The conference led off with the US leadership team behind the recently announced Havas CX. The session was energetically led by Doug Zanger, senior editor at Adweek, and addressed a number of the questions the industry has about this move by a major advertising holding company.

Customer-centric thinking is native to advertising strategists who survey culture, purchase behavior and more for insights to lead creative messaging and media plans. But CX promises to address a deeper and broader range of interactions, product and service design decisions not always associated with agency engagements.

The Havas network is publicly sharing a long held philosophy of orchestrating data, strategy, and technology expertise for clients with a unified offering that meets the emerging experience age of brand building.

- CX is a brand differentiator but multiple good experiences are required to overcome one bad experience, so CX initiatives should be comprehensively thought through.
- Our CX practice is made up of a cross-discipline accountability between data, interaction design, technology and communications.
- It takes more good experiences to cancel a bad one.
- 85% of brand interactions happen without a human presence.
- Leading insight from Forrester: “Customer experience (CX) is no longer just a discipline; it’s the basic ingredient for growth.”
- CX operationally is about integrating company capabilities against brand values and customer needs.
- We use a journey-driven strategy with our AI tool Arcadia that can process vast numbers of verbatims for better insights and CX briefs.
- The CX ethos of considering the consequences of company actions on all stakeholders, employees, customers and the larger community is also good for business.
- Digital transformation and acceleration during Covid is not just a cost issue, but a mandate to move the organization to digital-first strategies to better understand and serve customers and stakeholders.
- Focusing solely on technology is not the brief, but technology delivers experience today, especially in the pandemic when customers now depend on the digital ecosystems for most interactions.
- The entire brand team should have a full understanding of what’s possible and experiment with proofs of concept.
- The web is moving to 3D and AR, Social is moving to ecommerce and conversational interfaces are becoming more advanced.
- CX is a continuous process of maintaining relationships through service and communications relevance to fast-moving cultural and shopping behavior changes.
- Customer relationships have become more reciprocal and collaborative through interactivity. Data Design and technology are needed to make these relationships fully expressive and operative.
- CX helps nurture long-term connections that lead to much stronger brand loyalty.
- CX works to manage both acquisition and lifetime value investments.
- CX is a necessary complement to great advertising. Perception can’t be shifted through communications alone.
- Early overinvestment in tools and point solutions can block a holistic analysis and the ability to bring collaborative design processes to the forefront.
- Continual education in human centered design and CX principles helps build trust with internal partners and clients.
• Reciprocity, creating a dialogue in customer communications, is key to the design of loyalty-building CX.
• Brands are built continuously and cumulatively through experience design led CRM and communications.
• Empathy as brand principle entails attention to design and accessibility that goes beyond just managing compliance and transaction efficiency.
• Core elements of the POVs and guidance should express the agency perspective, while also fully recognizing a cross-ecosystem perspective.
• Where possible, real world case studies exploring the selected topics should be used to describe successes that illustrate what to do and/or failures to exemplify what not to do.

The technology giant Infosys/Wongdoody and the acclaimed design school Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) have a unique partnership in the Center for Complexity. The Center aims to train designers in agencies and enterprise to help all stakeholders negotiate the multiple uncertainties in societal and business problem areas. This conversation between a senior marketer/designer and innovation leader from agency Infosys/Wongdoody and the director of strategic design pedagogy at RISD outlined important concepts to lead cross-community problem/solution ownership:

• Learning with the discomfort of uncertainty opens up discovery to more potential and creates more possibilities for creative solutions.
• The race to a designer-led solution can cut off vital contribution from the community most exposed to the problem to be solved.
• Co-discovery with the community moves the search towards a stance of activism rather than a static answer.
• And the work is more inclusive!
• In the corporate setting these exercises serve to build skills for inclusive co-creation that can be applied to marketing opportunities where customer interaction is immediate and pervasive.

Our sponsor for CX Effect+, Unreal Engine, which is the development side of Epic Games (the firm behind Fortnite), delved directly into their tools that enable the most accomplished creators in film & TV, games, advertising, architecture and automotive and many other industries to create digital experiences of extraordinary quality.

For CX in product design, Unreal Engine real time rendering and modeling tools can connect to process data and contribute to everything from R&D and simulations to real-time interface display for such applications as in-car control and infotainment services and customer facing apps. The flexibility and real-time features give designers the potential to express brand experience principles more faithfully and consistently throughout a universe of digital contexts.

Selected highlights of their presentation included:

• The truly cross-platform development and asset delivery tools available through the platform from PC OS to HTML 5 to HoloLens.
• How streaming applications with high-quality visuals can drive personalized data-driven applications at industrial scale.
• How the Unreal Engine environment brings prototyping and implementation
Designing for and Measuring CX Impact

ft. Kristin Youngling, Group Director, Data Strategy, Ogilvy; Rebecca Flavin, Chief Experience Design Officer, Ogilvy Consulting

Measuring CX Impact

- Measuring the impact of CX solutions leads to a more customer-centric culture overall by helping organizations understand the full value of CX.
- Measurement provides a common language and framework around which cross-functional teams can align on co-ownership and collaboration priorities.
- The measurement plan should look across the entire customer journey for impact opportunities and unify and leverage the full spectrum of data available.
- A CX measurement framework also needs to map the customer value delivered to internal investments made to create a robust ROI model.
- Auditing the technology available to maximize the quality of experiences delivered should be a core consideration in the CX project plan and contribute directly to the measurement framework.
- To prioritize CX solutions you need to assess and score the projected value delivered to the customer, the goals of the business and the feasibility of executing the solution well and in place in the necessary time frame.
- Make sure there is a dedicated CX analyst resource in place to consistently manage the measurement regime.
- Measurement frameworks and the data operation that empowers them will always require attention and refinement to meet evolving business needs.

What does CX look like? Understanding CX Programs and Engagements

ft. Jason Gaikowski, Executive Director, Customer Experience | Global Lead, Human Centered Design, VMLY&R; Kit Krugman, Head of Organization and Culture Design, co:collective; Dave Meeker, Chief Innovation Officer, Isobar; Ashley Hopkins, Senior Manager, Consumer Insights, ASICS

Customer experience can stand for the qualities of almost any interaction between an organization and its relationship with an individual. So the term has often unspecified connotations and at times a buzzword vagueness.

The CXEffect+ had the best possible expert, Forrester’s Harley Manning, the founder of Forrester’s CX research coverage, to lead a discussion with CX leaders in organization design, brand-side insights, innovation development and human-centered design on what CX programs actually look like, how they are initiated and what activities they consist of.

A few of the insights from this discussion include:

- CX projects are often initiated out of the process of investigating and identifying specific business problems and discovering the experiential dimension where the most impactful change can be applied.
- CX activities like deep journey mapping, investigating behavioral data
from digital touchpoints and analyzing/improving the quality of the user experience design of the systems customers encounter, often become common sense targets for prioritization when a firm makes a commitment to a customer-centric business philosophy.

- Often a customer-centric business philosophy will take hold first at the top level of a company and CX activities like deep journey mapping, investigating behavioral data from digital touchpoints and analyzing/improving the quality of the user experience design of the systems customers encounter will emerge as common sense priorities as the company moves to fulfill that philosophy.

- People often experience a company's presence or product through another service or store for instance BEFORE they become familiar with the company's brand.

- Connecting CX to employee experience internally is key and a strong differentiator. The more that an employee's experience aligns with brand promise, the more likely a customer experience that fulfills that brand promise will be delivered and create a virtuous cycle.

- CX-focussed initiatives often require new organizational cross-disciplinary and inclusive collaboration strategies, even developing new capabilities that go deep into the company's operations, purpose and output.

- Employee experience journey excellence includes an inclusive approach to CX ownership in addition to accountability.

- CX strategist looks for insights to inspire service or product optimization across the customer's lifetime with the product or service, in addition to any inspiration needed for creative communications.

- CX-mindset maturity at the highest level entails an always-on focus for all operations of the company and not only those responsible for marketing and customer service or just a solution to a specific sales or service shortfall.

- CX maturity involves much more than optimizing engagement and looks to get at root experience issues affecting business performance.

- CX often requires a change management approach to creating an operational cultural shift to customer-centricity, even after the philosophy has been accepted by management and goals set for adoption.

- CX is happening all the time, by accident or design.

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To learn more about the 4A’s CX Council or to get involved, please email cfoxgrover@aaaa.org.

Chick Foxgrover
EVP–Creative Technology & Innovation at the 4A's