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# A framework for measuring & improving CX



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## CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE MANAGEMENT MATURITY MODEL & QUESTIONNAIRE

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# Foreword

Many companies around the world and across all industries have recognised that it is becoming business-critical to have a loyal customer base. The long-term growth outlook in mature markets is more or less flat and consumerism is getting the upper hand globally. So, keeping your customers happy is more important than ever before.

This goes well beyond the traditional marketing mix. Nowadays, managing the customer experience is the key to sustainable profitable growth. An increasing number of CEOs have understood that their organisation needs to be more customer-centric to succeed. However, few companies have fully understood how to go about that and what it takes to successfully manage the customer experience.

With that in mind, myself, Strathclyde University Business School's Alan Wilson, Ovum's Jeremy Cox and Gallup's Pa Sinyan put our heads together to develop a framework that leadership teams can use.

The Customer Experience Management (CEM) maturity model enables organisations to assess their actual performance along five dimensions and identify the maturity of their customer experience management programme.

It also reveals the concrete things that can and should be done to improve the customer experience. It has proven to be a useful tool for CEM executives and practitioners to guide them and their leadership through the change process. The maturity model works regardless what business you are in and it is equally insightful for companies that are just embarking on their CEM journey or are already well underway.

I hope you find the following report to be of great value and that the model will successfully steer your organisation on its customer experience management journey.

*Kim MacGillavry, vice president of customer experience and a member of the management board at DHL Freight.*

# An introduction to the CEM maturity model

By:



**Neil Davey**

*Managing editor, MyCustomer*

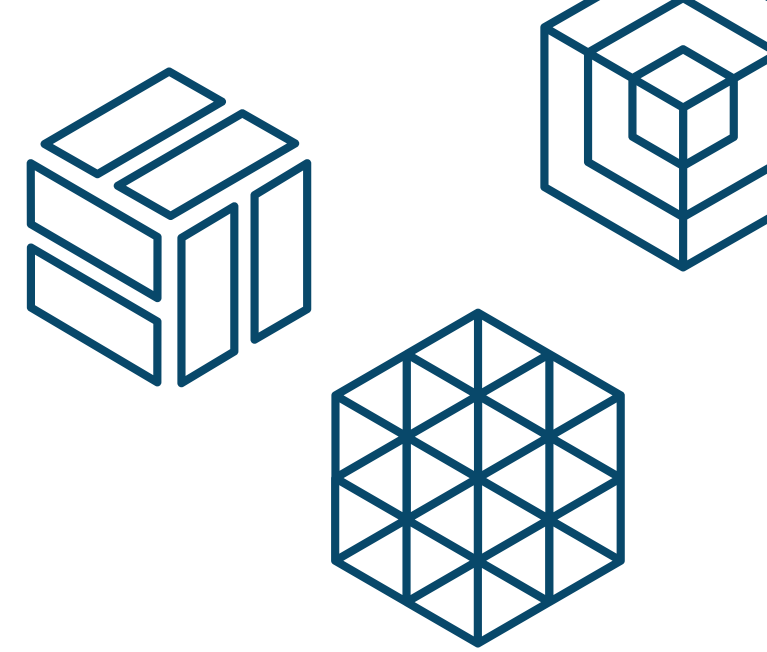
Much has been written about the emergence of customer experience as a key competitive battleground for businesses - a Gartner survey of marketing leaders, for instance, found that nearly 90% predicted that customer experience would be a major basis for competitive differentiation in 2017.

For some industries, customer experience could be the single biggest differentiator in their sector, particularly in those markets where the products or services have become commoditised. The road freight business is just such a sector – and it is for this reason that DHL Freight developed a customer experience programme, the byproduct of which has been the CEM Maturity Model. Let's take a look at the history of DHL Freight's customer experience programme and the origins of the model.

## **Background**

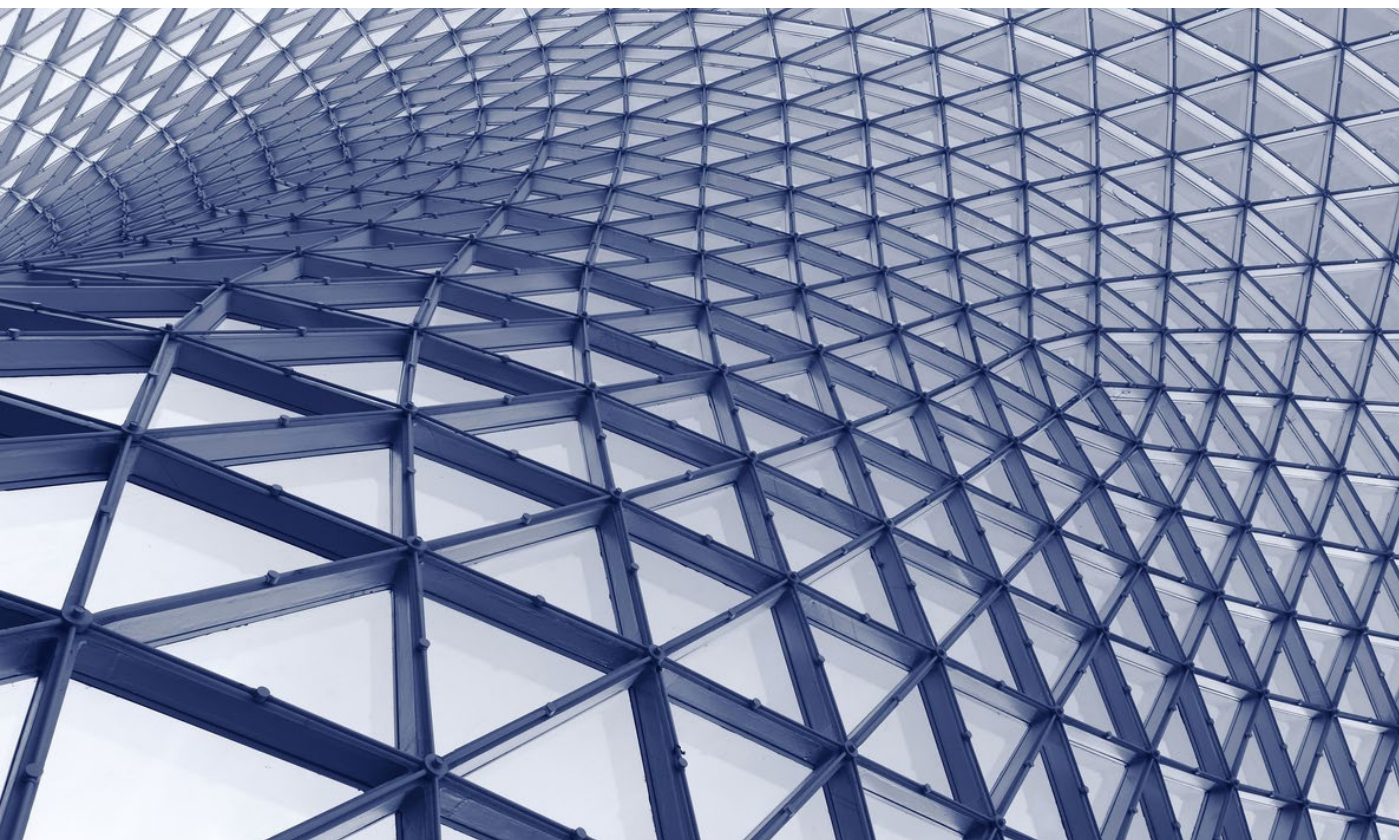
One of the leading providers of international road transportation solutions in Europe and beyond, DHL Freight was all too aware of the fact that the industry had become highly commoditised and price-driven, but when it conducted a survey of 700 road freight customers in 2013, the findings presented a stark picture of the market.

70% of respondents that used multiple providers reported that they were indifferent about them, perceiving that they offered more or less the same services for similar value. With little emotional engagement between customer and provider – as the relationship primarily revolves around service quality and price – there is little sense of loyalty,



and customers frequently switch providers. Because of this, businesses tend to compete primarily on price, leading to yield erosion for the providers.

It was a bleak picture. But there was a chink of light. As part of the customer survey, customers were asked to rate the importance of various attributes. While quality and price were rated highly, as expected, customers also rated ease of contact, quick action and having a knowledgeable staff as equal to or more important than those two factors. This indicated that for customers, quality was not only about operation excellence but also service excellence.



“The demands and expectations of customers in all industries and across the world are rising,” says Kim MacGillavry, vice president, customer experience, DHL Freight. “This trend is fuelled by technology-driven consumerism, subdued economic growth and large spread commoditisation of products and services. To make customers happy nowadays you need to do more than just sell good quality products and services at a fair price. In the logistics business this means that being easy to do business with, acting quickly and providing more personalised care have become equally important attributes of success.”

The survey demonstrated that there was a more complex relationship between company and customer than expected, and DHL Freight understood that improving the overall customer experience could therefore provide competitive differentiation which, if managed well, would reduce customer churn and increase positive word-of-mouth to drive new business.

## External experts

By 2015, DHL Freight had committed significant time and resources to its CX project, and had detailed the roadmap ahead, which included: defining a clear, compelling vision; outlining a value proposition; determining the priorities of customers; defining customer journeys; engaging the organisation around the project; and creating a performance management system.

“We came to the point where we said we’ve done our homework,” says MacGillavry. “We’ve worked out together what the customer-centric processes are and how they need to work.

“Once we concluded that and we figured out the blueprint for the organisation, we then had to bring that into the organisation. The hard part.

“It’s exactly at that juncture that we said, ‘OK we figured everything out, we go from theory now to practice. We go from design into implementation. Before we do, let’s do a stock take on how ready we really are.’”

Keen to gain an accurate assessment of its present customer-centricity and understand where it should be prioritising its efforts in order to fulfill its vision, DHL Freight enlisted the help of several external experts. These were: Alan Wilson, professor of marketing at Strathclyde University; Jeremy Cox, principal analyst, customer engagement, at Ovum; and Pa Sinyan, MD of Gallup Germany.

MacGillavry notes: “Alan is an academic with practical experience in marketing. Jeremy brought expertise from the IT side and the digital technical side to complement the model. Then Pa brought the people component into it because Gallup is the leading consultant and research company on employee happiness and wellbeing.

We complemented each other very well to highlight the different dimensions of the customer experience management programme.”

Together, they developed a survey that would enable DHL Freight to assess the maturity of the organisation across a range of CEM dimensions, and which then could be used by the leadership to obtain a holistic picture of its current capabilities compared to where it wanted to be.

*“Customer experience management is a field where everybody is learning as they go.”*

### **The survey**

The survey consisted of five questions that collated respondents’ opinions on the business relevance of CEM across five areas. These were:

- Vision, values and brand. Is there a clear vision for the company that differentiates the organisation and provides a desirable value proposition for the customer?
- Customer-centricity. Does the company know what the customer needs and does it deliver it in a timely way to ensure that it can achieve profitable growth?
- Visionary leadership. Does the company’s leadership manage the organisation in such a way that it is clear that the customer is the priority?
- Employee engagement. Are employees happy at work and motivated to make customers happy?
- Tools and processes. Are the systems and tools in place to provide customer information and feedback across the entire customer journey?

A further battery of 31 questions then drilled down into each of these five areas to get an assessment of how well the business is performing within these fields today.

“At the end of it we felt we had a very short questionnaire – because it is short in comparison to other maturity models – but one in which the questions are so well tested and synced that there is no need for further questions,” says MacGillavry. “Those questions alone provide you with a very good steer on the areas where you’re good or not good enough in order to do this.”

### **A model for all**

Having successfully used the approach themselves, Kim and the team were then keen that the model they developed should be freely available to other businesses, and in contrast to other maturity models, require no commercial commitment before it could be accessed.



“We created a model which we believe is good and testing well, and other companies should be able to use it too, and then they could save themselves thousands of dollars from having other companies do it for them,” says MacGillavry. “Customer experience management is a field where everybody is learning as they go – there are no general accepted customer experience practices around. We should be more open to exchange ideas so we build this discipline up into something more professional.”

Furthermore, MacGillavry believes that as well as being free to all, their model is also an improvement over the others.

“The other models are overly-complicated, which frustrated me,” he notes. “You overcomplicate the questionnaire and it just creates a huge amount of respondent fatigue, let alone just wasting the time of respondents. With all the experience we had - everybody was working on customer experience in their own way - we noticed that there aren’t too many questions you need to ask. But other surveys often add in supplemental questions for commercial purposes.”

### **Applying the model**

The application of the model is very simple, he insists. Organisations must encourage all board members and leadership teams to answer the

questions, then discuss with them where there are gaps between their belief scores that indicate where they want to be and their assessment scores, which indicate where the company actually is today.

Organisations should let as many employees as possible take the test, so that the management’s perception can be mirrored against the employees’.

“Drill down on the gaps and agree on concrete measures to close them,” says MacGillavry. “Get the message across that if there are major gaps between their belief and self-assessment or between managers and employees the chances of being successful at implementing a CEM programme are unlikely.”

He adds: “I think the questions are so straightforward that when you see low scores where you expect to see high scores or where there’s a big gap between where you want to be and where you need to be on a particular question, that’ll start a discussion.”

MacGillavry gives the example of the DHL Freight’s own findings from its Netherlands operation, which was its first pilot country, where the results demonstrated a shortfall in the belief of a need to have a vision and a clear brand compared to other companies in other countries.

He explains: “For me, it was clear I needed to do more there to explain

the value propositions and why they're important and what it means for all of us to deliver them. Therefore, we created a management deck and gave speaker notes to the country manager and told him to take his team through it during one of his management team meetings and to get everybody on board that way. We also organised classroom trainings on CEM and the company's brand values for the senior management team. Country managers were coached beforehand so they were in a position to lead the sessions."

He adds: "We wanted to make the questionnaire not only short but also very actionable. And while it may be true that some companies may need help or ideas about how to close a gap once they have identified one, these things aren't rocket science. Most will be able to come up with some concrete things themselves while they can reach out to other companies or even to consultants to find out what other concrete measures they can take."

### **Common findings and learnings**

Several other companies have subsequently adopted and used the maturity model, across a variety of different industries, including a well-known global IT and consulting company, and a worldwide name in insurance.

*“If you are going to prioritise things, systems and tools are the last and not the first step.”*

As adoption of the model increases, interesting insights are emerging that are common across CEM programmes.

One interesting finding that has emerged, for instance, is how often people believe that the reason the organisation is not customer-centric is because they don't have the right systems and tools in place.

“It is true that most companies don't have the processes and tools to manage the customer experience properly,” says MacGillavry. “Usually the gap between where a company wants to be and where it is today is biggest in this area. I think this is why so many companies believe that investing in CEM systems are a priority – that by closing that gap somehow the customer experience will get better.”

However, he adds: “The right conclusion is that you need to work on all five dimensions at the same time. And if you are going to prioritise things, systems and tools are the last and not the first step. It is not because you have better systems and tools that your employees are going to be more engaged, that your managers will be better leaders, that the organisation will be more customer-centric and that that then leads to a stronger brand. It works the other way around.”

Indeed, MacGillavry recommends that brands should start by being clear about the brand values that matter, which enables you to build

a customer-centric culture around those values, and which in turn gives company leadership the inspiration to lead the organisation in a customer-centric way. This then engages employees so they are able to use the tools and are willing to follow the processes that lead to a better customer experience.

With so many interconnected objectives, it is little wonder that organisations can find it difficult to get a grasp on the condition of their customer experience, and indeed what dials need to be turned to exact change. And it's for this reason that the CEM maturity model can prove so valuable.

MacGillavry concludes: “The CEM maturity model offers leadership teams a good insight into the gap between where the company is and where they want it to be. It also dissects each dimension into the concrete things that it can - and should - do to improve and close the gaps. This is therefore a useful tool for CEM executives and practitioners to guide them and their leadership through the change process.”

Let's now examine all five dimensions of the CEM maturity model, before sharing the questionnaire to help organisations assess their customer experience maturity and identify any gaps between CEM performance and aspiration.



# The first dimension of the CEM maturity model: Having a customer-centric vision

By:



**Kim MacGillavry**

*Vice president, customer experience,  
of DHL Freight.*



**Alan Wilson**

*Professor of marketing at  
Strathclyde University.*

Companies tend to confuse vision with strategy. Strategies tend to be designed to achieve certain business outputs and initiatives are defined to give immediate direction to the different line functions or departments. Inevitably that makes them inward directed and short-sighted. An overarching customer-centric vision is a constant that shapes your strategy that tends to be adjusted over time. A compelling vision gives people a sense of purpose that is based on shared brand and cultural values. It tells everyone where the company is heading and helps people to put their daily job into a wider context that goes beyond simply completing their tasks.

If everyone has the same understanding of the vision and values of the company then they will be able to collaborate

more effectively as they are working to achieve the same goals. Also, they are more likely to interact with customers in a similar way which makes the overall experience they have working with a company more consistent regardless who they deal with, when and where. So, vision is an essential starting point for any CEM programme. Without having a clear vision for the company there is no point taking the development of a CEM programme any further. It will be sure to surface at a later stage and both confuse the people and delay the process.

Listed overleaf are a few questions leadership teams need to ask themselves and for which they need to have a consensus view.

Depending on how far your CEM programme has evolved some questions can be answered with more certainty than others. Over time it is important that you can answer every question favourably.

### **Vision assessment**

- At our company we share a clear vision of what the company aspires to be in the future.
- I believe our vision is realistic and achievable.
- The company's cultural values guide my daily decision-making.
- Everyone at the company has a clear understanding of the overall benefits we offer our customer (i.e. the company's value proposition).
- I believe the benefits we offer our customers (i.e. our value proposition) are relevant to our customers and distinguish us from our competitors.
- I notice that the people I work with are led by our brand promise (i.e. the company's vision and value proposition) when doing their work.

Defining a company vision seems straightforward. However, it is often

the most time-consuming part of the entire CEM process. There are no shortcuts to defining a meaningful vision that an organisation can embrace and that gives direction to the decisions the leadership team make. The leadership teams needs to define their vision themselves. The process is complicated, tedious and time-consuming.

How to put to paper what defines the essence of a company? If done well the output is short, succinct and compelling. Many companies let only very few senior people participate in the exercise which is typically lead by external consultants. Developing a vision in this way rarely produces the right results, for two reasons. Firstly it is important to create a consensus among the entire leadership team. Whether this is the board of directors, board of management or an extended senior leadership team.

*“Defining a company vision seems straightforward. However, it is often the most time-consuming part of the entire CEM process.”*

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All those who together have the line responsibility for everyone in the company need to fully buy in to and embrace the vision for it to be cascaded through the organisation successfully. If only a few people have made the journey to develop a vision then others inevitably feel that it is not theirs and has been imposed on them.

Secondly, it is essential that the leadership itself comes up with the vision for the company and does not rely on external people to define it. Consultants can assist the leadership team by facilitating the process and accompanying them along the way. However, when thoughts and ideas around the company and its future come from people external to the company then they tend to extinguish as soon as the consultants' assignment ends. A good way to kick-start the process and prepare the leadership team is to expose them to thought leaders and how they go about it for themselves. The Disney Institute and the Ritz-Carlton Leadership Center are excellent providers of such services.

A good vision needs to provide simple answers to three questions: who you are, what you do and how you do it.

The who-question is answered by defining a common purpose statement. Everyone needs to share the same overarching purpose of the company to give meaning to their daily work, so they can



see beyond their day-to-day tasks and understand the importance of their role in the greater scheme of things. A common purpose can be a sentence or set of key words. Whichever way you formulate it the statement needs to reflect the essence of what the company is all about in a simple and short way. The common purpose is often also referred to as the DNA of the company.

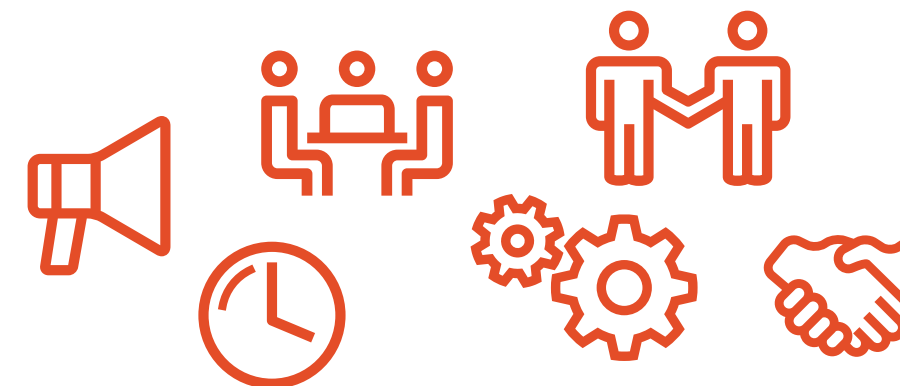
The what-question is answered by defining the value proposition the company offers its customers. It implies that you have a clear understanding of who your customers are.

Talking to customers is the only way to get to an answer. Most people tend to feel they have a very good understanding of what customers want. However, each person also tends to have a different understanding. Here an extensive process of doing qualitative research (focus group interviews, in-depth interviews,...) and quantitative research (online surveys, CATI,...) is indispensable. Complementing this research with customer meetings where they can speak directly and freely with members of the leadership team to say what they expect from you and what they like and dislike about your company is recommended. What you need to end up with is a set of attributes that describe what value the company provides its customers that are relevant for customers and distinguish the company from its competitors.

To make it more concrete and easier to communicate it helps to list up some proof points that explain in very practical terms what each value proposition statement means. The value proposition has to stand the test of time and like the common purpose should not be changed in the short-term. In this context it needs to reflect what the organisation is capable of delivering today to an extent, but should still be aspirational enough that it can continuously improve itself and so improve the delivery of its value proposition.

The how-question is answered by defining the culture of the company. If every company that targets the same customers in the same market segment did its homework properly then the value proposition of each company would be rather similar. What sets one company apart from another is its organisational culture.

What are the cultural values that drive the behaviour of the people? This is what determines how you interact with each other in the company, but also how customers perceive you when your employees interact with them. Having a strong culture is essential for the people to feel they belong and motivate themselves to come to the office every day. It also sends a message to existing and prospective customers how they can expect to be treated if they do business with you. Some companies use a carefully crafted sentence to describe their culture whereas others prefer to use a set of key words or sentences to capture it.





## The second dimension of the CEM maturity model: Customer-centric culture

By:



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*Vice president, customer experience,  
of DHL Freight.*



**Alan Wilson**

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Strathclyde University.*

Once a company has defined a customer-centric vision that is clear and compelling to everyone that works for it as well as relevant to customers, the next step is to ensure everyone rallies behind it. Building a customer-centric company culture is a critical step in the design of a CEM programme.

To make people happy to do business with you it is vital that everyone in the company uses every opportunity to listen to customers and takes their opinion into account. The skill and will of employees to have the customer in mind when they do their job is a prerequisite to delivering a great customer experience.

Customer-centricity is the personal state of mind where

the individual employee is influenced and directed by the interests of the customers. Typically the people working on the frontline have the best understanding of what customers want. Their happiness and that of customers are intrinsically aligned. If a customer is not happy the person dealing with that customer is probably also not going to be happy and vice versa.

To perform well as a company it is not enough for the frontline employees to be customer-centric. First of all there is a dependency on others to do a good job. Frontline staff are dependent on employees behind the frontline and they in turn are dependent on others in different departments to do their job. If customer requests are treated as internal matters as soon as they pass the front



line they are unlikely to get the attention needed to meet customer expectations.

Secondly, when doing business, customers interact in various different ways and through various different channels with a company and so are influenced by various different people. It is the sum of all these interactions and the impressions they leave that determines the overall opinion customers have of the company.

So, the prerequisite to be a customer-centric organisation is to have a high degree of collaboration between the employees, both in sharing customer requirements and feedback as well as in working together to address issues and make continuous improvements to all the customer interactions along the customer journeys.

The following list shows the key questions employees need to ask themselves and which indicate the degree to which they think and behave in a customer-centric manner. It starts with a general assessment of the customer orientation of the organisation. That is then put to the test by questioning the ability to capture and share customer insights. The acid test is the ability of the organisation to actually work together to address these insights.

### **Customer-centricity assessment**

- At this company, everything we do demonstrates that we always have the best interest of the customer in mind.
- My colleagues at the company always look for ways to make things better for our customers.
- At this company, we are good at listening to customers and understanding their needs.
- At this company, we are good at sharing customer opinions and feedback with others in the organisation.
- My colleagues across the company effectively collaborate together to fix customer issues.
- If I notice that a customer is not happy with the company I feel upset.

Usually people assess themselves more favourably than they do others. This is perhaps human nature, but it is also the result of the way many companies are organised. Most organisations are structured into a matrix that is divided by functional silos and country or business unit interests. Although there are good reasons to divide responsibilities

*“If customer requests are treated as internal matters as soon as they pass the front line they are unlikely to get the attention needed to meet customer expectations.”*

across different departments it makes it more difficult to manage the entire customer journey that cuts across the organisation and its departments.

With the responsibility for the customer dispersed across the company it is easy for an employee to take praise personally and to put the blame for issues customers are facing down to others. It is therefore usual that people that work in larger companies tend to respond more strongly to customers that are happy than to customer that are not happy. This is why feeling upset when customers are not happy is considered a tougher test for the customer orientation of employees.

A good exercise when developing your CEM programme is to bring employees from different departments of the organisation together to try and piece together a customer journey. This is not the same as journey mapping, which tends to focus on processes rather than people, which this exercise is aimed at. As each participant is in charge of one part of the journey it is not unusual that the steps before and after their part are not well known or understood.

A typical outcome of such an exercise is that people start to reflect on the customer’s perspective of what they do and realise the importance of working together. Mirroring the internal processes against the customer journey also helps bring to light the complexity that employees face in meeting customer expectations.

This can provide good suggestions about what the company can do to make it easier for people to do their job and consequently make it easier for customers to do business with your company. Inviting employees around the entire company to share stories about how they worked together to make customers happy is a good way to spread the message around the entire company and reward the right behaviour.



# The third dimension of the CEM maturity model: Visionary leadership

By:



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The leadership team plays a crucial role in making a company customer-centric. They need to manage the business in a way that demonstrates that it always puts customers first. If the leadership of a company doesn't live up to its customer-centric vision by walking the talk then it is very unlikely that the whole company will become customer-focused.

So, leadership teams need to visibly believe in it (mindset) and also act accordingly for others to see (behaviour). Referring back to the section on vision, this is an important reason why a leadership consensus around a common vision and purpose is so important.

Managers usually speak about customers and their importance for the company. A lot of money is spent on conducting surveys and other sorts of market research to find out how customers rate a company. The results then feature in presentations to employees that are instructed to use them to make improvements in areas that turn out the weakest numbers. Indeed, dealing with the customer is too often delegated to employees as a task and few managers take the lead to resolve customer issues, let alone connect with them at all.

Some managers will maintain relationships with selected customers worthy of their time and attention. Usually they get involved to negotiate new contracts or celebrate signing them. Few are really on the pulse of a representative sample

*“Normally managers assess themselves more favourably than the people that report to them.”*

of their customer base on an ongoing basis. Typical excuses for such behaviour are the lack of time and having other, more important priorities.

If managers truly want to lead their organisations they need to talk to lots of customers and get personally involved in sorting out their issues until they are actually solved. This not only makes the leadership more customer-centric, but also sends the right signals to others in the organisation on what is important and how to behave.

Answering the questions below will give a good impression of the degree of customer engagement the leadership team of the company is demonstrating. The answers are most revealing if the questions are put to both managers as well as employees. Normally managers assess themselves more favourably than the people that report to them.

Indeed, in most companies the further up the organisational

ladder you climb the less frequent the interaction with customers tends to be, as managers tend not to deal with the day-to-day affairs of their customers like their staff.

### **Leadership (self-)assessment**

- The organisation’s leadership focuses on understanding the needs of our customers.
- My manager frequently reviews and discusses customer opinions and feedback with me.
- The customer experience is on every management meeting agenda.
- When a customer issue occurs, the organisation’s management ensures that it is dealt with immediately.
- My management actively takes part in solving customer issues and making improvements.
- The organisation’s leadership frequently talks to or visits customers to get their feedback on how the organisation is performing.

To ensure that the leadership team manages the business in a customer-centric way, it helps to define the leadership traits you expect from your managers. Managers typically have a job description and get annual

## A framework for measuring & improving CX

business targets they need to achieve. They tend to be functionally defined and specific to the department. It is rare to include cultural leadership traits when selecting someone for a position in a company, let alone when assessing their performance on the job.

If a company is serious about CEM they need to be brave enough not to hire or reward those who don't live up to the customer-centric leadership traits that the company has predetermined. To make sure that they are both understood and adopted before enforcing compliance through HR processes it is recommended to provide classroom training and coaching to every person in the company that leads or supervises a team.

A good method to connect the leadership team with customers on the job is the top-down Net Promoter Approach.

First you need to classify customers into groups of Detractors, Passives and Promoters. This can be done in various ways, either by calling them or using surveys. The point is not to have scores and to report them, but rather to distinguish with which customer you need to have a conversation. Most companies tend to focus on their Detractors as these are the ones that can point out the things you need to improve.

The best companies also reach out to Promoters as they can tell you

what you do really well and which many companies are actually not aware of. Getting feedback directly from customers makes it personal and hard to ignore for any manager. As the number of calls will be limited they will not necessarily lead to an improvement of the overall performance of the company.

However, this dialogue with customers will naturally lead to a more customer-centric mindset and behaviour of the leadership team that will influence the way they make decisions and how they lead their people. Over time that does move the needle.





# The fourth dimension of the CEM maturity model: Employee engagement

By:



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An important insight that has been developed by neuroscientists is that the interaction between employees and customers is a mutually beneficial experience. Customers can experience extreme happiness when employees deliver a great service and this in turn can make employees experience similar levels of happiness.

So, to deliver a great customer experience it is critical that employees are happy at work and motivated to make customers happy. It is unlikely for employees to engage with customers in a positive way if they do not feel engaged at work and enjoy doing their job. In other words, there is a strong correlation between employee engagement and customer engagement. Being engaged at work is not easy nowadays as the workplace is a challenging environment

where many find it difficult to meet the expectations of increasingly demanding customers and managers.

Although research has shown that the drivers of employee engagement and those of customer-centricity are very different, both these aspects of people's mindset are highly correlated, and the most engaged employees tend to have a more customer-centric mindset and demonstrate a more customer-centric behaviour. Those that care least about customers tend also to be those employees that are less engaged at work.

Given the fact that the vast majority of employees around the world do not feel engaged at work, it is clear that if a CEM programme does not address the happiness and well-

being of the employees it will not be successful. The way to make the organisation more customer-centric is not to simply tell employees what customers are saying about the company and to instruct them to fix their pain points. In order for employees to act on Voice of the Customer data the company has to satisfy the fundamental needs of the people that work for it.

The questions below test the key aspects of employee engagement which are known to be directly connected to customer-centricity.

### **Employee engagement assessment**

- I am proud to work for this company.
- I would recommend this company as an employer to my family and friends.
- The vision and purpose of the company makes me feel my job is important.
- In my day to day work it is easy to meet customer expectations.
- I have the freedom I need to fix customer issues and make them happy.
- My direct manager gives me praise and recognition when I do something good for a customer.



Despite formal employee opinion surveys and performance appraisals the frequency and nature of interaction between managers and their teams is generally insufficient to make employees feel truly valued.

In order for employees to engage with the company they work for, their needs as people have to be fulfilled. These range from the basic working conditions, getting the support from managers to do their job, collaborating with others as a team through to being able to develop personally and grow professionally.

Although surveys go some way to capture what employees experience along these dimensions they are too infrequent and impersonal to make sustainable improvements. Just like the Net Promoter approach is a platform to improve the quality and quantity of dialogue companies have with their customers, the same approach can also be used to step up the dialogue between managers and their employees.

Simply ask everyone in the organisation a few basic questions that are a good indicator of employee engagement, such as the likelihood to recommend the company to friends and family or the ease of meeting customer expectations. Then let each team leader deep dive into the causes for happiness and unhappiness in an open and constructive way.

In a truly customer-centric organisation such a process would not be needed as it is in the culture of the company to build relationships between people and there is a great sense of togetherness. However, an employee Net Promoter approach is good way to kick-start cultural change.

Other methods such as enabling employees to address topics through idea management or providing direct access to board members take less effort and can also be an effective way to get going.







# The fifth dimension of the CEM maturity model: Customer-centric processes and tools

By:



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In order to manage the customer experience properly, a company needs systems and tools that provide customer information and feedback throughout the entire customer journey. Digital business transformation has completely changed the way customers interact with companies.

This is a threat to companies that do not take part in the digital transformation. At the same time there are huge rewards for companies that do. Modern, digital tools and processes are critical enablers to serve customers in a way that they expect and want.

Customer interaction tools and processes can lead to a higher emotional bond between a company and its customers if implemented correctly. This in turn increases

the loyalty behaviour of customers which is key to achieving sustainable, profitable growth.

The following questions provide insight into the quality of your processes and capability of your systems to manage the customer experience. The two critical success factors to delivering a great customer experience are the ability to continuously capture and analyse customer behaviour and opinions along the entire customer journey as well as the ability of the organisation to act upon that information and proactively making continuous improvements.

## **Customer-centric tools and processes assessment**

- At this company we continuously capture customer opinions and feedback over multiple channels.

- At this company we track customer satisfaction at every interaction along the customer journey.
- At this company we undertake detailed analysis of customer feedback in order to find ways to improve the service we provide.
- I have the tools necessary to meet customer expectations and respond effectively to their requests.
- At this company, customer feedback metrics are used to measure my team's performance.
- Customer satisfaction plays an important part in how we are incentivised.

The trap that many companies walk into is to jump on technology as the means to become customer-centric. There is no digital shortcut to transforming a business. For any CEM programme to succeed it is important to realise that people create great customer experiences and not IT systems. Indeed, technology can be used to capture the voice of customer better than before and can provide all sorts of insights and predictions. However, it is easy to get ahead of the organisation.

Often solutions go beyond the capabilities of the people using them. It is critical that the tools and systems support the people that use them

*“There is no digital shortcut to transforming a business.”*

and enable the processes they are capable of following and not let the tail wag the dog.

Most people have received computer-generated messages that are nicely personalised, but when interacting with the people on the frontline the experience can be quite a different one. To get the experience right a company needs to ensure that the customer experience is consistent across any channel, whether the interaction is digital or human.

To build the right tools a company needs to first define its customer-centric processes. Most companies have well-defined and documented finance, sales, operations and other functional processes. However, the customer-centric processes are typically neither defined nor documented.

An important reason for this is that the customer journeys cut through the entire organisation and its departments, leaving nobody to take end-to-end responsibility for them.

With the emergence of customer experience departments most companies have found a home for them meanwhile. The most common methodology to determine the customer-centric processes is to do journey mapping whereby the different interactions along the customer journey are hardwired to the internal processes. This gives very good insights into the delivery capabilities of the company at each touchpoint.

After the customer-centric processes are clear then the complicated task starts of finding out what data is needed to manage those processes and what tools are fit for purpose. There are a myriad of providers that have jumped on the CEM bandwagon and offer customer experience platforms. Often they are extensions of conventional customer service systems. Others are specialised in customer data analytics.

The key challenge most companies face is the integration of customer data that sits in various different locations within the company (or in the cloud) and the ability to integrate the different (legacy) systems to

give a 360 degree, real-time view of the customer.

Most companies tackle customer experience technology one application at a time and make investment decisions to either enhance a particular legacy system or acquire another. As the customer journey is rarely supported by one particular system, the only way to make a difference on the overall customer experience is to invest in various different systems at the same time and connecting them. This requires companies to make a bigger commitment and to take more risk than they are used to.

The even bigger challenge is the organisational change that is needed to implement the systems and the processes that they imply, especially as they are likely to affect more than one department in the company. The worry is justified as there is no single supplier that has the capabilities to cover all customer journeys from end to end, despite the claims they make.

However, technical challenges can be overcome. The more frequent reason that companies fail is the ability of the organisation to manage the changes needed to deploy the processes and tools. This is why this dimension of the CEM maturity is the last one that a company should tackle and not the first.



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## Questionnaire

The CEM Maturity Model was developed to assess the current aspiration level of its employees as well as evaluate current performance. Five questions test respondents' belief in the business relevance of customer experience management. Each belief question covers a key dimension of CEM. These should be completed by as many employees as possible so comparisons can be made between top managers and the people they manage or between different departments, locations or business units in the organisation.

As an example, 104 managers at DHL Freight (all board members, country managers, and the senior management

teams of the main countries in which the company operates) took part in this. In certain countries a broad base of employees took part and the results compared to those of the top managers. This helped to identify areas where managers' self-perception was more favourable than the views held by the non-managerial staff.

A 5 point Likert scale is used ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

The second batch of 31 questions should then be distributed to the same managers to assess respondents' perception of the actual performance of the organisation along the five dimensions.

Once the responses have been collected organisations are able to compare the score of each belief question (Where we want to be) against the average score of self-assessment questions (Where we are) associated to the respective dimension.

Any gaps between where the company is presently perceived to be and where it wants to be demonstrate an indication of the maturity of the organisation in the context of CEM. Analysing the gaps by drilling down to the different self-assessment questions helps to define efforts aimed at closing these gaps and so improving the company's CEM capabilities and skills which are proven to result in higher and more profitable growth of our business.

Whilst any organisation is free to use the questionnaire on their own, there is the possibility of distributing the questionnaire to their employees through an online platform located at Strathclyde University. This may allow an organisation to benchmark their maturity relative to the average for other companies using the platform.

For further information on this, please contact Professor Alan Wilson at University of Strathclyde Business School: [alan.wilson@strath.ac.uk](mailto:alan.wilson@strath.ac.uk).

# Belief questions:

## Dimension 1: Vision, values and brand

Having a clear vision for the company that provides customers with a desirable value proposition and differentiates us from competitors is critical to our success.

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly disagree				Strongly agree

## Dimension 2: Customer-centricity

Making customers happy to do business with us by learning more about what they need and turning that into action faster than competition is the key to enduring profitable growth.

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly disagree				Strongly agree

## Dimension 3: Visionary leadership

It is critical that the leadership team manages the business in a way that demonstrates that it always puts customers first.

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly disagree				Strongly agree

## Dimension 4: Employee engagement

To deliver a great customer experience it is critical that our employees are happy at work and motivated to make customers happy.

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly disagree				Strongly agree

## Dimension 5: Tools and processes

In order to manage the customer experience properly we need systems and tools that provide customer information and feedback throughout the entire customer journey.

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly disagree				Strongly agree

# Self-assessment questions:



## Dimension 1: Vision, values and brand

At our company we share a clear vision of what the company aspires to be in the future.

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Strongly disagree</b>				<b>Strongly agree</b>

I believe our vision is realistic and achievable.

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Strongly disagree</b>				<b>Strongly agree</b>

The company's culture values guide my daily decision-making.

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Strongly disagree</b>				<b>Strongly agree</b>

Everyone at the company has a clear understanding of the overall benefits we offer our customers.

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Strongly disagree</b>				<b>Strongly agree</b>

I believe the benefits we offer our customers are relevant to our customers and distinguish us from our competitors.

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Strongly disagree</b>				<b>Strongly agree</b>

I notice that the people I work with are led by our brand promise when doing their work.

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Strongly disagree</b>				<b>Strongly agree</b>







### Dimension 3: Visionary leadership

The company's leadership focuses on understanding the needs of our customers.

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Strongly disagree</b>				<b>Strongly agree</b>

My manager frequently reviews and discusses customer opinions and feedback with me.

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Strongly disagree</b>				<b>Strongly agree</b>

The customer experience is on every management meeting agenda.

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Strongly disagree</b>				<b>Strongly agree</b>

When a customer issue occurs the company's management ensures that it is dealt with immediately.

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Strongly disagree</b>				<b>Strongly agree</b>

My management actively takes part in solving customer issues and making improvements.

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Strongly disagree</b>				<b>Strongly agree</b>

The company's leadership frequently talks to or visits customers to get their feedback on how the company is performing.

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Strongly disagree</b>				<b>Strongly agree</b>



## Dimension 4: Employee engagement

I am proud to work for this company.

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Strongly disagree</b>				<b>Strongly agree</b>

I would recommend this company as an employer to my family and friends.

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Strongly disagree</b>				<b>Strongly agree</b>

The vision and purpose of the company makes me feel my job is important.

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Strongly disagree</b>				<b>Strongly agree</b>

In my day to day work it is easy to meet customer expectations.

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Strongly disagree</b>				<b>Strongly agree</b>

I have the freedom I need to fix customer issues and make them happy.

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Strongly disagree</b>				<b>Strongly agree</b>

My direct manager gives me praise and recognition when I do something good for a customer.

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Strongly disagree</b>				<b>Strongly agree</b>



## Dimension 5: Tools and processes

At this company we continuously capture customer opinions and feedback over multiple channels.

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Strongly disagree</b>				<b>Strongly agree</b>

At this organisation we track customer satisfaction at every interaction along the customer journey.

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Strongly disagree</b>				<b>Strongly agree</b>

At this organisation we undertake detailed analysis of customer feedback in order to find ways to improve the service we provide.

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Strongly disagree</b>				<b>Strongly agree</b>

I have the tools necessary to meet customer expectations and respond effectively to their requests.

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Strongly disagree</b>				<b>Strongly agree</b>

At this organisation, customer feedback metrics are used to measure my team's performance.

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Strongly disagree</b>				<b>Strongly agree</b>

Customer satisfaction plays an important part in how we are incentivised.

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Strongly disagree</b>				<b>Strongly agree</b>

Our IT environment gives us a complete view of the customer so that we can consistently deliver a relevant and positive customer experience.

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Strongly disagree</b>				<b>Strongly agree</b>

# About

## Neil Davey



Neil is managing editor of MyCustomer. He is an experienced business journalist and editor, having worked on a variety of newspapers, magazines and websites over the past 15 years. These include Internet Works, KnowledgeBoard and Business Management.

## MyCustomer

MyCustomer.com is Europe's leading online resource for customer focused professionals, with over 100,000 members. Sharing news and advice on fields including customer service, marketing, sales and CRM, MyCustomer.com is a vital hub for business leaders looking to enhance every part of the customer experience they deliver.

With a network of expert contributors from around the globe and a focus on strategy, technology and in-depth research, members of the MyCustomer community are able to tap into a wealth of knowledge and receive the most comprehensive view of the trends affecting and influencing the world of customer management.

**MYcustomer**

[www.mycustomer.com](http://www.mycustomer.com)

# About

## Kim MacGillavry



Kim is vice president of customer experience and a member of the management board at DHL Freight in Bonn, Germany, has extensive product and brand management experience and has lead various business transformation programs in a variety of multinational companies. In his current role, he is in charge of the design, development, and implementation of the customer experience management program for DHL Freight, and manages the customer service function globally.

## DHL Freight

DHL Freight provides overland transport across Europe, parts of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), North Africa and the Middle East. It is part of the Deutsche Post DHL (DPDHL) Group, one of the world's leading logistic services groups. The Group has two main brands: Deutsche Post and DHL. Deutsche Post is Europe's leading provider of standard letter mail services for private and business customers. DHL includes the Express, Forwarding/Freight, and Supply Chain corporate divisions. It is the world's largest air freight forwarder and second largest ocean freight forwarder, one of Europe's leading road freight forwarders, one of the world's leading courier and express service providers, and the world's largest contract logistics service provider. DHL operates in more than 220 countries and has around 280,000 employees.



[www.dhl.co.uk](http://www.dhl.co.uk)

# About

## Alan Wilson



Alan Wilson is a professor of marketing at the University of Strathclyde Business School. He has written numerous articles and advised many public and private organisations on service delivery, customer experience management and reputation. He has been invited to deliver lectures and seminars on marketing and customer experience management throughout the world. He is also the co-author of the European edition of *Services Marketing: Integrating Customer Focus Across The Firm* and is also author of one of the leading marketing research textbooks *Marketing Research: An Integrated Approach*. He is a Fellow of both the Chartered Institute of Marketing and the Market Research Society. Alan is also the Chairman of Culture Republic, a Scottish based audience development agency supporting the arts and cultural sector.



[www.strath.ac.uk](http://www.strath.ac.uk)

## University of Strathclyde

Strathclyde Business School is one of four faculties forming the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow. The Business School has established international centres in Greece, Switzerland, UAE, Oman, Bahrain, Singapore and Malaysia. With around 200 academic staff and more than 3,000 full-time and part-time students (undergraduate and postgraduate), Strathclyde Business School's subject departments and specialist units collaborate to provide a dynamic, fully-rounded and varied programme of specialist and cross-disciplinary courses.

In addition to our courses, Strathclyde has a reputation for research excellence. It has been rated in the top 10 business schools in the UK for its research - and first in Scotland - in the Research Excellence Framework (REF) which measures the quality and breadth of research.