> " There is a powerful triad created when you combine marketing, technology, and data. The person who ultimately wins from these efforts is the customer "

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Customer experience is the responsibility of the entire organization. Data and technology teams enable these experiences, while marketing aligns CX efforts to the overall brand and business strategy. There is a powerful triad created when you combine marketing, technology, and data. The person who ultimately wins from these efforts is the customer. Marketers can play a leadership role by ensuring that technology and analytics align with CX objectives.

Curating seamless CX is not easy and often does not follow a linear process. However, there are some actions that a marketer can lead that will help facilitate an experience that elicits both functional and emotional utility.

Start with an understanding of your customer. As simple as it sounds, many companies often describe their customers from the business's needs and point of view (for instance, we need to sell more jeans) rather than the customers'. Disparate data sources make it difficult to extract insights that reflect emotion, action, and choice. The combination of research and behavioral knowledge will help you uncover the pain points and motivators that impact customers' perceived interactions with your brand.

Actively manage systems to connect customer data. Once you have an understanding of your customers, map out the customer journey through a technology lens. Conduct an audit of the technologies that will enable each customer interaction so you can understand the data that is being fed into these systems and how it could enable more relevant and personalized experiences. The data store — or centralized customer data warehouse — is one of the most valuable and often-overlooked components of CX.

Also, designate a champion. One of the hidden pitfalls of getting to seamless CX is that leaders are not always aligned on what it is or means for their business. Designate a champion who can align leaders on a long-term vision and who is empowered to be the voice of the customer when making retail decisions.

Companies that are successful at curating positive CX put customers' needs first and align their entire organization around fulfilling those needs. Ultimately, it's the experience itself that will provide sustainable competitive differentiation. ∎