

Chapter 43

Managing Customer Journeys in a Nimble Way for Industry 4.0

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ABSTRACT

In the Fourth Industrial Revolution, customers expect companies to provide journeys in line with rapidly changing expectations. This allows for great potential for project portfolios that can enable tailored experiences, powered by technology and insights coming from the 360° view of the customer, to improve the experience and touchpoints before, during or after the main interaction of customers with a company. This chapter will illustrate that project managers need to master a dual dynamic to do so. On the one hand, new types of projects, changing expectations and shifting habits offer humbling challenges. On the other hand, governance, change and delivery continue to be the foundational baseline. By integrating theoretical insights and real-life cases from conservative and progressive industries, the author wants to stimulate project managers. Rather than seeing Industry 4.0 as a transformational tsunami, they should see it as an opportunity to remain curious, nimble and committed, while working in a reality where rapidly changing demand entails growth, learning and great value.

INTRODUCTION

While technological evolutions are airing at high speed, companies are continuously challenged to reinvent themselves. Digital Transformation is seen as one of the means to get there. Early 2016, the World Economic Forum in Davos called it the Fourth Industrial Revolution. They stated that these changes hold great potential, but that the related patterns of consumption, production and employment also pose major challenges requiring proactive adaptation by corporations, governments and individuals (Schwab & Samans, 2016).

Companies need to be aware that Industry 4.0 is not a temporary add-on. Likewise, it is not about technology itself, but about how to integrate it to transform businesses and shape the way of working (Caudron & Van Peteghem, 2014). One of the biggest changes that comes with it is therefore the transi-

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-7998-8548-1.ch043

tion from a product and competition-based economy to a service and customer journey focused reality (Janssens, 2018).

Given the fundamental changes coming with Industry 4.0, new customer experience and the growing impact of data power, it can be stated that all stages of project management discipline will be changed.

In this chapter, a more differentiated angle will be taken. It will be explained that traditional project management fundamentals remain valid, but the emphasis on specific dimensions needs to be adapted. Aspects that require increased attention are: an agile project approach from elaboration up until the reporting, empowering people, managing change for everyone, and continued delivery.

By integrating attention points for the project management silver lining with examples and cases from reality-based experience in both conservative and progressive industries, the author wants to illustrate that the Project Management fundamentals in the Industry 4.0. remain strongly valid, but involve a different emphasis, embedded in a more proactive and collaborative dynamic.

BACKGROUND

Every industrial revolution is driven by new technologies. In the Fourth Industrial Revolution, new technologies get combined with technologies that finally become mature and affordable, like computing power, connected devices, genetic sequencing, artificial intelligence and the like.

From a corporate perspective, facts are available in spades to illustrate the vastness of the impact of this evolution. In 2016, the CEO of technology and consultancy company Accenture stated that digital transformation is one of the main reasons half of the companies on the Fortune 500 have disappeared since 2000 (Nanterme, 2016). The growing impact of the GAFAs and the NATUs¹ only confirms this.

From a human perspective, the way people live, work and interact is transforming at high speed: more than 2 billion people were on Facebook in 2017; some predict that more people will have mobile phones by 2020 than will have electricity or running water in their homes or villages; and children born in 2017 may never drive a car (Arbib & Seba, 2017; Javelosa & Marquart, 2017; Schwab, 2016).

The transformation of physical and digital worlds entails great potential. At the same time, this leads to (pressure for) increased human productivity. Customers expect businesses to anticipate their needs and provide personalised service through any communication channel. Business-to-Business (B2B) and Business-to-Consumer (B2C) businesses alike need to shift therefore from a model focused solely on selling products, to a service model driven by deeper connections with customers (Janssens, 2017).

This deeper connection is embodied through the concept of ‘customer journeys.’ Customer journeys are the sum of experiences and touchpoints customers go through when interacting with a company, before, during and after the main interaction (Schadler, 2018; Truog, 2018; Van den Brink, 2018). By improving customer journeys, companies can remain relevant in the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

Data Is the New Currency

In the Digital Age, people are using connected devices, privately and professionally, and are sharing large data volumes every day. In 2017, it was expected to grow to 163ZB by 2025, of which a quarter in real-time (Reinsel, Gantz & Rydning, 2017).

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