Forrester's US 2021 Customer Experience Index Shows Companies That Revamped Experiences Excelled During The Pandemic

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21% of brands achieved a significantly higher score; engaging empathetically with customers is critical to success

CAMBRIDGE, Mass., June 2, 2021 /PRNewswire/ -- According to Forrester's (Nasdaq: FORR) US 2021 Customer Experience Index (CX Index™) rankings, 21% of brands saw a significant score increase compared to 2020. The pandemic forced brands across industries to change their approach to customer experience suddenly. As the coronavirus crisis worsened, brands responded to evolving customer needs with digital transformation, new shopping options, and different ways to interact with customers that emphasized safety. The increase in scores can be attributed to the goodwill the brands built with customers — their CX equity — in creating experiences that reassured customers of their safety.

The top 5% of brands that scored the highest across industries — the CX elite — includes Chewy.com, Etsy, Lincoln, Navy Federal Credit Union, and Trader Joe's. The top-performing brands in the CX Index leaned into meeting core customer needs. They outperformed all other brands in effectiveness and ease, where the elite brands had a 12-point advantage. Additionally, the highest-scoring brands understood the key emotional needs of their customers and provided emotionally pleasing experiences. They also developed a core group of loyal customers or devotees: those willing to forgive these brands' mistakes, pay a premium for the brands' products, keep their business with the brands, and spend more with the brands over time.

Industries in the pandemic's crosshairs had a mixed performance: Airlines, credit card issuers, health insurers, hotels, and retailers were especially challenged by COVID-19 because the crisis disrupted their business models or taxed their services. Against this headwind, health insurers performed best, with most providers improving their scores.

"Brands must build experiences that help them empathetically engage with their customers, especially during volatile times," said Harley Manning, VP and research director with Forrester. "We know this is important because experiences associated with positive emotions, such as resolving issues quickly and demonstrating empathy, create and sustain customer loyalty. To do this well, CX pros must have a disciplined approach to envisioning, designing, and delivering consistently high-quality experiences."

Conducted for the seventh year in a row, Forrester's CX Index results are benchmarked on a survey of more than 85,000 US customers across 219 brands and 13 industries. Forrester's CX Index methodology helps CX leaders grow revenue faster, drive higher brand preference, and charge more for their products. Forrester's CX Index helps brands identify the key drivers of a positive CX for their customers to prioritize efforts. Even a minor improvement to a brand's customer experience quality can add tens of millions of dollars of revenue by reducing customer churn and increasing share of wallet. Additionally, superior CX leads to reduced service costs and lowers the cost of customer acquisition through word of mouth.

Resources:

- Register to attend CX North America 2021 to learn about how to measure and benchmark journeys to drive emotional engagement and more.
- Learn about Forrester Decisions for customer experience leaders.
- Download Forrester's US 2021 CX Index report (client access required).
- Check out how to revitalize CX measurement and prioritization.

About Forrester's CX Index
Forrester's CX Index connects quality and loyalty measures with revenue models, giving leaders the ability to guide CX investments that produce the greatest revenue return.

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