partners on key requirements for your CX tech stack, separating the "must haves" from the "nice to haves," and choosing ISVs to help grow your experience-led business.

Mobile Is the Missing Link

Including linking and attribution technologies in your tech stack can extend your brand's experience to mobile devices

Virtually everyone interacts with brands on their mobile phones. In August 2020, 60 percent of all consumer web searches were mobile. Plus, millennial and gen-Z business buyers are doing more research on their mobile phones. To succeed in this environment, your mobile customer experience (CX) must be top-notch.

But integrating mobile with the rest of your CX can be challenging, particularly because mobile ecosystems are often fragmented and span multiple platforms. That's why it's essential that your CX tech stack bridge be able to connect mobile, web, and offline experiences. Linking and attribution technologies can provide a bridge between all these worlds.

For example, consider the QR code. A Branch link behind a QR code makes a seamless connection between the consumer and the relevant content in the app or on the web. It provides insight into the impact of that single touchpoint, and it allows the data to be associated with the profile of that consumer.

As you develop requirements for your CX tech stack, it's important to keep mobile in mind and be sure to include technologies that drive mobile experiences and insights.



The link behind the QR code on this poster connects customers with a useful app and provides data on that customer's behavior for analysis.

Deep linking—the overlooked CX tech

Companies that want to deliver a highly personalized experience should consider data, identity, and activation when building their CX tech stack. Generally speaking, must-have components for a CX tech stack that supports personalization include a customer data platform (CDP), a marketing automation platform to synchronize messaging and campaigns, and an analytics platform to uncover insights hidden in your customer data.

But one technology that is often overlooked in the CX tech stack is [deep linking](#). Links are the common denominator—the “currency”—for all marketing communications, across all channels (see social below—“app.link” is Branch). Those links can work across a very fragmented ecosystem, including mobile, to ensure a consistent experience and comprehensive [attribution](#). When done correctly, they can be rapidly deployed without custom workflows.

Choose a CX tech partner that will keep mobile top of mind

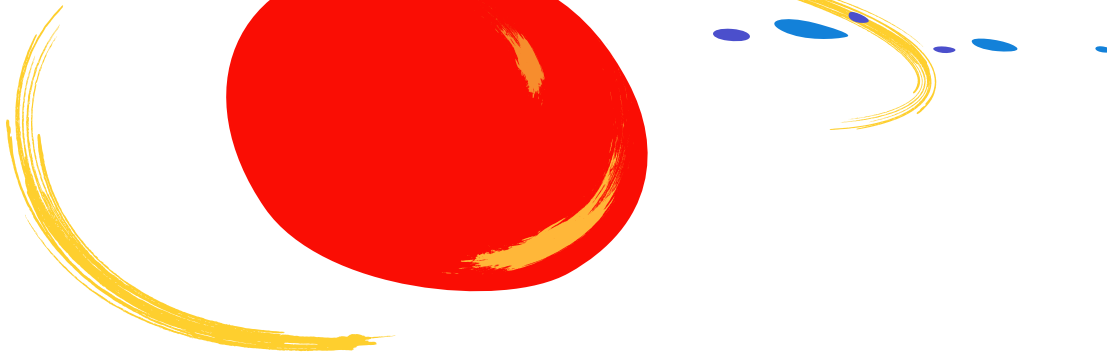
Even before speaking with vendors, marketing teams should identify their most critical requirements for the CX tech stack. For most companies, those requirements include delivering a great mobile experience that customers will enjoy through the pandemic and beyond.

But assembling requirements is just the beginning. You also have to take a deeper dive into technologies you’re considering. For example, if you need links that integrate with your marketing automation tool to deliver a seamless experience on mobile email, don’t just check the box. Instead, you should do the following:

- Research [what a robust integration looks like](#), as opposed to a superficial one
- Consider how those links would fit into your existing workflow and how your team might use new linking and attribution tools
- Ask vendors for references of clients that are succeeding with the tools you’re considering
- Also ask vendors for references from solution partners who work with the tools you’re considering and the technologies you already use



The app.link shown above connects users on social media with a useful app and captures data for your marketing automation and attribution platforms.



CX technology spotlight: linking and attribution from Branch

Branch (branch.io) provides the leading cross-platform linking and attribution platform, offering solutions that unify user experience and measurement across devices, platforms, and channels. Clients integrate Branch and then seamlessly deploy links across all channels using leading marketing technologies. The result is improved performance at every stage of the marketing funnel—acquisition, engagement, and retention. At the same time, Branch’s unique [predictive modeling](#) capabilities provide comprehensive attribution and engagement data across all channels.

“Mobile attribution is an incredibly intricate and technical space, changing across platforms and evolving with device manufacturers, and it’s very comforting to know that—more than just a service provider—with Branch, we have someone in our corner now and well into the future.” – 9Now



About Branch

Branch is trusted by leading multi-channel marketers around the globe. With 15 offices across 12 countries, Branch powers the marketing activities of more leading brands than any other platform—including Adobe, BuzzFeed, Yelp, OfferUp, and many more. The Branch platform offers [privacy-compliant solutions](#), has been certified by leading [security organizations](#), and delivers billions of mobile links and cross-platform measurement covering more than 3 billion monthly users worldwide.

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