



# From Data to Delight

Building Human-Centered Brand Experiences

**NCR VOYIX**

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**In today's data-rich, hyper-connected world, consumers are spending more time online and seeking deeper, more meaningful relationships. As a result, they expect more from the brands they engage with—especially personalized, seamless experiences that reflect their preferences and behaviors. Yet, most companies still struggle to meet these expectations.**



## **The Data Dilemma**

Despite collecting vast amounts of customer data, many brands fail to extract meaningful insights. Gaps in the customer journey and a lack of in-house expertise often result in data being underutilized. This disconnect frustrates consumers, who expect a clear value exchange for the information they share—most notably in the form of tailored, frictionless experiences.



## **The Challenge of Agility**

Brands also face difficulty adapting their marketing strategies in real time. Legacy systems and siloed data make it hard to integrate new insights into outbound communications in real-time. As a result, marketing messages often lag behind evolving customer preferences, missing opportunities to connect in relevant timely ways.



## **Where Brands Are Struggling**

To meet rising expectations for individualized experiences, brands must overcome several persistent challenges:

- Identifying and recognizing consumers across all buying channels and marketing touchpoints
- Uncovering insights from both spend and non-spend behaviors
- Leveraging automation and segmentation to act on behavioral data
- Designing hyper-relevant engagements that drive long-term behavior change
- Managing margins across all customer segments, including low-loyalty groups
- Applying machine learning to optimize purchases, frequency, engagement and advocacy



## **From Transactional to Experiential Loyalty**

So how can brands move beyond transactional relationships and one-dimensional loyalty programs? By leveraging data in real-time to constantly shape marketing activities, eliminating friction, and delivering value in unique personalized ways. This means creating experiences that feel human—rooted in empathy, relevance and trust. When brands do this well, they don't just earn loyalty—they build lasting emotional connections.

This is the next generation of devotion and has six core concepts: Recognize Me, Understand Me, Show Me the Love, Remove the Friction, Add Value



## CONCEPT: RECOGNIZE ME

Customers want to feel seen, especially in places they frequent. Recognition builds emotional connection and loyalty. In today's data-rich world, brands have no excuse not to remember their customers. At the very least, businesses should use the data they collect to acknowledge who their customers are and how often they engage. Want your customers to feel truly valued? Here are four simple ways to show them you see—and appreciate—them:

1. **Address customers by name**—Retailers and restaurant operators have a wide range of opportunities to address customers by name, both in-store and through marketing channels:



**Loyalty program integration**—Use restaurant and retail POS systems to greet customers by name when they check in or make a purchase and display the customer's name on digital screens or receipts.



**Reservations and appointments**—Greet customers by name when they arrive for a reservation or appointment. Train hosts and staff to confirm names and use them naturally in conversation.



**Reserved tables**—For VIPs or regulars, don't just use generic reserved signs, use name cards at tables or counters to personalize the reservation.



**Email Marketing, SMS & Push Notifications**—Personalize subject lines and greetings and include the customer's name in alerts and promotions.

2. **Know where your customers are...** Proximity technology enables brands to detect when customers are nearby, allowing for timely, personalized engagement. Whether it's sending targeted promotions, offering real-time discounts, or welcoming customers as they enter a store, this technology creates meaningful touchpoints that drive action.

With clickthrough rates reaching up to 80%, proximity marketing remains one of the most effective tools in a marketer's arsenal. **The global market for proximity marketing was valued at \$115.4 billion in 2024 and is projected to reach \$502.9 billion by 2030, growing at a CAGR of 27.8%.**

Retailer Target has implemented beacon-based proximity marketing in select stores. Customers using the Target app receive personalized deals and product suggestions based on their in-store location, significantly increasing engagement and sales.



**3. ...And where they've been**—Understanding where a customer has previously engaged—whether on your website, app or another digital touchpoint—allows you to continue the conversation seamlessly. Instead of starting from scratch with every interaction, you can build on their past behavior to create a more personalized and connected experience.

Imagine having to reintroduce yourself every time you meet someone—it would be frustrating and inefficient. That's exactly how customers feel when brands fail to recognize their previous interactions. Without continuity, you miss the opportunity to deepen engagement and foster loyalty.

**4. Don't just close the sale**—open the relationship—The customer journey doesn't end at checkout. Thoughtful follow-up—whether through apps, emails or SMS—enhances the overall experience, invites valuable feedback and keeps customers informed about future promotions. But most importantly, it offers a simple, powerful gesture: saying “thank you.”

A customer who feels unappreciated is far more likely to explore alternatives. In fact **42% of consumers are willing to pay more for a friendly, welcoming experience**. A sincere thank-you message is one of the easiest ways to make that experience feel personal and warm.

Recognition is the foundation of any lasting relationship. By acknowledging your customers after the transaction, you not only show appreciation, but you open the door to deeper engagement, stronger loyalty and long-term brand devotion.

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## CONCEPT: UNDERSTAND ME

Recognition is one thing, understanding is another. A company may be seen by its customers, but until it truly understands them, it's operating in the dark. Without insight into what customers want, need or value, every sale becomes a stroke of luck—unpredictable and nearly impossible to repeat.

For businesses that aim to build lasting relationships and drive consistent success, understanding the customer is essential. Here are a few key tips and considerations to help you get there:

### Start with a persona...

1

Understanding your customers begins with creating persona—abstract representations of your key customer types. A few well-crafted personas can help you capture a wide range of customer behaviors and preferences. These personas form the foundation for identifying individual motivations, goals and needs.

### ...And end with a person

2

While personas are useful for segmentation, they are only the beginning. Real customers are more than generalizations. New loyalty and marketing orchestration applications that include a customer data platform enable you to leverage AI and machine learning to build a personalized profile on each individual guest with further analysis on individual habits, behavior and preferences to activate experiential loyalty.

### Shopping as self-expression

3

A research study conducted at University College London and Columbia University shows that spending habits can reveal personality traits, including openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism. For businesses, this means that understanding customer behavior through spending data, when done ethically and responsibly, can offer more than just marketing insights. It can help tailor experiences that resonate with customers' deeper motivations, values and even emotional needs.

### Offer Free Wi-Fi

4

This not only improves your guest and shoppers' experience but also provides valuable insights. Using social media logins for access can also help you gather verified identities, public profile information and email addresses, and integrate this data into your Customer Data Platform (CDP).

Let's be honest, anyone can make a sale once. But if you want to earn a second sale, and a third, and build lasting loyalty, you need to understand the person behind the purchase. What brings them joy? What frustrates them? What drives their decisions? When you truly understand your customer, you're not just selling a product—you're answering the question that matters the most to them. Why should I care?



## CONCEPT: SHOW ME THE LOVE

We've already taken the first step by recognizing and understanding each customer as an individual. Now it's time to go further—by making them feel truly appreciated. Customers who feel valued are more likely to buy more, spend more, refer others and stay loyal. Below are ways to show appreciation and deepen customer loyalty without discounts:

1. **Make customer experience everyone's job**—In the race to offer great products at low prices, the customer experience can get lost. **But for 82% of customers, the experience is just as important as the product or service itself.** That's why your entire company, from the janitor to the CEO, should see themselves as part of the customer service team.
2. **Engage authentically on social media**—Having social media accounts isn't enough. Actively respond to mentions, comments, and shares. When done right, social engagement builds loyalty and creates emotional connections that last far beyond a single transaction.
3. **Love your haters**—Negative feedback can sting, but it's also a gift. Every complaint is a chance to show you care. Respond quickly, apologize sincerely, and fix the issue. Even better, use the feedback to improve. Studies show that customers who receive a thoughtful response to a complaint often become more loyal than those who never had a problem. As Elie Wiesel said, "The opposite of love is not hate, but indifference."
4. **Be transparent**—In an age of misinformation and data breaches, trust is everything. Companies that are open and honest, even when things go wrong, earn customer loyalty. **In fact, nearly 90% of customers will give a transparent brand a second chance after a bad experience.** Transparency isn't just good ethics, it's good business.
5. **Use technology to personalize and deepen loyalty**—Technology isn't just about efficiency—it's a powerful tool for building meaningful relationships at scale. Here's how to use it to your advantage:



### Leverage Customer Data for Personalization:

Use a Customer Data Platform and analytics to understand customer preferences and behaviors. This enables you to send personalized messages, recommend relevant products, or randomly offer surprise and delight rewards to your customers.



### Implement Loyalty Apps and Digital Rewards:

Mobile apps and digital wallets make it easy for customers to track rewards and access exclusive content. Gamified experiences—like earning points or unlocking badges—can make loyalty fun and engaging.



### Use AI-Powered Chatbots for 24/7 Support:

Chatbots can handle common questions instantly and escalate complex issues to human agents. When integrated with customer data, they can offer personalized, consistent support around the clock.



### Create Immersive Experiences with AR/VR:

Augmented and virtual reality can create memorable, interactive experiences—like virtual try-ons, behind-the-scenes tours, or AR-enhanced packaging that tells your brand story.



### Automate Feedback Loops:

Use surveys, review prompts, and sentiment analysis tools to gather and act on customer feedback in real time. This shows customers that their voices matter and helps you continuously improve.


Authenticity beats gimmicks every time. When customers feel seen, heard, and valued—both by people and by the technology you use—they stick around and bring others with them.



## CONCEPT: REMOVE THE FRICTION

In today's hyper-competitive market, friction is the fastest way to lose a customer. In fact, 42% of consumers will switch brands after just one bad experience. To keep customers loyal and engaged, businesses must make every interaction smooth, intuitive, and frustration-free. Here are three proven strategies to eliminate friction and elevate your customer experience (CX):

- 1. Let the channel surfers surf**—Today's customers don't shop in a straight line, they bounce between websites, apps, stores and social media. **76% of customers expect a consistent experience across all channels, and businesses that deliver on this expectation see a 91% increase in customer retention.**
- 2. Fix the pain points in the buying journey**—**The global cart abandonment rate reached 70% in 2025**, with mobile users more likely to abandon carts due to friction in the checkout process. Hidden fees, complicated forms, and limited payment options are common culprits.
  - Simplify checkout to one page
  - Offer multiple payment methods, including digital wallets
  - Be transparent about costs and return policies
- 3. Make loyalty programs effortless**—Loyalty programs should reward customers—not test their patience. Yet **50% of consumers hesitate to join due to long sign-up processes or excessive data requests.**
  - Keep enrollment under 60 seconds
  - Ask only for essential information
  - Offer instant rewards or welcome bonuses



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## CONCEPT: KNOW WHAT I CRAVE

Understanding your customers isn't just a nice-to-have, it's essential. According to the 2025 State of the Restaurant Industry Report, 64% of full-service restaurant customers and 47% of limited-service customers say the experience matters more than the price. Meanwhile, retail brands that score high on customer satisfaction consistently outperform their competitors in both loyalty and financial performance.

So how can restaurants and retailers tap into what their customers really care about? Here are three proven strategies:

1

**Analyze what they order and buy**—Customer behavior speaks volumes. A diner who regularly orders gluten-free or plant-based meals is likely health-conscious or environmentally aware. A retail shopper who chooses refillable beauty products or buys from local artisans may prioritize sustainability and community support.

Even seemingly small choices, like always ordering the seasonal special or buying limited-edition items, can reveal a desire for novelty and exclusivity. By analyzing these patterns, you can reverse-engineer what your customers expect from your brand and tailor your offerings accordingly.

2

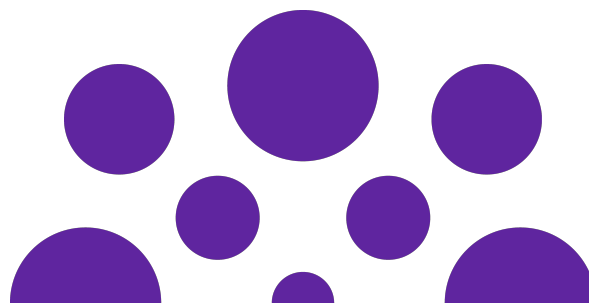
**Offer personalized choices**—**Nearly two-thirds (63%) of consumers say they feel loyal to brands that tailor experiences to their preferences.** Restaurants can offer loyalty programs that let customers choose their rewards—like a free appetizer, a discount on their favorite entrée, or early access to new menu items. Retailers can do the same with perks like bonus points on preferred product categories or exclusive early-bird sales.

These choices aren't just perks, they're insights. A customer who always picks rewards tied to family meals or school supplies likely has different priorities than one who chooses wellness or fashion-related perks.

3

**Support Their Passions**—When a customer asks your café to sponsor a local food drive or your boutique to donate to a school fundraiser, take it seriously. Supporting causes your customers care about builds goodwill and loyalty and gives you a clearer picture of what drives them.

According to the National Restaurant Association, community involvement is a key factor in building customer trust and loyalty in 2025. Whether it's sustainability, education, or health, aligning with your customers' values can turn a one-time buyer into a lifelong advocate.







## CONCEPT: ADD VALUE

Customer loyalty is no longer just about points and discounts. It's about creating personalized, emotionally resonant experiences. Whether you're in retail or running a restaurant, customers expect brands to understand their preferences, reward their loyalty, and add value at every touchpoint.

Here are four ways your brand can show customers that their time and loyalty are worth it:

1

**Offer privileges, not just price cuts**—Value doesn't always mean a discount. Today's customers crave exclusivity and recognition. **In 2025, experiential rewards like early access and exclusive events are outperforming traditional discounts in driving repeat visits.** Restaurants like Chick-fil-A and Starbucks offer early access to seasonal items and priority ordering through their apps—perks that make loyal customers feel like insiders. Retailers are also stepping up and are using real-time inventory alerts and app-based early access to product drops to reward top-tier members. Successful brands are using loyalty solutions with tiered rewards and app integration to offer VIP experiences, such as exclusive menu previews or members-only shopping hours.

2

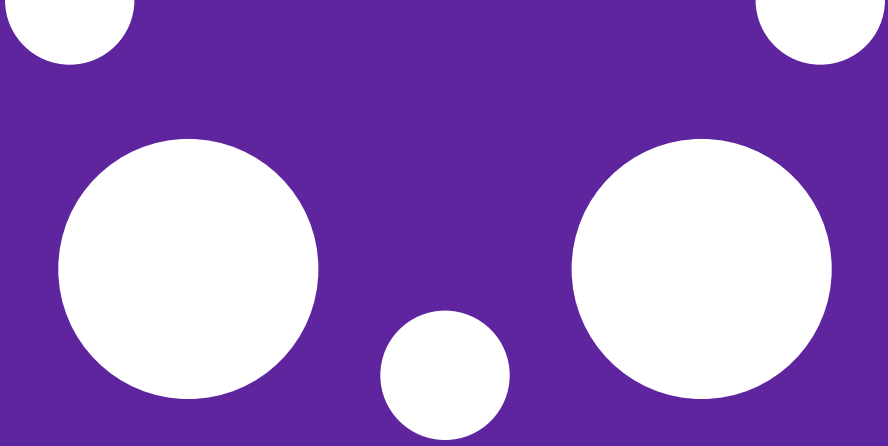
**Use small gestures to make a big impact**—Small, **unexpected rewards increase customer satisfaction and brand perception by up to 30%.** Restaurants like Panera Bread use this principle by offering surprise free bakery items to app users. Similarly, retailers like Sephora include free samples or small gifts with online orders. When building your loyalty strategy, look for automation tools to trigger surprise perks based on customer behavior, weather or special occasions.

3

**Reward what they already love**—You already know what your customers buy, so reward them for it. **73% of consumers prefer brands that send personalized offers based on purchase history, and 47% expect more value in return for sharing their data.** Restaurants like Domino's use AI to analyze order history and offer personalized deals on favorite items. Retailers are doing the same with dynamic coupons based on past purchases. To make this easy, brands are gravitating towards POS, customer data platform, and loyalty applications that use machine learning to identify patterns and automate personalized rewards.

4

**Celebrate their loyalty**—Recognizing milestones, like a loyalty anniversary or birthday, can create emotional resonance. Restaurants like TGI Fridays send birthday rewards through their app, while retailers like Ulta Beauty offer double points and exclusive gifts during birthday months. Use marketing automation to schedule milestone campaigns and personalize reward offers for loyalty. Instead of sending the same generic promotion for a customer's birthday, send them their favorite item from your store as a birthday gift.



NCR Voyix Corporation (NYSE: VYX) is a leading global provider of digital commerce solutions for the retail and restaurant industries. NCR Voyix transforms retail stores and restaurant systems through experiences with comprehensive, platform-led SaaS and services capabilities. NCR Voyix is headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia, with customers in more than 30 countries across the globe.

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