

Expert Interview with

DENNIS WAKABAYASHI

Vice President, Digital and Commerce Integration
The Integer Group\TBWA



integer

We are curious, inventive and brave. We utilize cultural insights to fuel creative ideas that build brands and connect with people where they are living, looking and buying, accelerating shoppers toward commerce.

The Integer Group® is a commerce agency. A key member of Omnicom Group Inc., Integer has more than 1,100 associates in 25 offices across the globe, including locations in Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, the Middle East, and North and South America. The Integer Group's clients include AT&T, FedEx, Mars/Wrigley, Michelin, P&G, PepsiCo, Starbucks and more.



ABOUT DENNIS

Dennis is a leading CX strategist, innovator and evangelist with a proven track record of redefining the landscape of customer experience strategy for Fortune 100 brands.

After recognizing the limitations of conventional approaches to journey mapping and customer experience workshops, Dennis developed his own methodology while leading integrated commerce at The Integer Group\TBWA. The resulting CX practice, known in the industry as “CX3”, is a cohesive consumer experience strategy delivering results across entire organizations.

In 2018, Dennis was named one of the Top 25 Retail Influencers to Keep an Eye On. He’s been recognized as one of the 25 Most Influential Email Marketers You Should Follow by CampaignMonitor.com, and Cision named him one of the world’s Top 50 Email Marketing Influencers.

He is a well-known CX subject matter expert on Adobe’s Experience League Advisory Council, teaches in the Big Data Advisory Council program at Southern Methodist University and develops customer experience curriculum as a CX subject matter expert for O’Reilly Media and SafariBooksOnline.com.

Q + A

1. What do you think are some of the biggest challenges customer experience professionals face with understanding or implementing Service Design?

One of the biggest challenges facing Service Design professionals and CX professionals alike is a need to connect customer experiences to business operations in a way that scales.

The key is to properly orchestrate business operations and marketing to deliver the right inventory to the right location and the right customer using the right message at the right time.

In truth, most people continue to think about “what” is happening instead of “when” things are happening. Which means they can’t scale demand and supply in harmony.

2. What do you think professionals who are responsible for customer experience in their organization need to know most about Service Design?

Customer experience professionals need to remember that Service Design has been with us for almost 50 years. The idea of aligning customer behavior to operations is nothing new.

What’s new is the 200% growth year over year in consumption brought about by the combination of mobile phones and the internet. This means that CX and Service Design organizations alike have to mitigate more waste and more risk when content, customer behavior and operations are not properly aligned to finance.

3. Would you say there is a high level of skepticism? If so, why?

Definitely. In fact, a person should be skeptical of any CX or Service Design strategy that omits customer feedback from business decisions. To deliver the revenue or margins that the C-Suite wants, we must all connect customer behavior to business operations – at scale.

4. What are a couple of hot trends you're seeing in Service Design now?

First would be the blurring of the lines between CX and Service Design. Both ends of the spectrum are abruptly realizing that they are one and the same, which leads to the second trend that's shaping all of our futures: machine learning and the ability to quantify customer behavior in real time across all of an organization's business units. Over the next few years, we'll see CX and Service Design leaders who embrace AI dynamically transform every part of business operations at a pace never before realized. I'd go as far as to consider the next few years as the birth of a new, high-velocity, Kaizen era.

5. With so many benefits to be had, what would keep CX professionals from implementing Service Design?

Nothing. The strongest leaders are already augmenting their value to their organizations with technology integrated across traditional working silos. There's no reason today why transformation can't come from any team, anywhere within any organization. We all want the same things, like capturing lost revenue from unhappy customers, decreased transactional friction and margin increases from accelerated commerce.

6. You say that "Every CX strategy should start with a commerce alignment workshop." Why is this imperative, in your opinion?

Commerce alignment is the way we, at The Integer Group, describe the process of breaking down silos.

What we see in the market today is rampant technology and lots of smart people at companies who are eager for new business success. To achieve rapid transformation, we look beyond technology platforms alone, and invest in the intangible catalysts of People, Rigor, Big Ideas, Insights and Decisiveness.

It really all comes down to teamwork to make the dream work.

7. Speed and efficiency in service are continually brought up as critical for CX success, so much so that our theme this year focuses on optimizing the customer experience through holistic Service Design. In the context of The Integer Group's service experiences, what does delivering superior customer experience mean to you?

At Integer, we believe that superior customer experience comes from connecting everything a brand does operationally to the behavior of its customers at scale.

Every customer has a unique behavior, and so we work beyond customer-centric strategy and instead deliver C-Suite-centric strategies that ultimately pay off for every single customer by recognizing them as the individuals that they truly are.

8. What project that you've built are you most proud of?

While we're proud of all the industry transformation we're creating with Fortune 100 brands, I'd have to say that the work we're currently doing with one of our clients is very exciting.

Right now, we're correlating major databases including CRM, POS and ERP within the organization combined with sensors inside retail stores to reorganize and reimagine several years historical data as quantifiable CX business attribution and insights. We're essentially connecting customer journeys and product journeys across every team. The results are completely transforming annual planning and forecasting.

It's exactly this kind of effort that harkens back to our shopper agency roots and squarely positions us as the commerce agency of the future, because we leverage our understanding of retail to pull above-the-line and below-the-line activity into quantifiable attribution for brands.

9. What are you most looking forward to at the Service Design conference this October?

I think this is a seminal year for all of us as we converge on a new era of Csuite Centricity. With so many great thought CX/UX/SD leaders at this event, I'm hoping we'll all build new bridges across the industry and together find ways to accelerate the success that clients and the industry demand.



Optimizing Customer Experience through Holistic Service Design

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