



Innovation: The New Normal

With the speed of change that comes with progression and innovation, companies need to inject agility into all areas of their organisations. – By Karlijn Deforche

Digital innovators have been raising the bar for a while now, creating high customer expectations as the new normal. Which of us is still amazed when that delicious noodle meal arrives on our doorstep 12 mins after ordering, without needing to talk to anyone, and without cash exchanging hands? Indeed, what we consider very normal today was unthinkable only a few of years ago.

These types of seamless end-to-end digital experiences have created expectations that are spilling over into other more traditional industries. Customers expect the same top-notch online servicing from all the businesses they interact with; wanting a seamless experience between both physical and digital interactions.

In today's fast-moving digital age, it is no longer enough to invest in a website or app and keep the rest of your business operations the same. Customers will critically evaluate every detail of the whole end-to-end experience when purchasing a product or using a service. It also requires companies to respond faster to the ever-changing requirements as their consumers have become accustomed to the speed of digital.

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The granting of the eight virtual banking licenses is one of the recent signs that the Hong Kong business landscape is changing rapidly, and that this change is driven by technology.
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Staying relevant

To succeed in today's digital age, companies need to respond to both challenges at the same time. You cannot achieve the promise of an amazing customer experience design without an agile internal way of working. It is the combination of both that has made companies like Amazon and Spotify

disrupt their respective industries, eventually becoming the undisputable leaders in their field.

Putting the human at the centre lies at the core of design thinking and customer experience design – it sounds obvious yet just think about it – how often do you request input from your customer or user when (re) designing products and services?

Design thinking is an iterative problem-solving process in which companies seek to understand their customer on a deeper level, challenge assumptions, and redefine problems in an attempt to identify alternative strategies and solutions that might not be instantly apparent. It is mostly used to innovate and disrupt the business offering on a more strategic level.

Customer experience *design* has the same customer-centric focus yet works on a more operational level, mapping out the ideal end-to-end customer journey landscape, focusing on all the interaction points when buying and using existing product or services.

Business agility

Agile ways of working have been around for 20-odd years, originating from the software development industry as a way to cope with the increasing uncertainty and changing nature of what they were asked to develop.

Today, we experience similar increasing uncertainty yet now it is strongly on the customer interaction and digital side of doing business. With the ever-



increasing pace of change and fast-changing customer requirements, agile is experiencing its renaissance as a model explicitly designed for companies to embrace and thrive in uncertainty.

Agile is now being applied to full organisations and to the ways of working in departments such as marketing and HR. To make that difference with its IT origin, it is often referred to as business agility, or the ability of an organisation to sense changes internally or externally, and respond accordingly in order to deliver value to its customers.

Agile is a team-centered, iterative and cross-functional approach that increases a company's speed and

adaptability to change. Agile at scale, or agile operating models, drive faster go-to-market turnarounds as well as quicker response to customer needs.

Agile adoption, especially at scale, is a rewarding yet tough challenge as traditional companies and its employees are hardwired to avoid change and uncertainty. The challenge

becomes even more complex as there is no one-size-fits-all approach to becoming more agile, and agility is an ongoing journey.

Combining your customer experience improvements with an agile internal way of working will put your company on the path of remaining relevant in this digital age. 

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Traditional institutions will need to become agile and more customer focused than ever before, if they want to stay relevant.
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United Outcomes is a delivery partner specialising in digital transformation. We help our clients with delivering business critical projects, as well as help them to improve the way they deliver through more agile and innovative ways of working.



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