

6 Essential Skills

For Every
CEM Team



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By the year 2020, customer experience will overtake price and product* as the key brand differentiator.

This means that Customer Experience Management (CEM) will continue to be a vital, strategic initiative within your business. Savvy businesses are investing heavily in CEM and are building dedicated teams to understand and improve the customer experience.

A winning CEM team empowers everyone in the organization to create amazing experiences that delight customers, leading to positive word of mouth, customer loyalty, and increased share-of-wallet. To be successful, this team needs to have an enterprise vision, a rich understanding of products and process, and an understanding of the customer from all angles. The most successful CEM programs are implemented using a data-driven approach for interpreting the Voice of the Customer (VoC). The team uses technology to reveal customer needs, wants, and desires, and brings this data to the business to drive action and change. Empowered with these customer insights, an effective CEM team ensures that customer feedback is operationalized throughout the entire organization.

* <http://www.walkerinfo.com/customers2020>



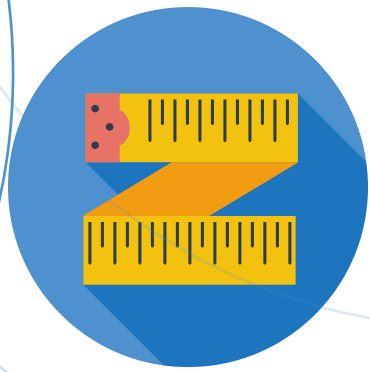
Your CEM team performs four critical functions within the business:

- 1. Maintains an enterprise vision:** The CEM team needs to know every area of the business and understand how customers interact with each business department.
- 2. Understands the Voice of the Customer (VoC):** They need to be able to obtain customer (and employee) data from across all touch-points, and scale with the data volumes through technology.
- 3. Provides best-in-class Insights:** In addition to having the right tools, the CEM office needs analytical storytellers to interpret data and turn it into plans and actions.
- 4. Cross-functional collaboration with stakeholders:** The team needs to know how to manage its programs across different departments, and how to define value from customer insights.

The 6 Core Skills that Make or Break a CEM Team

Finding candidates who are qualified to take on CEM can be challenging. While traditional business schools teach marketing, sales, and operations, CEM is ahead of most school curriculums. When building out your CEM team, focus on hiring candidates that round out the skills of your overall department.

There are 6 core skills that every CEM team needs to deliver on regardless of the industry they are in. Remember: you don't necessarily need 6 individuals on your team; rather, you can have just a few members who take on these roles and can perform these 6 skills between them.



1. Metric Mavens

Every member of your CEM team needs a foundational understanding of the main Customer Experience (CX) principles. This includes a high-level understanding of key CEM techniques and best practices, principles such as customer loyalty and customer sentiment, and key CX metrics like Customer Satisfaction (CSAT) and Net Promoter Score (NPS). While all team members don't need to be experts in these areas, at least one person on the team needs to be able to decide how to measure your program's success. This person should decide what is best for your business and answer questions such as:

- Should we measure our success against a single metric or multiple metrics?
- Should we measure at the company level, department level, or both?
- How should we motivate employees to strive towards these metrics?

Along with an understanding of CEM, your team members also need to have an understanding of the different parts of your business, what your business is selling, and how it makes a profit. Relating corporate metrics to your customer experience metric(s) is valuable in order to understand the progress you are making. This frames your CEM team's work and output, making sure it is relevant and impactful for the company.

QUICK TIP

Whatever metric you choose to use, experts in the field of CX recommend you pick just a few metrics, baseline them, and simply work to improve the numbers. It's also important to understand what is driving your metrics. For example, if you focus on NPS, you need to understand what is driving the behavior of your promoters and detractors. If promoters are talking negatively, it could have an impact on their score over time. Your team should be able to identify these drivers and address them before they negatively impact your CEM success.



2. Fearless Leaders

CEM team members, especially those in outward-facing roles (such as your team's evangelist), need to have strong leadership skills. Your team is likely changing the way things have always been done and the lens through which business decisions have been made. As you share customer insights and present a new way of approaching business opportunities, you will likely be faced with colleagues who are skeptical of the customer-first approach, or who put profits over the voice of the customer. CEM team members can't be afraid of challenging the established wisdom in order to sell the value of CEM internally. Team members need to be progressive thinkers, and most of all, they can't back down from a challenge.

THE CEM EVANGELIST:

- Liaises between the CEM team and the C-suite.
- Champions customer insights across the company, getting in front of the executive team to present customer feedback data that must be acted upon.
- Has a seat at the C-suite table, even if they may not be on the executive team themselves.

HIRING TIPS:

When interviewing candidates for a leadership role, ask questions such as:

- Tell me about your leadership experience. Have you ever reported to or worked directly with the executive level?
- Tell me about a time when you had to lead through influence. How did you overcome the natural hurdles?
- Let's imagine you lead a team of 20 customer service agents. You roll out a new process that 8 of your agents do not

agree with. How do you gain their buy-in?

- Tell me about your experience leading customer-facing teams. Have you ever managed customer-impacting programs?

These types of questions will help you find people who can effectively respond to and engage with people within the organization who don't necessarily agree with certain decisions. Look for people who can understand both sides of the argument, and who are open to receiving and being mindful of feedback.

3. Powerful Storytellers



People remember stories; not PowerPoint decks. When sharing customer insights with other business stakeholders, CEM team members, such as your team’s evangelist or Insights Manager, need to present the data in an actionable format. They need to sell the story and make it relevant and meaningful to the business.

A large part of your team’s time will be spent educating internal business stakeholders on what you are doing and why. Being a good storyteller with excellent presentation skills will help get buy-in and support for your team’s work.

Being a great storyteller includes understanding how your audience absorbs information. Do they prefer numbers and statistical graphs, or do they want you to share word clouds and bubble charts that display the information in a more visual manner? Good storytellers understand how to make reports and dashboards relevant to the people reading them.

THE CEM STORYTELLER:

- Works within the CEM team and has strong leadership skills.
- Excels at looking at data and distilling the business value behind it.
- Understands how customer insights impact the business, and can present this value to an audience.

HIRING TIPS:

When interviewing candidates, present them with data trends and customer verbatim, and ask them:

- Where would you look to find more data to back up what this data is showing?
- What do you think is the best way to visually present this data?
- If people get defensive or offended by this data, how could you show them that change will improve the

numbers, and therefore the customer experience?

- How would you discuss the data with the CEO? How about with a front-line employee?

Your goal is to find someone who can sell a story by using the appropriate data points to reinforce their findings. They need to know what is important and actionable for different levels of the organization, and share the story without boring or overwhelming their audience.



4. Data Enthusiasts

Members of your CEM team need to have a basic comfort level with understanding and making sense of customer data, even if they aren't data analysts themselves. For those in a management or evangelist role, good general analytical skills are a must. As your team grows, think about hiring dedicated data analysts, with more extensive skills in data handling, who can see meaning in numbers, identify correlations, and spot trends, asking the right questions to figure out what is driving them.

THE DATA ENTHUSIAST:

- Works within the CEM team and has excellent analytical skills.
- Is forever curious. They dig through data until they find meaning or a root cause to explain a trending issue.
- Understands the value of data segmentation, and knows how to enrich it using data from multiple sources.
- Is organized and detail-oriented. They can create a library of interesting data sets that can be used at a moment's notice to help make sense of emerging feedback trends.

HIRING TIPS:

When interviewing candidates, present them with customer data, and ask them:

- What does the data show?
- What types of questions would you ask based on these data points?
- How does this data relate to other data you might see from across our business?

Look for candidates who ask the right questions in order to figure out what is driving a specific trend. The right candidate needs to be organized and disciplined enough to not get carried away with digging into the data. Instead, they should understand how far they need to go into the data in order for their findings to be relevant and actionable for the business.

5. Relationship Builders



Your team needs to be able to build good relationships with other business departments. This will help you understand what kinds of customer insights are relevant to the work they are doing, letting you better meet their needs and break down departmental silos. On their end, they are more likely to support your work and champion your initiatives, helping you grow your CEM footprint internally. Depending on how your CEM team is organized, you may have

champions in each business unit, or have your team members sit within other departments.

A good relationship builder also needs to be a good cross-departmental collaborator. This means helping other people across your business build relationships with each other. This is important because many times, departments tend to blame each other for driving negative customer satisfaction. For example, if your team finds that customers are complaining about the customer service agent in the call center, the customer service director may simply blame the front-line employee who did a poor job selling the item in the first place. Relationship builders will not be deterred by this; in fact they take on this challenge and build bridges accordingly.

THE RELATIONSHIP BUILDER:

- Interfaces with the CEM team and “represents” business departments that need deeper insight into the customer or employee.
- Understands their business department’s processes, products, services, goals, and everything in between.
- Partners with the CEM team to assist analysts, promote VoC best practices, and provide data requirements for analysis and output.

HIRING TIPS:

When interviewing relationship builder candidates, ask open-ended questions:

- How have you been able to bring about change across different business units?
- How have you overcome political issues in the past within or across business units?
- What’s your reporting line today, and what’s an example of something you’ve achieved

with someone outside of your department or reporting line?

These types of questions help to identify candidates who are able to use people skills to bring about change without being constrained by traditional hierarchies and silos. They need to be resourceful enough to identify people in other departments who can help champion their cause, and to build relationships based on trust and credibility.

6. Empathetic Customer Champions



Empathy is the golden rule. With everything your team does, and every decision your team makes, each team member must constantly ask themselves, “What will the customer think?”

This passion for the customer will enable your team to more easily sell the customer-first mindset to stakeholders across the business.

Many businesses are accustomed to prioritizing customer acquisition without investing in the service needed to retain them. Non-profit generating business lines have traditionally taken a back seat. To be effective, CEM team members need to truly believe that it is vital to improve all parts of the business in order to build better relationships with the customer. Delivering good CX has to be more than just a job. It has to be part of who they are, and a part of their emotional DNA. Passionate customer champions also tend to see the right path through the clutter.

HIRING TIPS:

When interviewing candidates, ask behavioral questions such as:

- Tell me about a time when you had to stay motivated in achieving your goal, despite facing skepticism from other people.
- Tell me about a time when you failed at something. How did you respond to the situation?
- Tell me about a time when you received a good customer experience. What made it memorable for you?

- Tell me about a time when you had to break down a complex situation into digestible chunks.

When asking these types of questions, look for candidates who show resilience. CEM teams, like with all nascent disciplines, may face failure when trying to get others to prioritize customer feedback. You want to hire candidates who, even when they fail, still wake up the next morning and believe they are fundamentally doing the right thing in putting the customer first. They can't be afraid to turn around and say, “We need to try this in a different way.”



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CEM Always Wins

When built correctly, a CEM team is a flexible, insightful, measured, and collaborative driving force within an organization. Team members are self-starters and proactively identify opportunities to build momentum around customer experience initiatives.

Even if your CEM team starts out with just 2 people, make sure you have as many of the essential skills covered as possible:

- Strategic skills that can align CEM to a clear and concise measurement framework
- Leadership skills that can drive business change
- Storytelling skills that can convey value
- Data handling skills that can make sense of customer data and feedback trends
- Interpersonal skills that allow for cross-departmental relationship building
- Empathy skills that drive enthusiasm and passion for the customer across the entire business

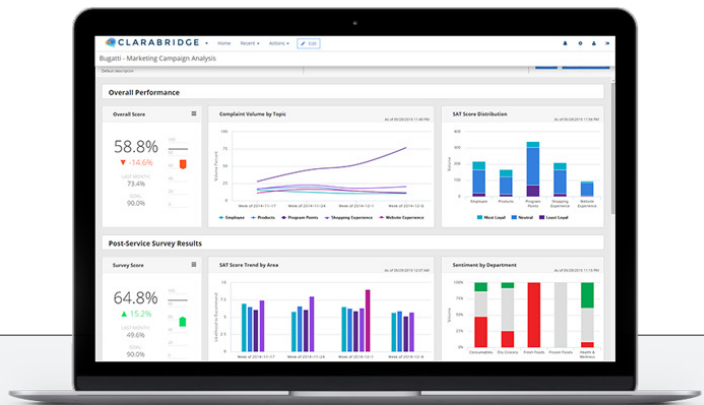
As demand for your team's work grows, you can hire additional team members with deeper skills in areas such as financial modeling, data modeling, market research, building journey maps, and cultural transformation.

Sure, getting to CEM greatness requires hard work, but whenever a business is invested in understanding and acting on customer feedback, the customer always wins. And in turn, your customer will reward you with increased loyalty, spend, and satisfaction. Even for the CEM skeptics in your business, industry studies^{*} show that an improvement of just 1 point in your customer satisfaction scores can translate into \$15 million to \$175 million in revenue, depending on the industry. With this potential at hand, your CEM efforts will always be worth it.

^{*}<https://www.forrester.com/The+Revenue+Impact+Of+Customer+Experience+2015/fulltext/-/E-RES122323>

Request a Demo

Find out how you can equip your CEM team to start putting customer feedback to work. Call 1.866.761.5661 for a free demo of Clarabridge.



Clarabridge helps hundreds of the world's leading brands understand and improve the customer experience. Powered by the industry's most sophisticated customer analytics engine, Clarabridge collects and transforms all forms of customer feedback into intelligence, allowing businesses to activate the voice of the customer across the enterprise.

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