



Global Standards

for Customer Experience Teams

v2024.1



KANTAR

qualtrics^{XM}



Introducing a powerful new toolkit to elevate the quality of customer experiences and CX standards across the world.

Bain & Company, in partnership with Kantar and Qualtrics, has created a new set of jointly-endorsed CX standards. The first ever cross-industry initiative to introduce a common language for excellence.

Despite its critical importance for sustained growth and competitiveness, the ambiguity surrounding customer experience (CX) has led to misunderstandings and underinvestment. Many CX functions struggle for recognition and influence within organizations.

To address these challenges most effectively, the Standards are based on the CX AdvanceSM Framework from Bain & Company, with valuable contributions from Kantar and Qualtrics.

These standards aim to provide clarity and support a common set of guidelines empowering companies to build effective CX functions.

They also exemplify our collective, best practice methodology evolved from decades of practical, proven, hands-on experience across global organizations. The standards have been specifically developed to enrich the lives of customers and provide the best in customer experience support to our clients. Thereby raising the overall quality of CX practices across all industries and geographies.

Why These Standards Are Critical

Customer Experience Management is a relatively young discipline. It wasn't until the early 2000s, influenced by books like **Customer Experience Management** by Bernd Schmitt (2001) and **The Ultimate Question** by Fred Reichheld (2006), that companies began to seriously consider the impact of customer sentiment on business performance.

In addition, entry into the CX profession has traditionally been based on practical experience rather than standardized knowledge. This lack of clear standards has led to misconceptions about the role of CX and made it challenging for practitioners to make a significant impact with their brands and customers.

This situation has also led to CX solutions providers working to their own standards, making true partnerships difficult. Most providers' products, technology, and support are too bespoke to be compatible with each other, meaning CX leaders have had to navigate a tricky vendor landscape by themselves.



The need for common CX standards is critical; they establish a universal benchmark for excellence, ensuring that companies worldwide know exactly how to deliver superior customer experiences.

Stanford Swinton

Principal Author of Global CX Standards
Executive Vice President at Bain & Company



The new Global Standards for CX provide companies with proven strategies for superior customer experience, an expert-backed CX framework, actionable insights and comprehensive support.



Customer Centric Culture

1. Purpose and Leadership

- 1a** Company purpose, values, priorities, and vision metrics are focused on enriching customer lives
- 1b** Brand(s) positioning aligns to company purpose and values
- 1c** The company scorecard measures progress towards the company's purpose, values and brand positioning
- 1d** Leaders are trained on the company's purpose and regularly spend time with and in the shoes of customers and employees
- 1e** A central CX function sets standards and holds the business accountable for delivering on the customer promise
- 1f** All executives have a tracked personal plan in place for enriching customer lives
- 1g** Internal communication and celebrations are aligned with the company's purpose
- 1h** Every Executive Committee meeting starts with a focus on the customer

2. Employee Experience

- 2a** Employee feedback is regularly captured, that includes questions related to employee and customer experience
- 2b** Employee coaching sessions are regularly conducted to support employees in creating customer centric behaviors
- 2c** Employees are rewarded and recognized based on their performance against the company's purpose and values
- 2d** Supervisors review employee feedback and develop action plans based on it
- 2e** Employees have an easy way to raise and escalate issues with internal systems, processes, policies, tools, etc
- 2f** A closed-loop process is in place to keep employees informed about how their issues are resolved
- 2g** Hiring, onboarding, and performance management are all aligned with the company's purpose and values

Customer Experience Capability

3. Feedback Management

- 3a** Customer feedback is tracked at four levels: competitive benchmark, relationship, journeys, and interactions
- 3b** Customer experience data insights are shared with all teams, based on the needs of their role (while maintaining anonymity), with relevant data to help improve the customer experience
- 3c** All teams across the company meet regularly to discuss customer feedback, plan actions, and review relevant data
- 3d** There are high standards for the methodology, wording, sampling, and controls used in collecting and analyzing customer feedback
- 3e** Robust qualitative analytics on surveys and non-surveys are used to understand the meaning behind customer comments
- 3f** There are live, visible reporting and dashboards to track customer feedback
- 3g** Customers are proactively followed up with after they provide feedback
- 3h** There is a simple mechanism in place for escalating customer issues to the appropriate level
- 3i** Generative AI is used to support listening, learning, and acting on customer feedback across the organization
- 3j** Monitoring in place on usage of dashboards, closed loop process and escalation

4. Data Management

- 4a** Customer data fields (operational, financial, customer, and contextual) are mapped to form a clear customer taxonomy
- 4b** A data roadmap is in place to close any gaps in our customer data
- 4c** A single view of each customer is obtained to understand their value, lifecycle, and journey
- 4d** Customer data is linked to specific business goals and initiatives (e.g. retention, acquisition, upsell)
- 4e** Advanced data science techniques are used to identify opportunities for improvement and design targets
- 4f** Experimentation platforms are utilized to pilot new ideas and track their results

Customer Experience Execution

5. Value Management

- 5a** There is a clear understanding of the connection between brand/marketing efforts and customer conversion
- 5b** Customer health and growth rates are tracked
- 5c** Executives regularly review metrics that show customer value
- 5d** Both customer economics and customer feedback are considered when making decisions
- 5e** Customer needs and attitudes inform the development of our customer value proposition (CVP)
- 5f** The value of customer referrals is tracked
- 5g** The potential value of each customer is predicted and understood
- 5h** The key factors that drive customer value are identified and used to differentiate the brand

6. Journey Management

- 6a** Target experience and journeys are designed with the User as the ultimate arbiter of quality
- 6b** A single, unified way of describing customer needs, journeys, and touchpoints is implemented
- 6c** The profitability of each customer journey is tracked
- 6d** Teams are organized around customer needs and journeys (virtually or through a fully aligned operating model)
- 6e** Each journey has a single point of accountability (operational, financial, and customer)
- 6f** There are clear plans for funding both strategic initiatives and ongoing improvements in the customer journey
- 6g** Team members are trained on CX design techniques and empowered to make improvements
- 6h** There is a defined set of common CX design principles that all teams follow, aligned to brand and customer value proposition
- 6i** Each customer need/journey has its own “north star” design linked to the design principles and product roadmap
- 6j** Journey owners have the appropriate tools and resources to act

7. Lifecycle Management

- 7a** Every customer has a sentiment metric, is assigned to a needs-based segment, and has their individual lifetime value (CLV) and customer acquisition cost (CAC) tracked
- 7b** Key milestones are defined for each customer throughout their lifecycle
- 7c** Personalized actions for each customer are identified and taken, including addressing churn risk and activating promoters
- 7d** Direct marketing and account management are personalized based on each customer’s unique experiences and insights
- 7e** AI and machine learning are used to improve the way humans interact with customers
- 7f** Customer service is readily and conveniently accessible for any customer

Next Steps

This first ever cross-industry effort introduces a common language for excellence in the CX industry and standards to elevate the quality of CX practices across all industries.

We are launching these Standards as a preview to gain industry and practitioner input between now and CX Day - October 1, 2024. The consultation window is open between July 16 and August 31, 2024.

Please visit cx-standards.com/consultation to share your feedback.

Additionally, if you would like to see how your business measures up to these Global CX Standards – and take a step towards being accredited against them – then simply contact your Bain, Kantar or Qualtrics account team to discuss.

Thank you for your engagement in shaping the future of customer experience.

Acknowledgements

Principal Author
Bain & Company - Stanford Swinton

Contributors
Kantar - Peter Aitken
Qualtrics - James Scutt

The material and analysis contained herein (the “Report”) was prepared by Bain & Company, Inc over a limited time period in order to provide a perspective on CX industry standards.

Recipients are granted a non-exclusive, personal license to use the Report solely for personal, non-commercial purposes.

The Report may not be reproduced, copied, modified, decompiled, transferred or distributed in any form for any purpose, without Bain & Company explicit prior written permission.

In the event that you provide Bain & Company with any feedback, ideas or suggestions regarding the Report (collectively, “Feedback”), you hereby assign all right, title and interest thereto to Bain & Company and Bain & Company may use any such Feedback in any manner and for any purpose whatsoever without any obligation, attribution or compensation based on intellectual property rights or otherwise.