Enterprise Customer Experience Transformation Consultants

by Megan Burns, June 14, 2012

KEY TAKEAWAYS

There Are Two Types Of Transformation Consultants

Some management consulting firms, including Accenture and Deloitte, have added enterprise customer experience transformation offerings in the past several years. A host of smaller firms like CustomerBliss, Experience Engineering, and Strativity Group also help enterprises with large-scale customer experience transformation.

Consultant Services Fall Into Five Major Categories

Consultants can help define a customer experience strategy, create a transformation road map, build support for a transformation, execute a transformation, and measure business impact. However, not all consultants offer all of these services.
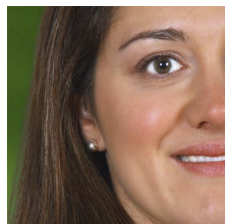
Enterprise Customer Experience Transformation Consultants

Tools And Technology: The Experience-Driven Organization Playbook

by Megan Burns
with Harley Manning and Belle Bocal

WHY READ THIS REPORT

This report is an update to "Enterprise Customer Experience Transformation Consultants" originally published on October 21, 2010. This report provides an overview of the types of technology that customer experience professionals can use to act in transforming their company into an experience-driven organization. Forrester scanned the market for companies offering enterprise customer experience transformation services and found two types of providers: management consultants and boutiques. All of the 15 vendors we interviewed help clients build an initial customer experience transformation road map. Some can also execute key steps in that road map like employee training, process redesign, and IT systems implementation (though capabilities in this area vary widely). To help select the right partner, customer experience professionals should start by creating a shopping list that defines the types of help they are likely to need and the level of commitment they are willing to make.

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Notes & Resources

Forrester interviewed 15 firms that offer customer experience services, including: Accenture, Beyond Philosophy, Beyond the Arc, Capgemini, CustomerBliss (Jeanne Bliss), Deloitte, Experience Engineering, IBM Global Business Services, MCorp Consulting, Mulberry Consulting, PwC, smith and co, Strativity Group, Synovate (Ipsos), and Walker. McKinsey was invited to participate in this research but declined to do so.

Related Research Documents

Major Voice Of The Customer Trends, 2011
December 8, 2011

Three Secrets Of Success For Customer Experience Organizations
April 29, 2010

FIRMS NEED HELP WITH ENTERPRISE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE TRANSFORMATION

Forrester's research shows that transforming a company from product-centric to customer-centric takes years and requires active participation from everyone in the firm. Given the magnitude of such change, customer experience leaders need help making the process as quick and smooth as possible. In particular, they need partners with:

- **Expertise.** New customer experience teams are often staffed with seasoned employees who know their company's business but lack experience in essential methodologies like ethnographic research, customer journey mapping, and interaction design.

- **Manpower.** Customer experience teams are typically small, making it hard for them to analyze reams of customer data, map the journeys of many diverse customer populations, or train thousands of their fellow employees on new processes.[1]

- **Objectivity.** Third parties often see patterns, issues, and opportunities in customer experience data that others closer to the work might not see. And even when insiders do pick up on the key issues, customer experience leaders know that findings presented by outsiders are often seen as more credible and easier to digest than those presented by insiders.[2]

THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE TRANSFORMATION CONSULTANT LANDSCAPE

To help customer experience leaders find the support they need, Forrester scanned the marketplace for firms offering consulting services for enterprise customer experience transformation.[3] We identified 15 firms that have done this type of work for large US enterprises and asked them about the services they offer. Based on that research, we identified two major groups of providers in the market (see Figure 1):

- **Management consultants.** Several management consulting firms, including Accenture, Deloitte, and PwC, have added enterprise customer experience transformation offerings in the past several years. Some have a dedicated customer experience practice, while others have enhanced their customer strategy, loyalty, or customer relationship management (CRM) practices to cover the needs of customer experience leaders.

- **Boutiques.** A host of smaller firms also help enterprises with large-scale customer experience transformation. Some like CustomerBliss (Jeanne Bliss), Experience Engineering, smith and co, and Strativity Group focus solely on customer experience. Others like MCorp Consulting, Synovate, and Walker have added customer experience transformation services to existing offerings in related fields like branding, loyalty, and market research.

Figure 1 The Enterprise Customer Experience Transformation Consultant Landscape

Management consultants	Founded/ practice started	Customer experience practice headquarters	Sample clients
Accenture	2002	(no specific headquarters)	• PG&E • New York City Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications • Stanford Hospital & Clinics
Capgemini	2006	London	• DHL • KPN • Orange • Westpac
Deloitte	2004	Dallas	Cannot disclose
IBM Global Business Services	1996	New York	• TD Bank • The Nature Conservancy • The Palace Museum
PwC	2004	New York	• HR services provider • Large domestic telecom carrier • Large insurance provider • Software provider

56600   Source: Forrester Research, Inc.

Figure 1 The Enterprise Customer Experience Transformation Consultant Landscape (Cont.)

Boutiques	Founded/ practice started	Customer experience practice headquarters	Sample clients
Beyond Philosophy	2002	Atlanta and London	• American Express • FedEx • IBM • Microsoft
Beyond the Arc	2006	Berkeley, Calif.	Cannot disclose
CustomerBliss (Jeanne Bliss)	2002	Los Angeles	• St. Jude Children's Research Hospital • TD Ameritrade • Walmart.com • Zappos.com
Experience Engineering	1996	Minneapolis	• Audi • Panda Restaurant Group • Red Roof Inn • Royal Bank of Canada
MCorp Consulting	2002	San Francisco	• GE • Microsoft • T. Rowe Price
Mulberry Consulting	2003	London	• Aviva • Emirates • Reed Elsevier • UPS
smith and co	2003	London	• Burberry • InterContinental Hotels Group • O2 • Symantec
Strativity Group	2003	Rochelle Park, N.J., and London	• FedEx • Capital One • Honeywell • Wyeth
Synovate	1997	Chicago	• HP • InterContinental Hotels Group • Sony • Whirlpool
Walker	Mid-1980s	Indianapolis	• Avnet • CDW • Cisco Systems • Pepsi Beverages

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Source: Forrester Research, Inc.

Planning Services Are Common; Execution Services Are Not

The activities required to transform a company's culture and customer experience fall into five major categories (see Figure 2). Based on information that each of the consultants provided, we used those five categories to classify the type of assistance that each firm says it offers potential clients (see Figure 3). A scan of the overall market landscape shows that:

- **All firms will build transformation road maps.** Most firms we spoke with have a methodology in place to assess the current state of a firm's customer experience, identify gaps between the current state and the desired end state, and develop a prioritized road map of projects to drive change. They typically include a step to define desired business outcomes and identify metrics that should be used to track progress. Many will do new primary research as part of the assessment process, if needed, although some prefer to stick to the data that's already available.

- **Change management services vary.** Most road maps include similar activities — developing and delivering employee training; redesigning governance structures, key business processes, and incentive programs; and managing the overall change program. Management consultants can — and do — leverage their existing change management practices to implement these changes on behalf of a client. In contrast, boutique firms vary in their ability to do the work called for in the road map. Training is one of the most common execution services that the smaller firms offer — some only design training, while others have teams that can also deliver it on a large scale. Many boutiques also assist with measurement implementation; they can apply methodologies used during the assessment phase to track improvement as the transformation progresses.

- **Management consultants can help with technology implementations.** When transformation requires changes to platforms like CRM, enterprise resource planning (ERP), or contact center tools, management consultants pull in their existing IT and systems integration teams to do the work. Only two of the boutiques we spoke with said that they do any type of development work — Walker, which will implement the tools needed to support a company's voice of the customer (VoC) program, and Experience Engineering.

- **Continuous coaching means that some relationships last for years.** Because these transformations tend to take a long time, most management consultants engage in ongoing coaching sessions with their clients. In fact, some have been on retainer for as long as six years. These coaching sessions may involve only the core customer experience transformation team or the entire executive leadership. If needed, consultants may also reassess the road map and recommend adjustments based on progress to date and changes in both the internal and the external environment.

Figure 2 Customer Experience Transformations Revolve Around Five Major Activities

Category	Sample activities
Define a customer experience strategy	• Evaluate the competitive landscape • Evaluate the role of customer experience in an industry • Recommend an appropriate customer experience strategy
Create a transformation road map	• Assess current experience and organizational capabilities • Identify gaps between current and desired state • Design solutions and new experiences • Prioritize potential projects and solutions • Create a road map and timeline
Build support for customer experience efforts	• Estimate the ROI of better customer experience • Create business cases and communication plans • Engage executives in the transformation process • Engage employees in the transformation process
Execute the customer experience transformation	• Deliver customer-centric employee training • Re-engineer key business processes • Implement supporting technology infrastructure
Measure the business impact	• Choose appropriate customer experience metrics • Design customer experience dashboards and reports • Connect customer experience improvements to business metrics

56600 Source: Forrester Research, Inc.

Figure 3 The Enterprise Customer Experience Consultant Service Matrix

	Accenture	Capgemini	Deloitte	IBM Global Business Services	PwC	Beyond Philosophy	Beyond the Arc	CustomerBliss (Jeanne Bliss)
Define a customer experience strategy								
Competitive assessment	●	●	●	●	●	●		
Strategy definition	●	●	●	●	●	●		●
Create a transformation road map								
Customer/business data analysis	●	●	●	●	●		●	●
Capabilities assessment	●		●	●	●	●		●
Primary research (quantitative and qualitative)	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
VoC program design and setup	●	●	●	●	●	●		●
Customer journey mapping (current state)	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Ideal customer experience definition	●	●	●	●	●	●		●
Road map definition/prioritization	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Build support for customer experience efforts								
Business case creation	●	●	●	●	●	●		●
Execute the customer experience transformation								
Program management	●	●	●	●	●			
Executive/management coaching	●		●	●		●		●
Organizational structure, governance alignment	●	●	●	●	●	●		
Process redesign	●	●	●	●	●	●		●
Training development and delivery	●	●	●	●	●	●		
Incentive and compensation design	●	●	●	●				
Internal communications planning	●	●	●	●	●		●	●
Job redesign/HR changes	●	●	●	●	●			●
Technology implementation	●	●	●	●	●			
Measure the business impact								
Customer experience metrics definition	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Customer experience metrics collection and reporting	●	●	●	●	●	●		

Source: Forrester Research, Inc.

Figure 3 The Enterprise Customer Experience Consultant Service Matrix (Cont.)

	Experience Engineering	MCorp Consulting	Mulberry Consulting	smith and co	Strativity Group	Synovate	Walker
Define a customer experience strategy							
Competitive assessment	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Strategy definition	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Create a transformation road map							
Customer/business data analysis	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Capabilities assessment	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Primary research (quantitative and qualitative)	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
VoC program design and setup	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Customer journey mapping (current state)	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Ideal customer experience definition	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Road map definition/prioritization	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Build support for customer experience efforts							
Business case creation	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Execute the customer experience transformation							
Program management	●		●	●	●	●	●
Executive/management coaching	●		●	●	●	●	●
Organizational structure, governance alignment	●		●		●	●	
Process redesign	●		●		●	●	
Training development and delivery	●		●	●	●		●
Incentive and compensation design	●		●		●	●	●
Internal communications planning	●		●	●	●	●	●
Job redesign/HR changes	●		●		●		
Technology implementation	●						●
Measure the business impact							
Customer experience metrics definition	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Customer experience metrics collection and reporting	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

56600 Source: Forrester Research, Inc.

RECOMMENDATIONS

MAKE A CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE TRANSFORMATION CONSULTANT SHOPPING LIST

Before reaching out to any of the consultants listed in this report, Forrester recommends that customer experience professionals take time to think about what they want from the relationship. In particular, you should:

- **Identify where you need help.** Although it's unlikely that you'll know all your needs upfront, having an initial wish list will make the process of identifying a shortlist of vendors much easier. Using the description of the services above as a starting point, write down the parts of the transformation process with which you are likely to need assistance and why. For example, do you need a specialist just to help with the tasks that you lack the expertise to do yourself, such as customer journey mapping? Or, do you need to broadly supplement your own customer experience team with additional staff to complete a project more quickly?

- **Decide how much of a commitment you're willing to make.** Once you've narrowed down what you want from a consultant, define an initial engagement that allows you to see the consultancy in action and determine how well your teams work together. Most consultants have a set of suggested first steps for new clients — use them as a starting point for the scoping process. We asked several consultants how much new clients typically invest in their phase 1 efforts and got a range of answers: Time estimates went from four to 18 weeks, while cost estimates ranged from a low of $25,000 to a fairly substantial high of $250,000.

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL

Methodology

We interviewed 15 firms that offer customer experience transformation services, the details of which are outlined in Figure 3. We also interviewed two other companies for this report.

Companies Interviewed For This Report

Accenture	Deloitte
Beyond Philosophy	Experience Engineering
Beyond the Arc	IBM Global Business Services
Capgemini	MCorp Consulting
CustomerBliss (Jeanne Bliss)	Mulberry Consulting

PwC   Synovate (Ipsos)

smith and co   Walker

Strativity Group

ENDNOTES

[1] Forrester studied successful customer experience teams and found that inspiring leaders and a strong internal brand presence help centralized teams drive significant change despite their small size. See the April 29, 2010, "Three Secrets Of Success For Customer Experience Organizations" report.

[2] Forrester identified validation from outside experts as one of several best practices when building a compelling business case for customer experience investments. See the June 17, 2008, "How To Get Funding For Web Site Improvements" report.

[3] To identify companies for this report, we used a variety of approaches. These included asking customer experience leaders which firms they had worked with, soliciting company names from customer experience practitioner groups, and even searching Google for "customer experience consulting."

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« CARL ERICKSON, client persona representing Customer Experience Professionals