

PRAISE FOR *THE POWER* *OF CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE*

As we try to make sense of how to grow our businesses in a disrupted world, Martin Newman has done the thinking for us. Here is a well-researched and practical guide on how to build a sustainable and commercially successful business based around customer-centricity. It takes us on a journey of how customer-centricity has evolved since the internet changed the balance of power. The 10 building blocks provide a road map for how to embed customer-centricity into your organization, using case studies to help bring the theories to life. This book is an essential read for anyone, at any level, involved in selling products and services to customers.

Andy Rubin, Deputy Chair, Pentland Group

Customer-centricity is one of those topics that is easy to talk about but hard to do. Martin Newman does a brilliant job of breaking it down in this thoughtful and eminently practical toolkit.

Doug Gurr, Director, Natural History Museum, London;
formerly CEO, Amazon UK and President, Amazon China

A superb read for customer-centric leaders on a mission to embrace the best ways of leveraging and driving the new paradigm of how and why consumers buy and build your brand equity. *The Power of Customer Experience* is packed with insightful and comprehensive reference points – Martin Newman has provided an excellent combination of a thought-provoking read and a pragmatic framework to implement.

Vince Gunn, former CEO, Sofa.com

A masterclass for anyone who has a genuine interest in improving the experience of their customers. It is full of real-life examples of brands that have lost their way, as well as those that have found a whole new way to excel. An insightful and practical read that is an enjoyable journey. So many powerful lessons from so many different sectors, delivered with authority.

Debbie Hewitt MBE, Chairman, White Stuff

Another excellent book by Martin Newman – packed with helpful case studies and examples, providing easy-to-understand frameworks that can be applied in any business. The world is continuously changing, and Martin picks up on the shifts in consumer behaviour driven by global questions such as diversity and inclusion, climate change and the broader ethical questions of consumerism.

Eve Henrikson, Online Director, Tesco

If you are serious about transforming your business to become customer-centric, which only a few very successful companies truly managed to achieve, then this is your must-read book. Martin Newman, in his typical authentic style, shows us the way with clarity and conviction, providing valuable, actionable insights and useful frameworks supported with numerous up-to-date case studies. For me, this is a handbook for retailers to thrive not just survive.

Koray Gul, former COO, Missguided

Imagine working for an organization that creates value for customers, value for those in the organization who create it, value for stakeholders and value for the planet. Martin Newman is one of the few people I know who really understands the meaning of the word 'value'. This is a fantastic book that will show you how to create it.

**Professor Malcolm McDonald MA(Oxon) MSc PhD DLitt DSc, Emeritus
Professor, Cranfield University School of Management**

The Power of Customer Experience

How to use customer-centricity to drive sales and profitability

Martin Newman



Publisher's note

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Known as the Consumer Champion and founder of www.customerservice-action.com and www.thecustomerfirstgroup.com, Martin Newman is a force for positive change for both consumers and brands.

He is a constant advocate for consumer rights as well as keeping diversity, social responsibility and employee engagement top of the agenda in his media appearances and through all of the content he produces including on his TV channel, which can be found at www.consumerfocus.tv and on his podcast, *Customer Centricity*, which is available on all main platforms.

He appears regularly on BBC TV and radio, on Sky, Channel 5 and a host of other media channels such as LBC, *The Times* and the *Financial Times* to discuss various consumer issues relating to the retail, travel, casual dining, automotive and financial services sectors.

Martin has almost four decades of experience working in consumer sectors heading up the multichannel operations of some of the world's leading brands, including Burberry, Intersport, Pentland Brands (Speedo, Berghaus, etc), Harrods and Ted Baker. He leveraged this experience to author his first book *100 Practical Ways to Improve Customer Experience*, which was shortlisted for the Business Book of the Year Awards 2019.

A successful entrepreneur, following his career in the consumer sector, Martin founded and scaled a global ecommerce and digital consultancy, Practicology (now called Pattern), to 100 people, with offices across the UK, EU, Middle East and Asia-Pacific, and subsequently sold it in 2018. Martin has since set up The Customer First Group, consumer-facing website Customer Service Action and consumer app ServeOmeter.

Martin delivers keynote presentations and chairs many leading industry events around the world. This has included sharing the stage with Sir Tim Berners-Lee, inventor of the World Wide Web, to discuss the future of the internet and its implications for retailers. He also judges numerous industry awards, such as the World Retail Awards, the Customer Experience Awards, the Retail Insider Awards, the Drapers Digital Awards, the Online Retail Awards of Australia and the Great British Entrepreneur Awards.

Among Martin's many accolades, he has featured in various industry leader lists, including *Retail Week's* top 50 eTail Power List for five years in a row. He has also been named in the Retail Insiders top 100 Retail Movers

and Shakers List for a number of years consecutively as well as the British Vogue Online Fashion 100.

He is a non-executive chairman of the Scout Store, board adviser to Clearpay (Afterpay) and the Mayborn Group, and works with the boards of consumer-facing businesses on their key strategic questions and challenges. He is also a trustee of In Kind Direct and a member of the prestigious KPMG IPSOS Retail Think Tank.

PREFACE

Why I wrote this book

My reason for being is to drive positive change for consumers and brands.

As those of you who know me will be aware, I've been beating the drum for customer-centricity for a long time – 25 years by my reckoning.

I've written a book about it (make that two books!). I've delivered literally hundreds of presentations with this as the key theme. I've created podcasts, interviewed consumers on the high streets of Glasgow, Newcastle, Exeter, Dublin, London, Sydney, Melbourne and New York, talked on TV and radio about it, written umpteen columns and newspaper articles about it. In my client-side roles with Harrods, Intersport, Pentland brands, Burberry and Ted Baker, I've tried to action it as best I could, and I have also done so while advising clients whom I have worked with over the years.

Yet here we are in the 2020s, and you have to look far and wide for anyone who can describe to you what it really means to be customer-centric. What it means to be customer first. What it means to put the customer at the heart of all you do. You'll have to look even harder to find someone who can describe what you need to do to deliver this.

That is what I'm going to attempt to do now throughout this book. I want to create and share a framework that any business can get behind and implement, therefore benefiting from putting customers first.

To be clear, there is a commercial imperative to doing this. Just think about it for a minute. The two financial elements that determine the viability of a business are top-line sales and bottom-line profitability. The customer determines the outcome for both of these measures and yet customers are treated as a cost as opposed to a benefit.

Our focus on customers will determine whether we have a business in the future or not. I really believe that; customer-centricity as a strategy is THE most important and relevant thing we can focus on. To this end, the book is a must-read for many different stakeholders, as every part of the business has some input into driving customer-centricity – from the CEO, CFO and COO to those directly responsible for day-to-day operations that touch the customer, ecommerce directors and heads of ecommerce, multichannel directors, store and branch managers, regional managers,

contact centre managers, customer service directors, logistics directors and warehouse managers, chief marketing officers and heads of digital marketing, brand marketing, chief technology officers, chief digital officers, buyers, merchandisers and of course chief customer officers and those who look after CRM.

The book will also be a great opportunity for those who aspire to step up in their careers and to take on more responsibility for customer experience.

To understand where businesses are going wrong, you just need to look at how the customer service team or contact centre is viewed. In the vast majority of businesses, it's seen as a 'cost centre' as opposed to a 'profit centre'. This is a legacy mindset. It's born out of pre-e-commerce times when all consumer-facing businesses held the balance of power. The customer had limited choice. The internet changed all of that and, in 1994, with the first e-commerce transaction, began the democratization of retail, travel, financial services, automotive and other sectors as the proliferation of choice began the shift in the balance of power from the brand to the consumer.

If we view customers as a cost and not a benefit, we're on a very slippery slope. The only way is down. The only question is, how long will it take for us to reach the bottom?

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I will always be indebted to my former executive assistant, Tiffany (now running The Personal Consultancy), for providing so much help with sources, editing, coordinating with Kogan Page, and also with formatting the manuscript. Thank you Tiff.

I want to thank my good friend Emma Bonar, who is one of the most experienced ecommerce and digital directors around, and now owner of her own fashion boutique, 69BBoutique.com. She is someone who shares my passion for customer-centricity. She has been incredibly helpful in researching case studies of brands in different sectors who stand out from the crowd and are commercially successful as a result of their focus on customer service and customer experience.

I want to thank the publisher Kogan Page and the delightful Stephen Dunnell for his support and feedback. I hope I've done a good job of repaying your confidence in me with the book that I've produced.

Last but not least, I want to thank my colleagues from The Customer First Group. Both for their support during this process as well as for the support they provide our clients in helping them to continually improve the levels of service they deliver for consumers.