Speeds, Feeds, or Customer Needs? How to Excel in the Most Important Metric of All

What makes customers fall in love with a company's product or service? Great design, performance, reliability…but what about experience? Hands-on support when you need it—or before you even know you do?

Customer experience shouldn't end the day you sign the sales agreement or open the box—that's when it *begins*. And in IT, it's what separates the good from the great.

Customer-obsessed vs. Competitor-obsessed

> *"Good design is like a refrigerator—when it works, no one notices, but when it doesn't, it sure stinks." –Irene Au, Design Partner, Khosla Ventures*

What's the difference between something that "just works" and something that makes people fall in love? Customer obsession.

Examples of customer-obsessed products rarely compete on features, benchmarks, or specs—that's *competitor obsession*. Instead, they disrupt life as we know it, in ways big and small. Big could be an ecosystem like iOS that connects all your data and devices seamlessly. Small could be the first, unified storage platform that automates provisioning to give storage admins their weekends and holidays back.

To get there, we have to ask deeper questions. Not just, "What is my customer's problem?" but also, "What is my customer living with that is harder than it should be? And how can I make their life easier?"

In the enterprise business world, where great customer experience isn't always flashy or thrilling, delighting customers hasn't always been a priority. Vendors have been able to get away with humming along like an old fridge. But that world and customers' needs are changing rapidly, and "humming along" doesn't cut it.

The Risk in Designing Products Incrementally vs.

Inherently

When you're designing a product that people will love, you have to make the customer experience your focus at the outset, with the very first prototype.

Think of your product as a story. Once you share it with the world, it's out there. You can release sequels and new editions and build on that story over time with features and upgrades, but the plot is the plot. It's not something you rewrite using the same title. You can rejigger software or scale up service offerings, but you can't retrofit products and deliver life-changing customer experiences.

The Pure Storage story was written from day one with one main character: our customers, whether they're hyperscalers or regional energy providers. Before our stellar NPS score, we engineered our hardware and software to create an absolutely seamless platform. We dialed in our operating system, with over-the-air updates and a unified ecosystem that are as life-changing as the examples above.

Not because of speeds, feeds, and DFMs—but because of the outcomes they deliver.

If Experience Lags, Customers Will Move On. Be the Better than "Good Enough"

You might be wondering, "Why is a data storage guy so obsessed with customer experience?"

Customer experience is the new battleground—make no mistake. And right now, too many enterprises are getting by on less than great experiences with their data storage vendors. When data is *the most powerful accelerant* to innovation right now, "getting by" just might be the new definition of insanity.

We're creatures of habit, and "switching requires ending a trusted relationship in the hope of reaching an uncertain improvement level." But I'd argue there's nothing uncertain about switching to a platform that can handle anything you throw at it—from hyperscaler demands to GPU bottlenecks—all from a vendor who's there for you every step of the way.

"'Switching requires ending a trusted relationship in the hope of reaching an uncertain improvement level.' But I'd argue there's nothing uncertain about switching to a platform that can handle anything you throw at it."

At Pure Storage, we consider the sale as the start of the relationship—which is why

our customers have the highest satisfaction among our peers. We think about what customer experience is beyond the day the box is shipped—from day 10 to day 100 and on.

If you want to earn customers' trust and the NPS score to prove it, deliver:

- **Products with longer equipment lifespans.** Customers don't want to invest in something they have to rip and replace in 3-5 years, but many are living in this painful cycle. It's a trap created by a "customer-last" mindset—and it's piling up in landfills and on balance sheets.
- **A basket customers actually *want* all their eggs in.** Ecosystem lock-in can be a huge pain point for IT professionals—unless it's an environment that provides a solution for all of their needs. The Pure Storage platform abstracts away the complexities of having tailored solutions for various needs. It all speaks the same language thanks to Purity—a non-negotiable for AI training and inference demands.
- **Simple, intuitive design that removes the need for support calls.** Designing intuitive products that "just work" isn't easy, but it's a home run when it minimizes the need for any support at all. Many users report rarely needing to contact support due to the reliability and simplicity of Pure Storage systems. One customer estimated that "Pure's self-driving storage capability has saved around 40% of the person-hours required for infrastructure administration, performance tuning, troubleshooting, monitoring, and reporting."[1]
- **Responsive, always available assistance**. When they do need support, how does the interaction make customers feel? Is it white glove? The Pure Storage support team is described as "quick to respond" when issues arise. During problem resolution, support teams maintain regular contact with customers.

Customers Deserve Better than "Good Enough"

We've always said customers deserve better than "good enough," but lately, headlines are doing the talking for us. With AI, cyber threats, and energy demands looming, we suspect it's only a matter of time before "good enough" won't cut it anymore. And we'll be here ready to help organizations step into the future.utions that transform how businesses harness data, much like shoes enabling humans to reach new heights.

1

https://ie.insight.com/content/dam/insight-web/emea/partner/pure-storage/Pure_Real_World_Stories_eBook.pdf