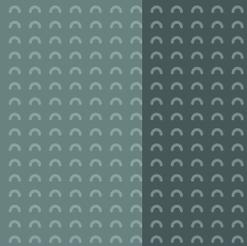


Taking the lead:

Why CX teams will play a critical role in COVID-19 recovery

Our study reveals why staying in lock-step with, and even ahead of, your customers' changing needs and priorities can play a critical role in your company's economic recovery.



1 in 4 say their company has laid off, furloughed, or reduced hours or pay for employees as a direct result of COVID-19.

In a crisis like the one we've seen unfold across the globe with COVID-19, some businesses survive—and even thrive—while others collapse. When you strip away the misfortune that impacts some industries more than others, are there other factors that contribute to a company's success or failure? And most importantly, is there anything you can do now to improve your organization's chances? Fortunately, our study has revealed the answer is yes—and your customers hold the key to your recovery.

We surveyed 1,777 professionals who are involved in the customer experience (CX) or Voice-of-the-Customer (VoC) programs at their organizations to uncover trends in CX during COVID-19. We'll dig into CX teams' growing role in digital transformation initiatives, the biggest challenges facing CX initiatives today, and the key attributes that could mean the difference between closing up shop or driving big revenue growth.

Curious about what the rest of professionals think? Check out our general study of 3,275 professionals.

[Learn more](#)

OH THE OTHER HAND,

19%

OF ORGANIZATIONS HAVE SEEN MAJOR FINANCIAL GROWTH.

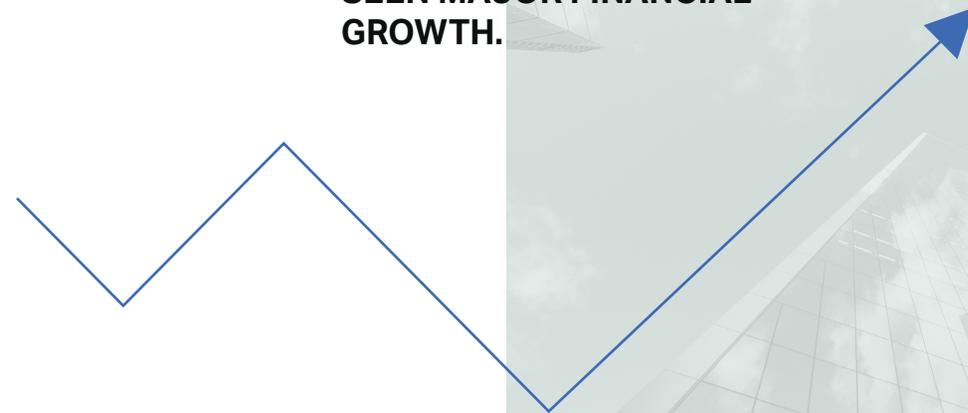
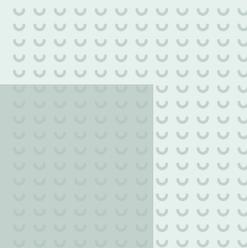
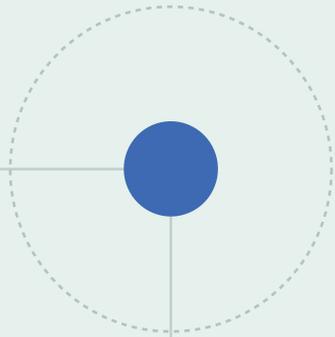


Table of Contents



01

MARKET TRENDS

- CX in the new normal
- Digital transformation
- The rise of CX teams

04

ATTRIBUTES OF SUCCESS

- Agile
- Collaborative
- Customer-centric
- Holistic

10

CHALLENGES

- CX blockers
- Technology

22

BEST PRACTICES

- People
- Process
- Technology
- How GetFeedback can help

Customer experience in the new normal

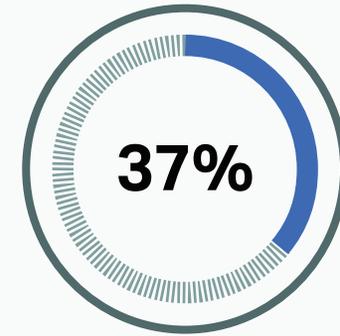
Your customers' needs likely look very different today than they did earlier in 2020. While there's no universal guidebook to navigating a situation as tricky and fluid as the novel coronavirus pandemic, businesses are doing what they can to adapt to changing customer priorities—whether that involves completely scrapping and reimagining their go-to-market strategy or putting more focus and resources toward customer retention.



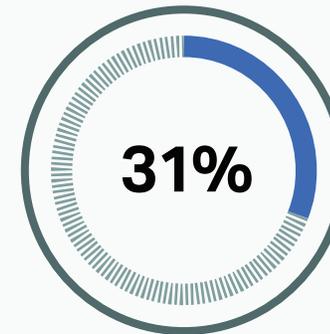
The top actions businesses have taken as a direct result of the pandemic:



GATHERED FEEDBACK FROM CUSTOMERS AND EMPLOYEES



INCREASED FOCUS ON CUSTOMER RETENTION AND LOYALTY



CHANGED THEIR BUSINESS STRATEGY



RELEASED UPDATES OR IMPROVEMENTS TO EXISTING PRODUCTS OR SERVICES

The acceleration of digital transformation

Digital transformation: The continued adoption of new and emerging technologies by organizations to improve business processes, systems, and culture, in order to deliver better customer experience quickly and effectively, and better compete in the market.

Of the 80% of CX professionals who are involved in their organization's digital transformation initiatives, nearly 2/3 are more involved today than they were prior to COVID-19.

As digital transformation initiatives continue to be prioritized across organizations, CX teams will play a vital role in their success. For one, expensive transformation investments aren't made on a whim—companies need to keep a close eye on the market and customer insights to effectively evaluate and execute on these efforts. CX professionals serve an important role in connecting the broader organization with valuable customer insights to de-risk these initiatives and ensure their digital transformation strategy is grounded in data.



75% are accelerating new or planned digital transformation initiatives today due to COVID-19.

Organizations had been planning multi-year digital transformation initiatives long before the pandemic came around. But COVID-19 has become a forcing function for prioritizing and accelerating these imperatives as organizations struggle to keep up with shifts in the market and compete effectively. Financially, companies that can't move quickly enough may pay the price.



80% 80% say their organizations' online interactions with customers have increased since COVID-19

The pandemic has ushered in a new era of the digital economy, with more customers interacting with brands digitally than ever before. Face-to-face time with salespeople and in-store visits are still largely off the table in many regions or look different than before. As a result, ecommerce and digital marketing have become more important—as has keeping a close eye on the customer experience you're delivering via your website and digital channels.



CHARLES GAO
MANAGER, BUSINESS STRATEGY, ANALYTICS, GOLDEN STATE WARRIORS

“During our hiatus, we’re taking a closer look at our digital experience and mobile app. Our goal is to continue to optimize the experience for what customers really want, better align the product-market fit, and ensure the most-used aspects of the app are the most successful. To achieve this, we need to continue to listen to fans for their feedback.”

The rise of CX teams

All eyes are on CX teams right now. From adding new customer touchpoints and sending more customer surveys to increasing the focus on customer retention, organizations are making CX a higher priority today. This puts CX teams in a unique position

to make a big impact on their organization's strategy to improve customer experience and increase revenue, while advocating for their customers' needs.

Since the onset of COVID-19...

Listening to your customers has become more critical than ever



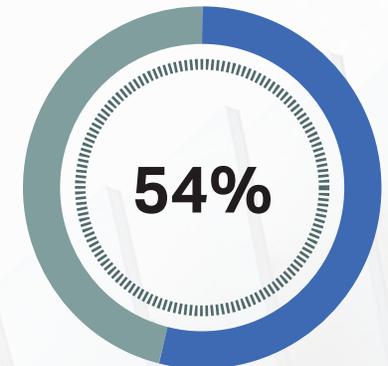
SAY CUSTOMER FEEDBACK HAS BECOME MORE IMPORTANT

Companies are listening to customers in new places



OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS HAVE ADDED ADDITIONAL CUSTOMER TOUCHPOINTS.

Executive leadership is paying more attention to CX



OVER HALF AGREE: "SINCE THE ONSET OF COVID-19, THERE HAS BEEN AN INCREASED FOCUS ON MY CX PROGRAM FROM THE C-SUITE"

What our respondents said:

“We have dramatically increased scheduled touch points with clients to make sure their needs are being met.”

“We have now bumped CX initiatives to a top priority.”





CHASE ZENGER
HEAD OF GLOBAL SCALED CUSTOMER SUCCESS, BOX

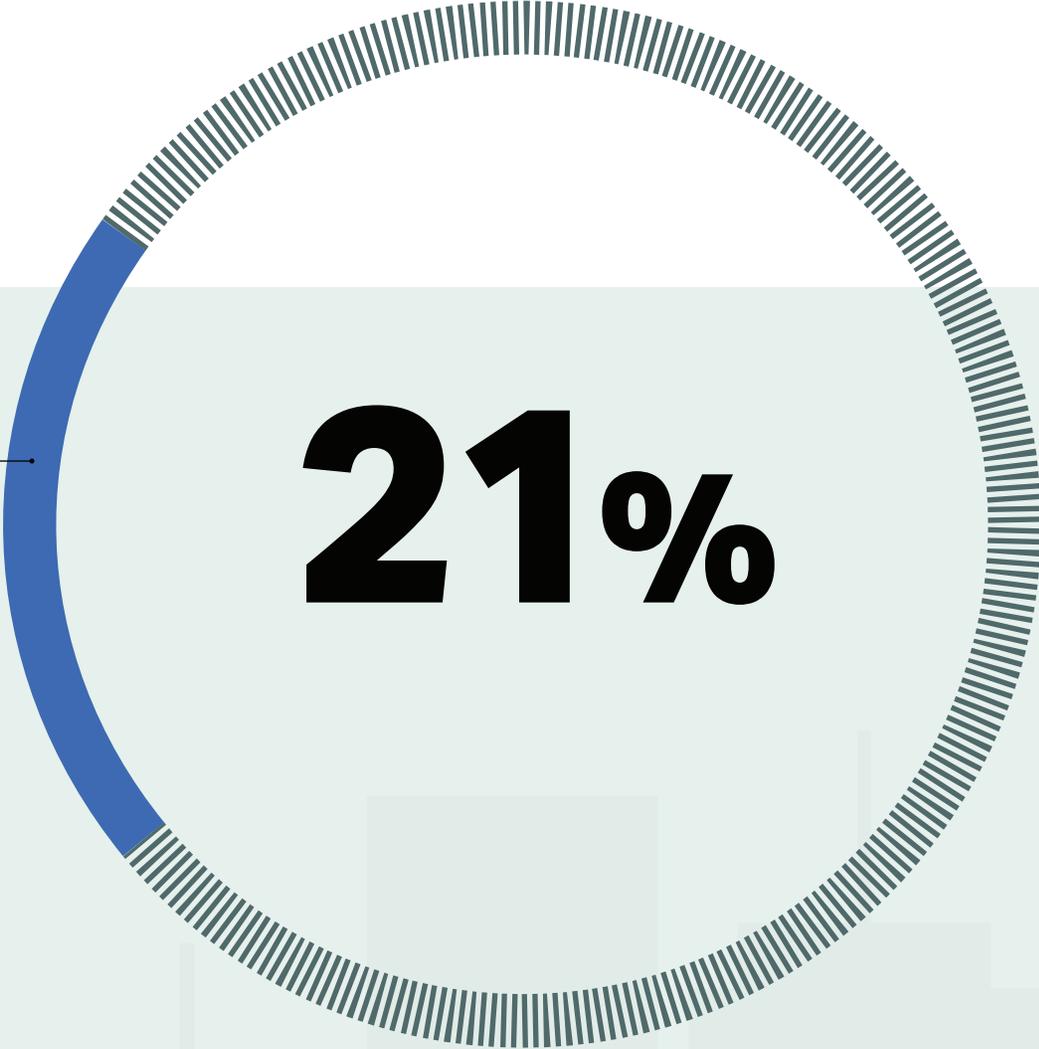
“COVID accelerated the desire and need to be really close to our customers. Since the pandemic, our executive team has been much more hands on with a lot of our customers and joining calls more than normal. But surveys are a way to do that at scale, to get a pulse on our customers across our entire base.”

What sets successful organizations apart from the rest?

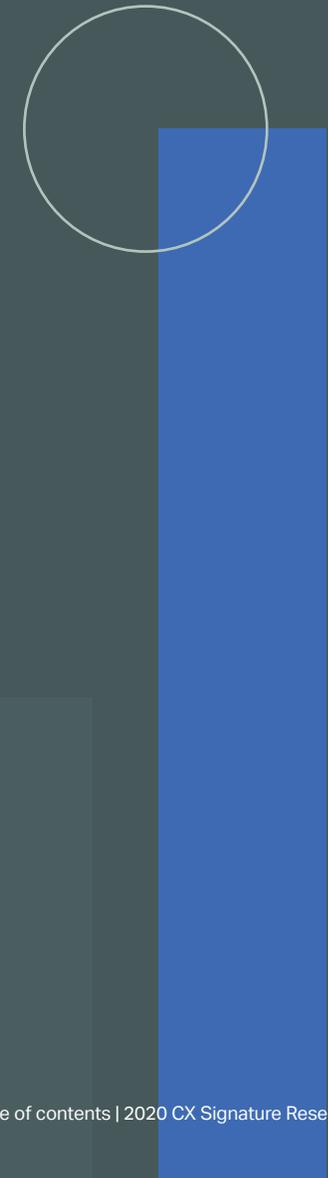
21% say their companies have seen financial decline since the pandemic began.

This goes up to 23% and 32% for the manufacturing and education industries, respectively: two industries that have been particularly hard hit.

On the other hand, 47% of all have documented revenue growth over the same time period, and almost a third (32%) have seen revenue remain fairly stable. So what has enabled some companies to bounce back, while others are still seeing a decline? In the following pages, we'll drill down into the specific attributes and actions that have contributed to their success.



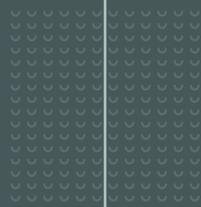
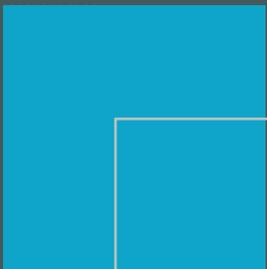
4 key traits of companies with revenue growth since COVID-19



01

Agile

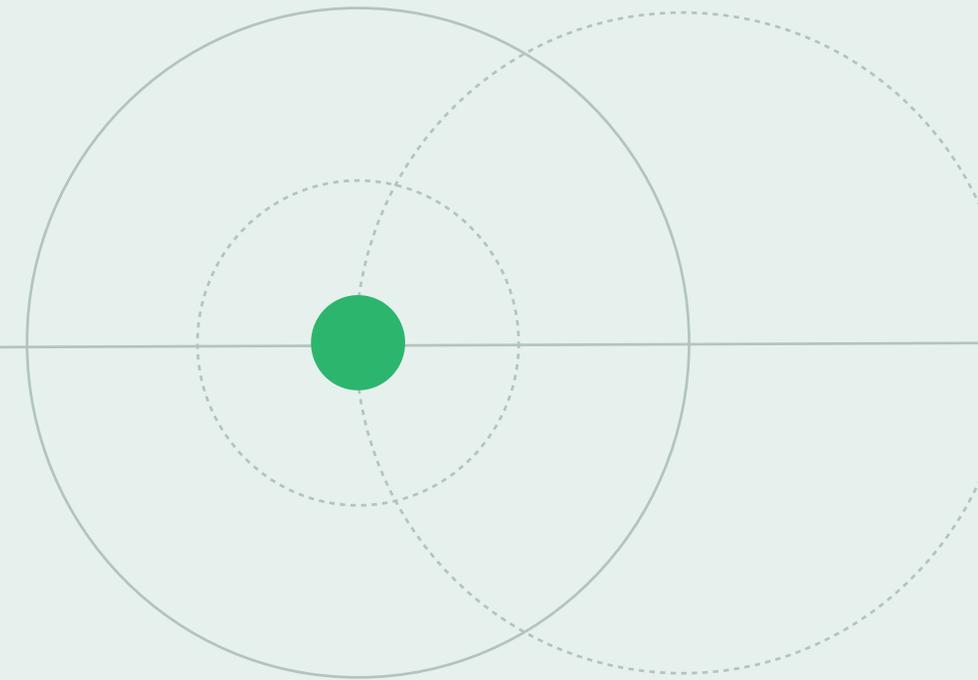
Agility gives businesses the ability to think and move fast in response to changing external circumstances. Agile organizations can pivot quickly based on new information they've gathered in order to keep up with changing customer needs.



02

Customer-centric

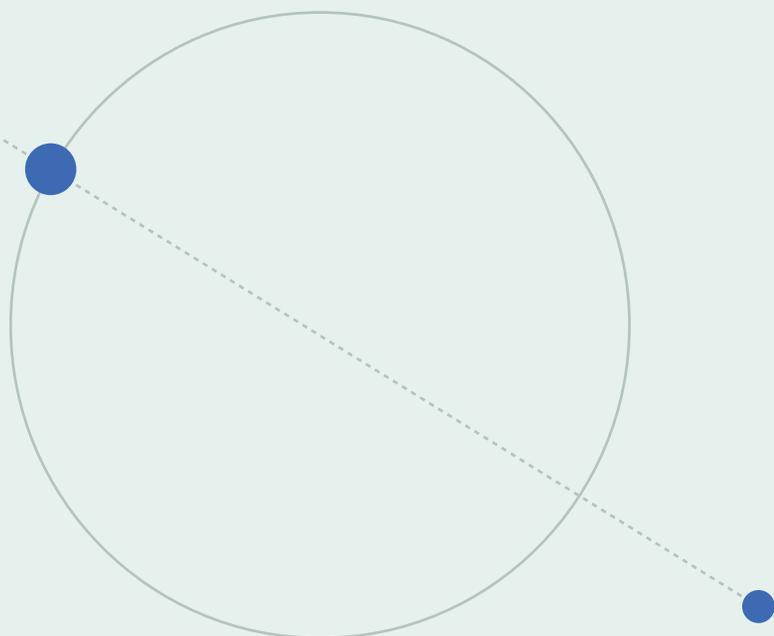
Customer centricity means putting the customer at the center of every aspect of the business. Customer-centric organizations make the customer experience a priority and focus on delivering goods or services that meet or exceed the expectations of their customers.



03

Collaborative

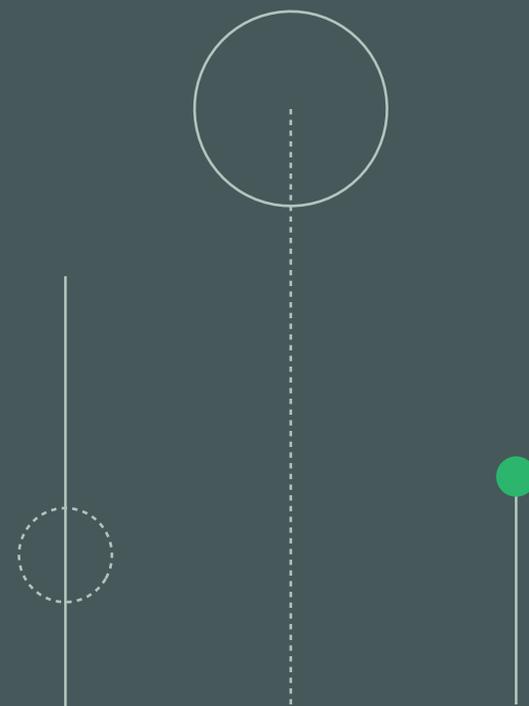
When a company is truly cross-functional, team members across different areas of the business work together toward a common goal. Highly collaborative businesses have processes in place for meeting regularly with cross-functional stakeholders, sharing customer insights broadly, and holding everyone accountable for delivering on CX goals.



04

Holistic

Organizations with holistic CX programs are able to connect insights from the full end-to-end customer journey in order to see the big picture of what's happening with their customer experience.



Businesses must pivot quickly or risk getting left behind

In uncertain times, when your customers' priorities and needs are rapidly changing, it's important to move fast. Companies that can pivot on a dime and quickly rework their product roadmaps based on customer feedback will be rewarded, while those that can't will struggle to compete. Out of all the factors we correlated with success, agility is the biggest differentiator that separates successful companies from the rest.

Agile companies are more resilient in a crisis:

	Saw revenue growth	Saw revenue decline	Feel prepared to withstand an economic downturn	Don't feel prepared to withstand an economic downturn
Agile companies	50%	18%	57%	9%
Slow-to-adapt companies	26%	40%	25%	29%



MAJA PALEJ
HEAD OF STRATEGIC CX INITIATIVES,
PEOPLE.AI

"We've been very proactive in asking customers what they need for the next year, and how they're going to thrive during all the macro challenges we all face. As we execute on our roadmap, we're also collaborating with our customers to ensure their needs are met. In true agile fashion, we are doing experiments in real-time, then taking those experiments, productizing them, and serving our customers in the most meaningful way."



CYNTHIA HESTER
DIRECTOR, GLOBAL CUSTOMER PROGRAMS,
GOOGLE CLOUD

"We cannot predict the future. This year, all bets are off. If you can set up a good foundation that is built on trust, and you have the right tools to listen to your customers, then this sets you up to be nimble. If you're well grounded and you understand where your north star is, even as things start to change week to week and month to month, you'll be able to pivot."

Great CX is a team effort

Taking action on customer feedback is a team sport—no one person owns the customer experience. Making meaningful changes in service of your customers requires a coordinated cross-functional effort across just about every department in the company, from marketing to product. And when you need to move quickly to keep pace with your

customers, you need all hands on deck. That's why we're not surprised to see companies that collaborate on a regular basis are more likely to say they're able to adapt quickly, and more likely to report financial gains as a result.

Frequent collaboration helps organizations adapt quickly:

	Saw revenue growth	Able to adapt quickly to changing customer needs	Feel prepared to withstand an economic downturn
Collaborate somewhat or significantly	50%	90%	57%
Collaborate seldomly or not at all	30%	73%	35%

Unfortunately, many organizations still operate in silos, which presents a big challenge in implementing CX programs successfully.

- **In fact, 1 in 4 CX professionals admit siloed data is a top challenge they face.**

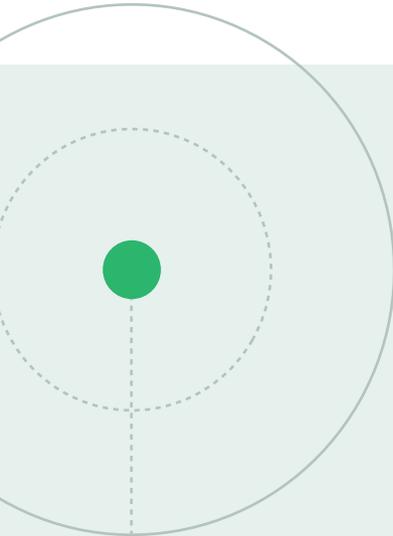
Alignment is also an issue—37% say it's

“hard to align with cross-functional teams to act on customer feedback.”

Learn the 4 key elements you need for a successful cross-functional CX program. [See Guide](#)

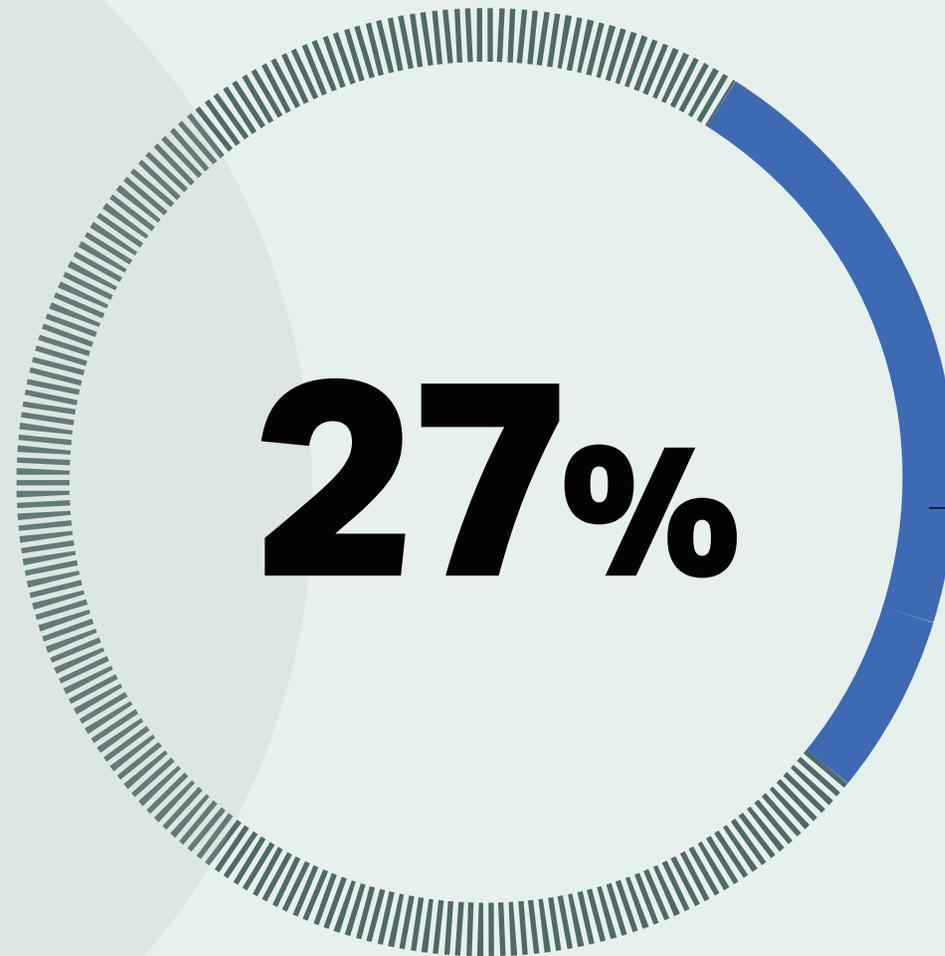
A customer-first mentality is no longer optional

There's no question that customer experience is top of mind right now. In fact, 89% of the 305 C-level executives we surveyed say that they are extremely invested in CX. While most companies are placing more emphasis on listening to customer feedback and leveraging it to make critical business decisions, organizations that have seen financial growth in COVID-19 times are even more likely to understand the importance of and operationalize customer insights.



Businesses that value customer feedback from the executive level down report financial success:

	Customer feedback has become more important	Executives consider CX data extremely or very valuable	C-suite has increased focus on CX program	Added additional customer feedback touchpoints
Financial growth	92%	86%	61%	69%
Financial decline	78%	68%	47%	48%



More mature, high ROI CX programs are also correlated with financial success during the pandemic.

In fact, **27% of companies that saw revenue growth** since COVID-19 reported **"very high" ROI** on their CX programs, while only 10% of the organization that didn't fare well said they saw high ROI. On the maturity scale, those who reported their company had no formal CX program had the lowest rate of financial growth (33%), while organizations with **established (50%) and advanced (62%) CX programs** were much more likely to **experience growth**.



TONY RODONI
EVP, CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE,
SALESFORCE

“There's nothing more important than remaining highly relevant to your customers, and that's what listening to your customers is all about. At the beginning of COVID, it was about being empathetic and understanding their situation. Then it was, 'well, how can we change our solutions to fit what's happening right now?’”



CYNTHIA HESTER
DIRECTOR, GLOBAL CUSTOMER PROGRAMS,
GOOGLE CLOUD

“You can never have enough information. It's been really important to check in with customers and make sure they're doing OK. Getting feedback and listening is even more important than ever today.”

Aspire to be holistic

Holistic CX Leader: An individual who looks at the entire customer journey, from end to end, rather than focusing on a segment of the journey, or only getting a partial view of touch-points or channels.

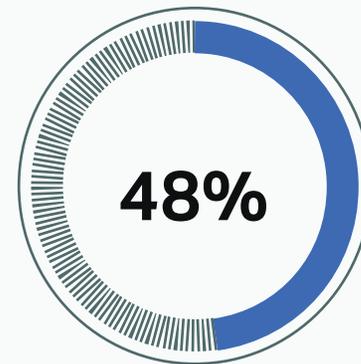
Your customers expect a seamless, consistent, and delightful experience across all the interactions they have with your business—so why would you look at just a portion of the customer journey? To deliver a truly remarkable experience, your organization needs to look at the big picture. Perhaps that’s why organizations with a holistic CX leader are more likely to say their CX program has been very valuable since COVID-19, report financial growth since the pandemic, and fare better in an economic downturn.

	C-suite is extremely invested in CX	CX program has been very valuable since COVID	Saw financial growth	Feel prepared to withstand an economic downturn
24% have a holistic CX leader or CX department	54%	56%	58%	65%
42% have a holistic CX leader who sits under a functional department	31%	39%	48%	55%
26% have CX programs managed entirely by functional departments that connect data for a holistic view	21%	37%	40%	44%
8% have CX programs managed by functional departments that don't aggregate data	13%	27%	35%	41%

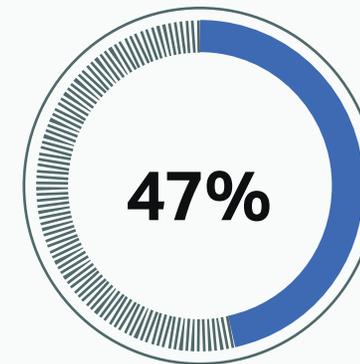
What's standing between CX programs and success?

The data shows that a CX program is critical to an organization's ability to adapt and pivot successfully in the face of adversity. So how do you go about creating an effective CX program, and what's standing in the way of success?

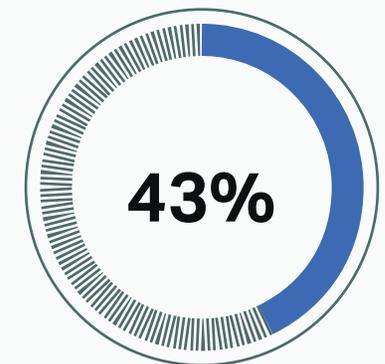
The top challenges reported overall:



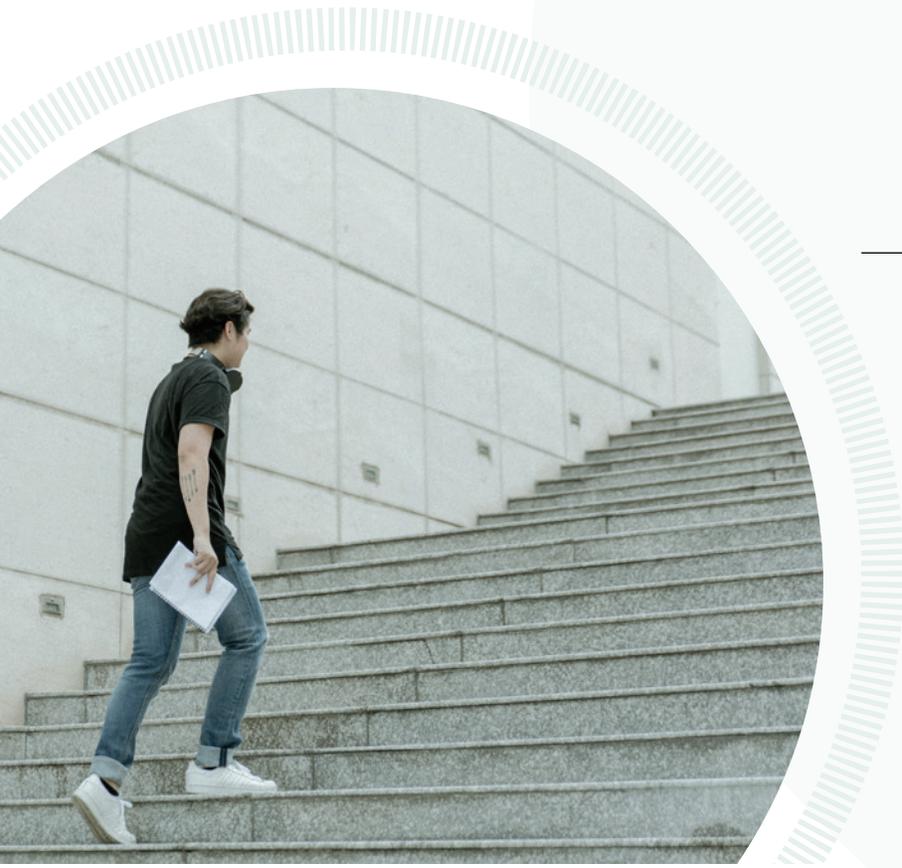
CONNECTING CX DATA WITH OPERATIONAL DATA



CONTINUOUSLY PROVING VALUE AND GETTING EXECUTIVE BUY-IN

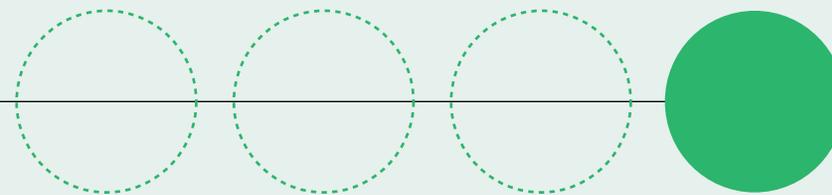


MOVING FROM DEPARTMENTAL TOUCHPOINTS TO HOLISTIC CUSTOMER JOURNEYS

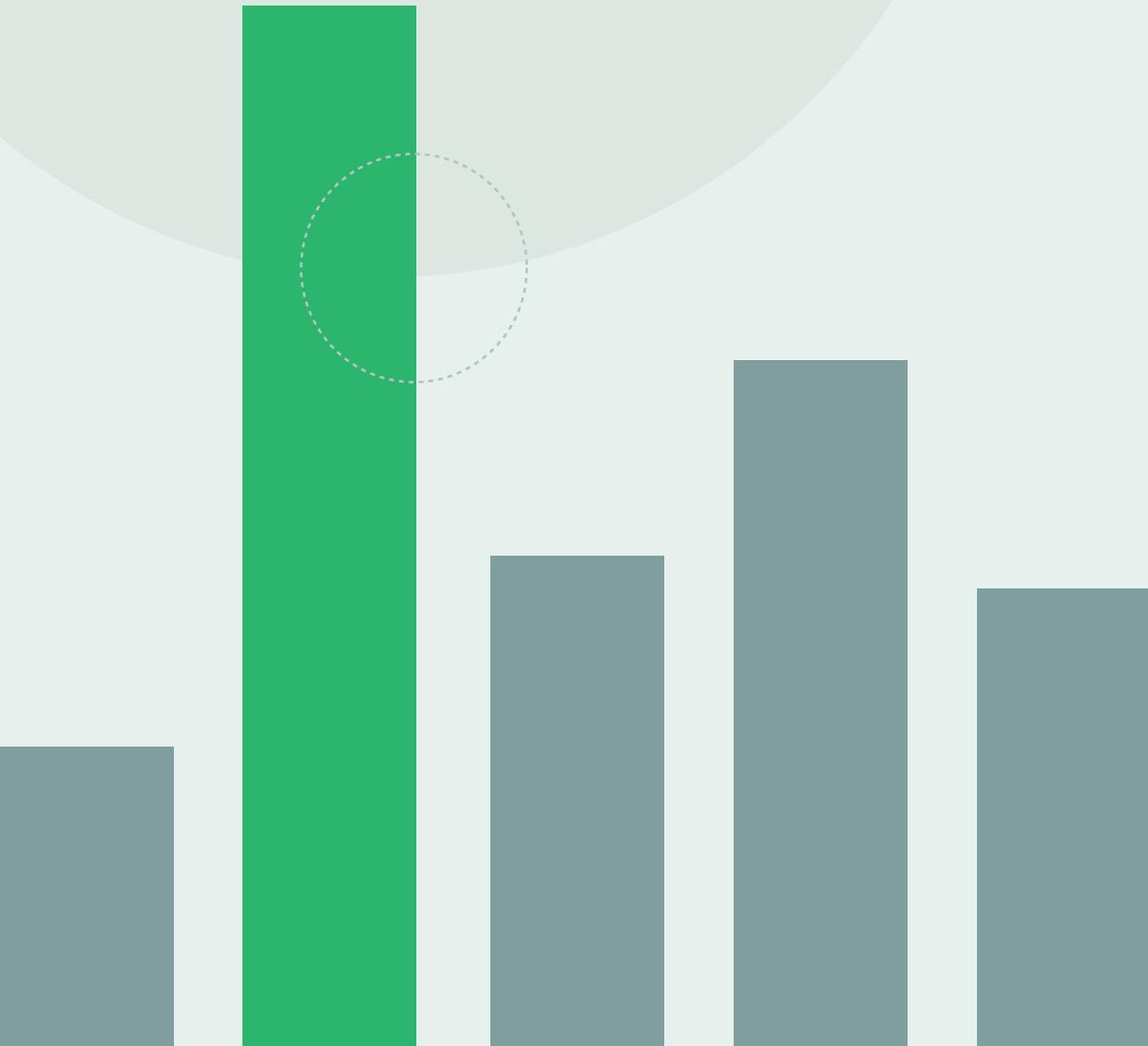


When it comes to tech, CX teams are facing a goldilocks conundrum

Having the right tech stack in place is critical before businesses can begin to see value from connecting feedback data with operational data and moving to holistic customer journeys. But our research reveals most CX teams are still struggling to find the right tools and technology they need to be successful.



3 in 4 say the CX program measurement solutions they've evaluated or implemented don't match their needs.



37%

say they have more features and functionality than necessary (which likely came at a higher cost as well)



27%

say the solutions they've looked into or used are missing some features and functionality they need



25%

say the solutions evaluated or implemented are just what they're looking for.

So what are CX teams looking for?

The top 3 criteria are:

02

Speed to Insights

They want to get customer insights fast

01

Ease of Use

CX pros want to be able to get insights themselves, without help from a data scientist

03

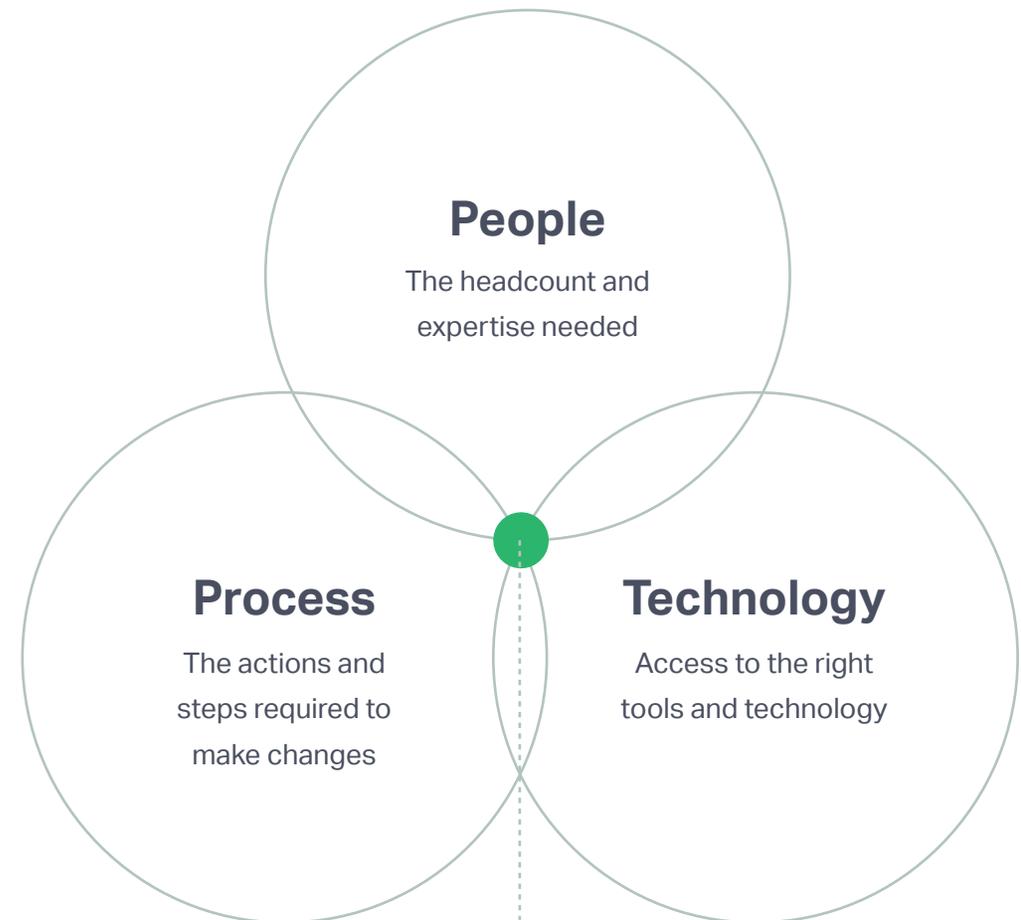
Flexibility

They want a flexible API and the ability to pull in and push data out to other systems

3 steps to leveraging CX & agility for recovery in 2021

Our research points to clear factors that are powering today's most inspiring come-back stories: agility, cross-functional collaboration, holistic customer programs, and CX prioritization are among the key attributes and actions that enable businesses to pivot successfully and move at the speed of their customers. So what's holding organizations back?

There are 3 key factors that enable a business to transform successfully in response to changing customer needs: **People, Process, and Technology.**

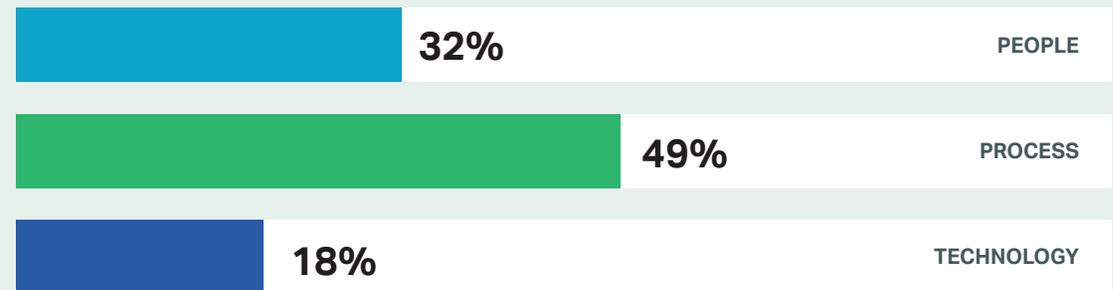


3 Steps to leveraging CX & agility for recovery in 2021

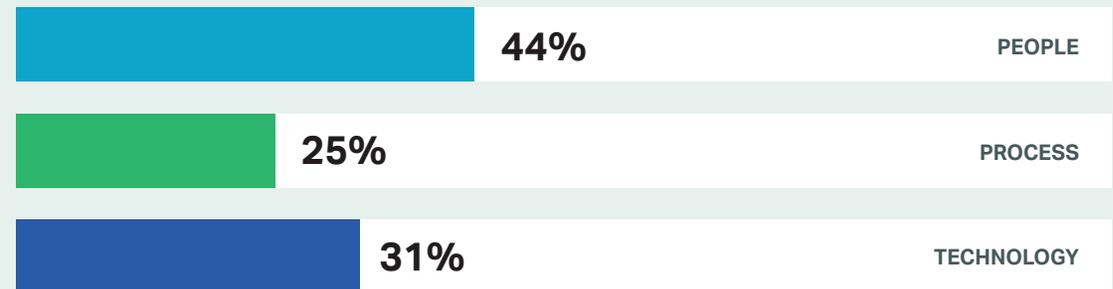
To uncover what's keeping companies from being as agile as they need to be to respond quickly to a crisis, we asked our survey respondents which of these factors is most helpful in enabling agility—and which are blockers.



"Process" is the most significant barrier slowing down the ability to adapt quickly



"People" is the most significant factor enabling companies to adapt quickly to changing customer needs



Step 1: Build a cross-functional tiger team for CX

Building a culture of customer centricity starts with hiring and assembling the right people. To ensure your company is delivering a satisfactory experience at every customer touchpoint, you'll need all of your employees to pitch in. When CX is everyone's job, everyone wins: your customers are satisfied, your company wins (and grows) business, and your shareholders profit.



Helpful tips to get started:

- Include customer empathy in your company's **core values**, then hire employees who share these values and are able to demonstrate customer-centric thinking.
- If your organization has a mature CX program, it may be time to appoint a **holistic CX leader**. Whether they report to the C-suite or work within a functional department, having a point person to manage the end-to-end customer experience is correlated with success since the start of COVID-19.
- If your organization is not yet at an advanced stage with its CX program, that's OK—building a **cross-functional CX team** is also associated with many benefits like financial success and confidence in your company's ability to withstand an economic downturn. Once you've assembled a team, make sure to meet at a regular cadence to share insights and decide on next steps.
- Prioritize **diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)** in all your business practices, from hiring, nurturing, and promoting a diverse workforce, to hiring vendors with a culture of DEI. Striving for a diverse workforce that reflects the community you do business in is key to creating products and services that are accessible to everyone. This enables you to deliver better customer experience and stronger business outcomes.

Step 2: Put processes in place to keep a pulse on your customers

Whether you love it or love to hate it, “process” is necessary to get things done. Unfortunately, it’s also the #1 challenge preventing organizations from pivoting quickly to meet new and rapidly changing customer needs.

Once you’ve got your cross-functional team assembled, you’ll want to put some processes in place to ensure you’re prepared to listen to customers in the right places and mobilize your team into action in response to what you’re hearing.

Not sure what metrics to use? If you’re just getting started, take a look at our catalogue of customer experience metrics. [Learn More](#)



Helpful tips to get started:

- **Survey your customers** regularly, and try to add listening posts anywhere your customers are interacting with your business, including on your website and mobile app.
- Put a system in place for **taking action** on customer feedback and build accountability within the organization. How will you follow up with your customers? Do complaints get escalated to the appropriate person at your company who can help resolve?
- **Break down silos** and share customer insights regularly with the broader organization. This is a crucial step in building a collaborative workplace, where everyone is accountable and working toward the same goal of meeting customer expectations.
- Proving the value of your CX program and getting executive buy-in continues to be a big challenge for many professionals. Make sure you're **measuring ROI** and looking to your metrics as your north star. Connecting your CX data with operational data is also helpful to show ROI and get a holistic view of your customer.

Step 3: Continually adapt your tech stack to stay competitive

Technology is the critical third piece that enables people to carry out or automate the processes they've established. Technological advances have made it faster and easier to do more innovative work. But it's still an ongoing challenge to evaluate and deploy the right tools and technologies you need to stay competitive and deliver on your customers' ever-increasing expectations.



Helpful tips to get started:

- During lockdown, businesses saw traffic to their websites increase as customers visited sites to shop or otherwise interact with brands. So it's important to include your digital channels, such as websites, mobile apps, and in-product, as places to **gather in-the-moment feedback**.
- Look for a CX platform that matches the **maturity of your CX program**. Point solutions are great when segments of the customer journey are being managed by different departments, but more advanced CX initiatives may require the features and functionality offered by a unified platform.
- Review your digital transformation plan for revisions. The projects that you or other teams had planned earlier in 2020 may no longer be relevant or appropriate for the new normal. **Gather feedback from your customers to drive transformation projects** that support how customers want to do business now and in the future.

How GetFeedback can help

In times of uncertainty, organizations that prioritize customer feedback and pivot quickly in response to changes in the market are better equipped to survive and make a strong recovery.

Whether you need to boost retention, drive digital transformation initiatives with VoC data, or improve the experience on your website and digital channels, the GetFeedback Platform combines ease-of-use with powerful features and functionality to help businesses gather critical insights and take action in service of their customers.

[Learn more](#)

With GetFeedback you can:

- Create a CX program that is agile, flexible, and customizable to your needs
- Get valuable insights in days, not weeks, so you can quickly adapt to changing customer behavior
- Gather transactional, relational, and in-the-moment customer feedback across a wide range of customer touchpoints
- Integrate CX data into the systems your team already uses to enable fast follow-up



JAKE TAYLOR
MARKETING ANALYST AT CORT

“With GetFeedback, we can easily execute a CX program across our entire organization to understand customer needs at each touchpoint and how to make changes that increase loyalty.”

[Learn more](#)