

Recherche et Applications en Marketing
Call for papers - Special Issue 2022

Technologies, Experiences, Services and beyond !

Deadline for submission of paper proposals: 8 January, 2021

Special issue editors :

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Background

Since the seminal work of Holbrook and Hirschman (1982), building impactful **customer experience** is a major aim in marketing. The literature has demonstrated how a successful customer experience influences key marketing variables such as satisfaction, loyalty or, more recently, consumer engagement. To study customer experience, several theoretical trends coexist today in a literature that continues to develop. In 2013 already, RAM had a special issue dedicated to the shopping experience (Badot and Lemoine, 2013 Antéblian, Filser and Roederer, 2013; Antéblian, Filser and Roederer, 2013). However, despite a growing number of publications, scientific research remains fragmented and contradictory. Several researchers are calling for a better conceptualization of the customer experience, a better integration of the different theoretical approaches and a more unified vision (Jaakkola et al., 2015; Becker et al., 2020; De Keyser et al., 2020).

Despite several impactful papers (e.g., Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; Beker et al., 2020; De Keyser et al., 2020), which have helped to better define the concept of customer experience, much work agrees on the difficulty to understand this complex construct (Roederer, 2012), and, perhaps more importantly, to measure its reliably and validly. Recent research in the field also questions the impact of customer experience in the long-run (Siebert et al., 2020).

Some researchers recommend that customer journeys should be made as "consistent and as predictable" as possible by simplifying, personalizing and contextualizing the customer experience (e.g., Frow and Payne, 2007; Kuehnl, Jozic' and Homburg, 2019). Others suggest incorporating intentional inconsistency, unpredictability and uncertainty to bring more arousal, "sense of adventure", thereby aiming to stimulate higher levels of engagement and loyalty (Siebert et al., 2020; Leclerq et al., 2020). Furthermore, the consumer's role has undeniably changed in recent years, from a simple passive role to a diversification of roles (i.e. co-creators, influencers, co-producers, partners, etc.) (Leclerq et al., 2016;; Macinnis et al., 2019). The context of consumption has also changed (e.g. communities, groups, etc.).

All these factors imply additional constraints in terms of customer engagement, customer journey design and experience (Bolton, 2014; Teixeira et al., 2019; Akaka et al., 2019; Siebert et al., 2020).

Moreover, in recent years, digital and mobile **technologies** have changed our daily lives (Bleier et al., 2019; Davenport et al., 2020), both professionally and personally, and have had a significant impact on the integration of resources, relationships and interactions between stakeholders. In a world where technological innovation is very fast, artificial intelligence, robots, the Internet of Things, chatbots, or virtual/enhanced reality have potential consequences on customer experience and value creation. These are, unfortunately, still understudied.

The integration of smart technologies into marketing and business can undoubtedly offer many opportunities, as well as a set of challenges, for both companies and their customers (e.g. Davenport et al., 2020; Lancelot, Miltgen and Smith, 2019). This call therefore strongly encourages work that looks at the roles of digital and mobile technologies in improving or damaging the customer experience(s).

As an example, the health **crisis** we are experiencing currently has certainly had an impact on customer experience, whether in-store or online. The pandemic has certainly accelerated the dissemination of such technologies in a large number of sectors. This has accelerated the rise of smart technologies such as robots (Wirtz et al., 2018). Experts predict by 2025, 85% of business relationships with consumers will be managed without human agents (Forrester, 2016)

Expected contributions

The 2022 special issue of *Recherche et Applications en Marketing* is open to research that looks at the role and impact of technologies on customer experience, whether from the point of view of companies, customers or society as a whole, in a current and/or forward-looking perspective. Research that investigates how and under which conditions the use of technology can improve not only the customer experience but also the quality of service is obviously welcome, as is research that investigates how and under which conditions technology could, on the contrary, deteriorate customer experience. Research studying the potentially negative impacts of these technologies on the well-being of consumers and citizens is encouraged. Work involving the combined understanding of both the positive and the negative impacts or focusing on the challenges that these technologies pose for various stakeholders will be particularly valued. We are of course thinking of some inherent challenges of technologies such as security, privacy and sustainability, but other challenges can no doubt usefully complement this list. We are also interested in research on customer experience in a post-pandemic context.

Studies investigating the benefits and risks that these technologies bring to marketers, consumers, and society as a whole are welcome. In this special issue, research that looks at experience beyond the individual level (i.e. groups, communities, segments) and in different sectors (e.g. health, retail, tourism etc.) or contexts (e.g. emerging countries) is also welcomed.

This list is of course not exhaustive, but the proposed articles may address the following topics:

- *Consequences of replacing humans with chatbots and, with robots*
- *Difficulties and challenges associated with the conception, design and implementation of customer journeys and experiences*
- *Collaborative experiences*
- *Backfire effects of a customer experience approach*
- *The “low-touch” economy, consequences for consumers, companies and society*
- *Artificial Intelligence and emotions*
- *Social Media impact, emerging practices (e.g. tiktok, stories, live streaming etc.) and consumer experiences*
- *Smart technologies, service, value creation/or destruction*
- *Smart technologies and well-being*
- *Virtual reality, augmented reality, avatars and value creation and/or destruction.*
- *Smart technologies, risks and benefits for employees (front-line), organizations and society*
- *Roles of shopping assistants and comparators in customer experience*
- *Privacy, personal data, technology and customer experience.*

Submission Procedure

The papers submitted may use quantitative, qualitative or conceptual approaches. Submissions must also follow the instructions to the authors of *Recherche et Applications en Marketing* and will be made directly on the mc.manuscriptcentral.com/ram platform.

The platform will be open from **15 July 2020** and the deadline for submission is **8 January 2021**. Manuscripts will have the opportunity to be submitted **in either French or English**. The special issue “Technologies, Experiences, Services and Beyond!” of *Recherche et Applications en Marketing* will be published online in the first half of 2022. Accepted projects will be published in French and English.

Any questions about this special issue should be addressed to the three guest editors:

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