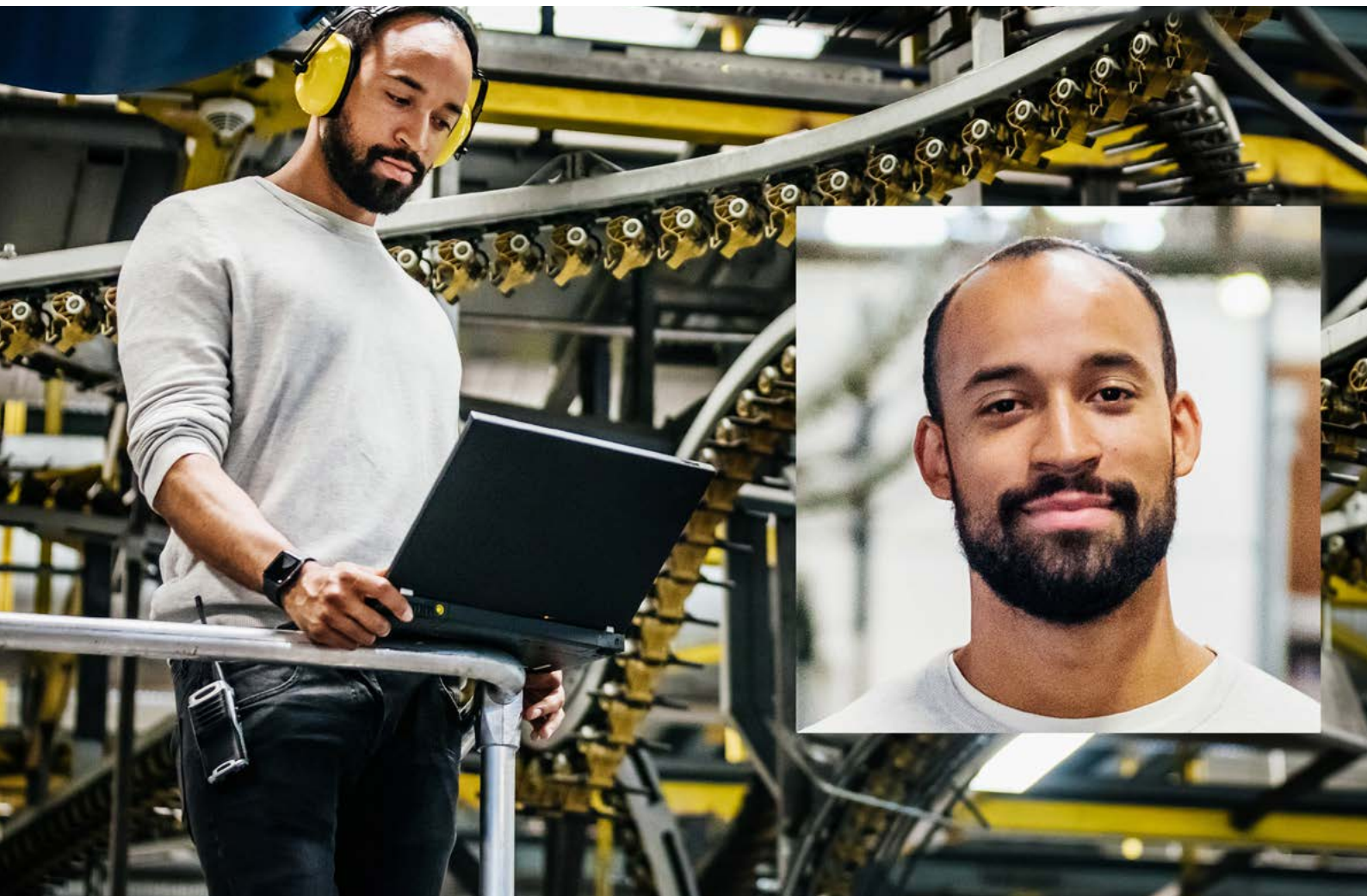Delivering a powerful customer experience (CX)

PLACING THE CUSTOMER AT THE HEART OF B2B MANUFACTURING

NTT DATA Business Solutions

SAP Platinum Partner

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Trusted Global Innovator

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HOW TO PRESENT A POWERFUL CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE (CX) TO IMPROVE LOYALTY AND REVENUE

Legacy B2B digital platforms were underperforming well before COVID-19, but the effects of supply chain disruption and changing customer behaviour have emphasised an urgent need to change. Competing on price and product specification is no longer enough to give B2B manufacturers a competitive advantage. Gartner calls customer experience (CX) the new battlefield, with 80% of companies expecting to compete mostly or completely based on customer experience by 2020[1]. The modern B2B customer now expects the same level of self-service and 24/7 accessibility via a more digitalised and personalised service.

Whether purchasing products or accessing aftersales services, today's customer wants the convenience of engaging with the organisation however they choose - at any time and on any device. The old model of customers using the telephone or email to place orders and arrange their shipment and invoicing queries is becoming obsolete. There is a growing trend for B2B manufacturers to use intelligent CX platforms to automate and personalise online interactions with their customers. Providing a B2C-style buying and aftersales experience to B2B customers can deliver tangible benefits including cost reductions and increased efficiencies that help to improve customer loyalty and increase order values. Manufacturers need to realise their full digital potential. Manufacturers that survive and thrive are staying nimble; they are ready to embrace change and engage their customers, and they adopt innovative digital solutions rapidly. In this whitepaper, we explore the main challenges that B2B manufacturers typically face when attempting to improve the experience delivered to their customers:

- Challenge #1: Disconnected systems and touchpoints
- Challenge #2: Complex product configurations and pricing
- Challenge #3: Lack of visibility

We also look at how a good CX platform can help manufacturers to put the customer at the heart of their business, increasing revenues and efficiencies. We then outline some of the core capabilities of NTT DATA Business Solutions' CX solution, **it.B2B commerce[R2R] for Manufacturing**, which incorporates intelligent SAP Cloud CX technology.

CHALLENGE #1: DISCONNECTED SYSTEMS AND TOUCHPOINTS

B2B manufacturers are often awash in data, captured across many touchpoints between the customer, products, suppliers and employees. Customer data is scattered across systems and therefore difficult to merge for a complete view of the customer. For example, data on returns, percentages and customer importance ranking usually reside in the sales system, and information on aftersales, warranties, servicing and complaints tracking are held in a separate customer services system.

Typically, there is a disconnect between the customer and the manufacturer's ERP system. Manufacturers therefore struggle with providing B2B customers with an all-around online service - from custom pricing, availability to promise, and individual product design, to tracking the status of orders.

Using disconnected legacy systems makes it difficult, if not impossible, to improve customer satisfaction and to unearth customer insights which can lead to revenue increases. By digitalising all key customer processes within a single system - one that integrates with their ERP - B2B, manufacturers can:

- **Get a 360° view of the customer**
- **Increase efficiency in customer service**
- **Create transparency for all relevant customer and product data between departments**
- **Ensure the flow of information between the manufacturer and its dealers**
- **Redefine the buying experience by automating and simplifying the full order-to-cash process**
- **Provide a faster, smoother checkout with easy repeat ordering and delivery tracking**

With a modern CX system, manufacturers can leverage the data stored in their ERP platform to enhance their customers' experience. This creates opportunities for automatic cross-sell and up-sell recommendations. The customer can also receive 'in the moment' personalised marketing messages based on their buying behaviour.

Both the manufacturer and their customers get a single source of the truth in real-time. This means accurate pricing, product and delivery information as well as a personalised experience for purchasing, spares, warranties and aftersales services.

CHALLENGE #2:
COMPLEX PRODUCT
CONFIGURATIONS AND PRICING

Taking orders and working out bespoke pricing is usually dealt with manually, through field sales agents and call centre operatives. This can result in unnecessary delays whilst the customer has to wait for their order details to be finalised and confirmed. It also limits the number of sales the manufacturer can make, as this is dependent on how many salespeople they have.

Processing orders in the old way, using an extranet and relying on manual processes, carries the risk of human error. With make-to-order products, if someone gets an element of an order wrong it can be a costly mistake, which can lead to a customer satisfaction issue.

An intelligent CX system can handle complex product configurations, as well as pricing complexities based on sales arrangements specific to that customer. There is less risk of mistakes because the ordering processes are automated and the customer is empowered to self-serve.

B2B Manufacturers often have large product catalogues and can struggle to maintain large volumes of product and website data. This can lead to the manufacturer only displaying online a small range of their broad product portfolio. Product catalogues are usually maintained in parallel with other systems where data is enriched and prepared for the website. The high volume of material data make maintenance difficult, not to mention the requirements for variant configuration.

Getting a large product set online and maintaining the catalogue is relatively straightforward with a modern CX platform which unifies data from different customer touchpoints. It enables manufacturers to proactively serve up related long-tail items which would otherwise be hard to find but can generate significant profits due to their high margins.

CHALLENGE #3: LACK OF VISIBILITY

B2B manufacturers can find it difficult to specify exact delivery dates. Once they have created an order, they lose any visibility of it! Interactions with production are limited to phone calls and emails because the sales, service and production systems are not connected. This can cause a lot of frustration for the manufacturer and their customer as it is difficult to see accurate delivery dates and arduous if not impossible to set up notifications of any delays.

B2B manufacturers need to digitalise their interactions with customers and internally between departments because B2B customers now expect a 'consumer grade' experience. This shift in customer expectations is due in part to the rise of the millennial buyer, the first generation to grow up with mobile phones and the internet.

Simply displaying product information online is no longer enough. Today's customer wants real-time visibility into the supply chain and back-office information such as:

- **Stock availability**
- **Order status**
- **Production plans**
- **Delivery times**

Advanced CX technology can support manufacturers to deliver a superior customer experience by providing real-time visibility. In turn, this enables them to improve customer retention and increase revenue.

IT.B2B COMMERCE^{R2R} FOR MANUFACTURING

NTT DATA Business Solutions has combined its own manufacturing ERP and User Experience (UX) expertise with SAP's Commerce Cloud technology to create it.**it.B2B commerce^{R2R} for Manufacturing**. This SAP Qualified Partner Package solution includes both software and services to drive digital transformation and help B2B manufacturers to unify processes and deliver superior customer experiences. With this package, manufacturers can vastly improve their customer experience in as little as 15 weeks, and gain:

- An easy-to-use B2B sales channel
- Improved customer satisfaction
- Digitalised internal processes
- Data-driven insights to increase revenue and conversions

Quick to value solution delivered in only 15 weeks

INTEGRATES WITH SAP ERP

it.B2B commerce^{R2R} for Manufacturing unifies data from different systems and presents the manufacturer's make-to-order products and their broad portfolio in a way that is both intuitive for the customer to interact with and easy for the manufacturer to upload and manage their product catalogues.

It pulls data from the SAP ERP to make it possible for customers to self-service, even with configurable products, and still get accurate pricing. This can be made specific to a customer, using Artificial Intelligence (AI) to facilitate bespoke contract pricing and credit terms. By defining rules and automating the configuration and pricing processes, manufacturers can ensure consistency, as sales agents are no longer making different interpretations of the pricing structure.

CONCLUSION

As other B2B manufacturers continue to transform their supply chains by integrating their systems, it is essential for anyone in the industry to consider the digital transformation of the customer experience. Where quality and on-time delivery were once competitive advantages, today they are simply what it takes to enter the global economy. Customer experience is now the key differentiator in a competitive market.

The manufacturing industry faces unique CX challenges including managing complex product configurations, bespoke pricing and large product catalogues. Becoming customer-centric in your services and processes, and by implementing a modern, intelligent CX platform you can address these complexities, as well as automate and simplify the full order-to-cash process.

To grow and increase revenue in a volatile market, you must give your customers a 'one-stop shop' approach to enabling access to information and services online in a consistent way. As a result, you will create a connected B2B buying journey with reduced integration and operational costs. A good CX system can break down the walls between you and your customer. It empowers manufacturing organisations to serve customers more efficiently and in the ways the customer prefers. It also impacts revenue by increasing online orders and average order values, due to cross-sell and up-sell opportunities. A CX system can give a full, real-time view of the production line and the ability to track deliveries.

SUMMARY

The benefits of improving customer experience goes beyond revenue generation. Implementing an intelligent CX system can also streamline operations and increase efficiency. **it.B2B commerce[R2R] for Manufacturing** enables you to harness the power of advanced technology such as AI, real-time analytics, automation and machine learning to deliver improvements in productivity as well as providing a seamless customer journey.

Sources: 1. Thompson, E. Realizing the Benefits of Superior Customer Experience. Gartner **https://www.gartner.com/en/doc/3874972-realizing-the-benefits-of-superior-customer-experience-a-gartner-trend-insight-report** (Accessed 07/06/21)

Why NTT DATA Business Solutions

NTT DATA Business Solutions, part of the NTT DATA Group, has been working with manufacturing customers for over thirty years. As an SAP Platinum Partner, our customers have peace of mind that we can consistently deliver high quality projects on time and within budget. NTT DATA Business Solutions provides end-to-end CX digital expertise, strong SAP ERP capability and manufacturing industry knowledge. This combination means that we can accelerate digital transformation for manufactures running SAP and provide frictionless 'experiences' for their customers as well as partners and suppliers.

Our presence in 24 countries around the world ensures we are always close to your business. What's more, our strong ties to SAP mean we stay up-to-speed with the latest innovations and can help you get the most from them.

30+
Industry Experience

250+
CX Consultants

7000+
SAP Specialists

200+
CX Projects Globally

We Transform. SAP® Solutions into Value

Digital transformation helps companies reach their full potential – if the underlying technologies work for the people using them! At NTT DATA Business Solutions, we design, implement, manage and continuously enhance SAP solutions to make them work for companies – and for their people.

www.nttdata-solutions.com

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