

# Adding Value to the Journey: Mastering CX to Build Meaningful Relationships

## Discover:

- How trended data can unlock new customers.
- The business benefits of 'friction right' design.
- Why speed and customer empowerment are key.

TransUnion<sup>®</sup> 



# Contents

- 1** The role of customer experience in financial services [Pg 3 >](#)
- 2** The digital experiences consumers want [Pg 6 >](#)
- 3** How to win in the experience economy [Pg 11 >](#)
- 4** Recommendations and horizon scanning [Pg 20 >](#)

## METHODOLOGY

**Customer experience research:**  
TransUnion worked in conjunction with an independent Manchester-based research agency to conduct a survey of 2,002 consumers in May 2019. Respondents were all UK-based, over 18, and had been through a financial application process in the past six months.

**Open Banking research:**  
In November 2018, TransUnion worked with Forrester to conduct a survey of 1,555 UK consumers (aged 18+) who had been through a financial application process in the last six months.

**Credit score research:**  
TransUnion worked in conjunction with OnePoll to conduct a survey of 2000 consumers in May 2019. Responders were nationally representative (UK) and were all aged 18 and over.

# Key takeaways

We are working in an era where the transformation of digital customer experience (CX), through data and software, is powering business growth.

This paper pinpoints how speed, digital fluency and human connection can unlock CX as an asset and differentiator for organisations working in the financial sector.

It makes recommendations, informed by our expertise as a global information and insights company, on how trust, trended data and educational tools can improve conversions and customer loyalty; ultimately helping you win in the 'experience economy.'

# Better CX =

-  **Better data usage**  
The introduction of trended data represents a seismic shift in the way we understand and evaluate consumer data. It offers superior intelligence and analytics for more precise decisions, benefitting consumers and businesses alike.
-  **Aligning consumer expectations and brand ambitions**  
CX will be led as much by consumer expectations as it will by business innovation. As new CX expectations emerge and become the norm, companies that fail to improve and adapt, and in many cases adopt the standards of others, will wither and die.
-  **A balancing act**  
Consumers want experiences that are secure, fast and tailored for them. How you balance these factors will determine whether you are able to win their business and gain their loyalty.

## Section 1

# The role of customer experience within financial services

- › Entering the Consumer First era.
- › The business benefits of 'friction right' design.
- › Why speed and customer empowerment are key.

[< RETURN TO CONTENTS](#)



# Entering the Consumer First era

As the digital world evolves, consumer awareness around the value of data, security and the art of the possible when it comes to online experiences, increases.

Digital evolution is evident in financial services where modern banking has entered the Consumer First era, where power has shifted, and continues to shift, to the consumer. Consumers today have more choice, information, control and higher expectations than ever before.

The transition to the Consumer First era has brought major regulatory changes – PSD2, GDPR and Open Banking – as well as new business models including digital-only banks such as Starling and Monzo, peer-to-peer lenders and consumer empowerment platforms such as Credit Karma, MoneySuperMarket and TotallyMoney.

Add to this the growing expectations of consumers when interacting via digital channels, and we have a perfect storm of factors driving transformation in how financial institutions must value and invest in customer experience programmes.

## THE VALUE OF GOOD CX

Implementing CX that puts ease-of-use first, while keeping consumers safe and giving them a personalised experience isn't easy, but does pay off.

A recent study conducted by TransUnion shows that institutions that get CX right will be rewarded.<sup>1</sup> 79% of consumers we surveyed said they would use or would consider using a company again if their customer experience was positive, and one fifth of those who had a good customer experience would recommend the company to others.

Additionally conversion rates will increase, loyalty will improve and your chances of being 'top of wallet' will go up.

To be successful in this era organisations need a deep understanding of consumers' preferences and to design approaches that meet these expectations. This will involve harnessing the power of data from a variety of sources to not only make better decisions, but complete aspects of application forms without having to ask the consumer for information, employ smart and adaptive fraud and identity verification techniques, and embrace personalisation.



### WHAT'S THE CURRENT STATE OF PLAY?

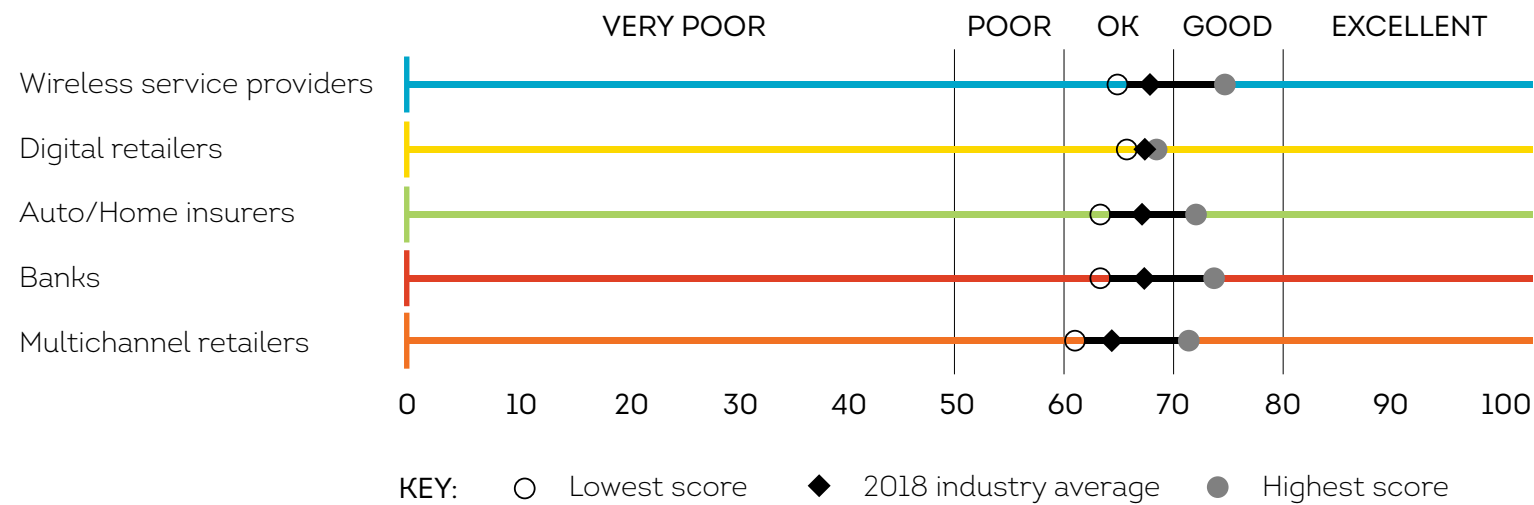
For Satrajit 'Satty' Saha, CEO of TransUnion UK, senior teams need to understand the commercial advantages CX offer: "Organisations need to use big data in a sophisticated way, embrace consumer empowerment and balance legislation, commercial and consumer expectations."

"Our own consumer research, which we believe complements existing Forrester insight, suggests many organisations are not yet ready to embrace the Consumer First era of banking or have a true understanding of the commercial improvements great CX can create," continues Saha.

"Those excelling at CX grow revenue faster, drive higher brand preference and cultivate loyalty. They can place a commercial value on aspects of customer experience and will be in pole position to win in the experience economy. The way CX teams operate, either working horizontally or in silos on specific projects, can present challenges. The former may limit their influence, whilst a consequence of the latter is that some innovation or investment serves a limited use case and the organisation fails to capitalise on the relevance or upside, outside of that. It falls to senior teams to face this challenge and work collaboratively on strategies that have a consumer lens."

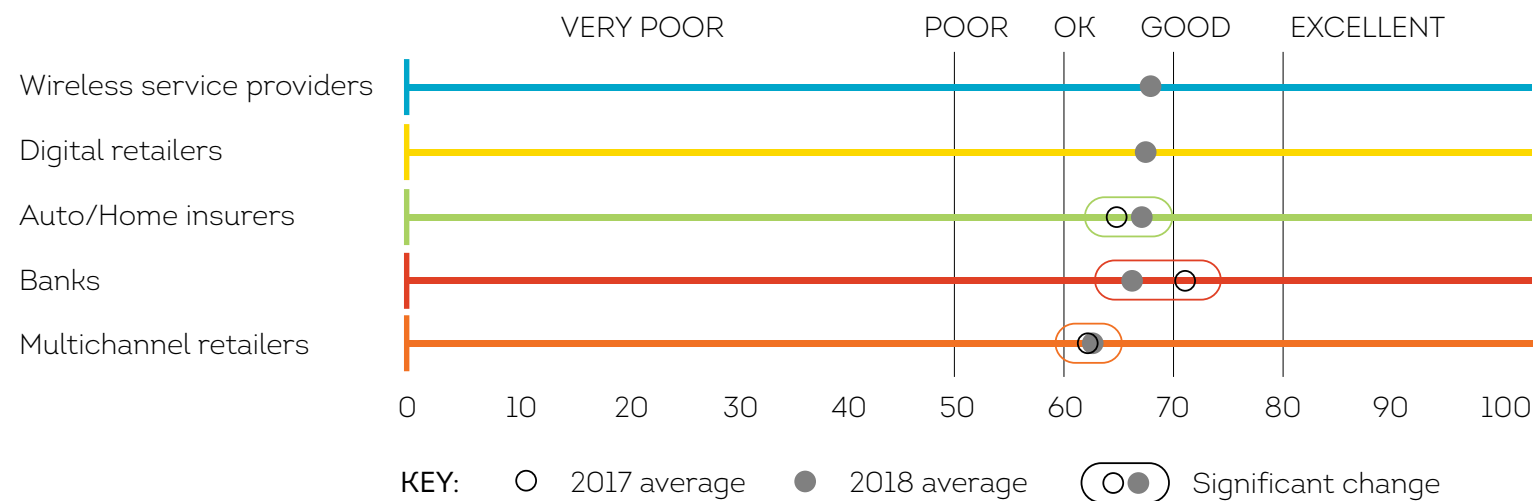
### FORRESTER RESEARCH: THE UK CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE INDEX 2018<sup>1</sup>

#### How brands build loyalty with the quality of their experience:



Forrester's 'The UK Customer Experience Index 2018' research revealed that the industry average CX for UK banks had been downgraded between 2017 and 2018, with no UK bank rated as having excellent CX. It isolated a number of factors for this decline including brands meeting rather than exceeding expectations and a lack of focus on customer service.

#### How 2018 compared to the 2017 customer experience index:



## Section 2

# The digital experiences consumers want

- › Consumers value digital fluency.
- › Speed wins every time.
- › Brands need to be human-centric.

[← RETURN TO CONTENTS](#)



**Brian Chesky**, co-founder and CEO of Airbnb, describes the importance of knowing your consumer as: “If you want to create a great product, just focus on one person. Make that one person have the most amazing experience ever.”

Airbnb encapsulates the new types of digital experience consumers are embracing – its peer-to-peer model flips the traditional vendor-customer relationship on its head and its platform’s usability brings together the best UX and UI from social and retail platforms.

With a reported annual turnover of \$2.6bn<sup>1</sup> in 2017, Airbnb highlights how technology can be harnessed to create products and new experiences that consumers love.

We have discovered that consumers have three main expectations when looking for financial products:

- i. **Digital fluency**
- ii. **Speed**
- iii. **Human connection**



# i. Consumers value digital fluency

Digital fluency is the ability to deliver consistent, connected and optimised experiences. Our research reveals that these qualities are important to consumers when they are interacting with financial service providers.

When applying for a financial product, like a loan or credit card, 75% of those surveyed said that it was important or very important that applications are done online or via an app.<sup>1</sup>

For Melanie Zimmerman, senior vice president, TransUnion International, consumers now expect a certain standard of digital experience, regardless of what they are buying or applying for: “When you think about FinTechs, online retailers like Amazon or sharing economy platforms like Uber, they are setting the bar in terms of what people expect from a really great customer experience.

Consumers are getting used to a certain level of experience and when that experience doesn't exist, they notice it and they can get easily frustrated.”

## POOR CX INFLUENCES ABANDONMENT RATES

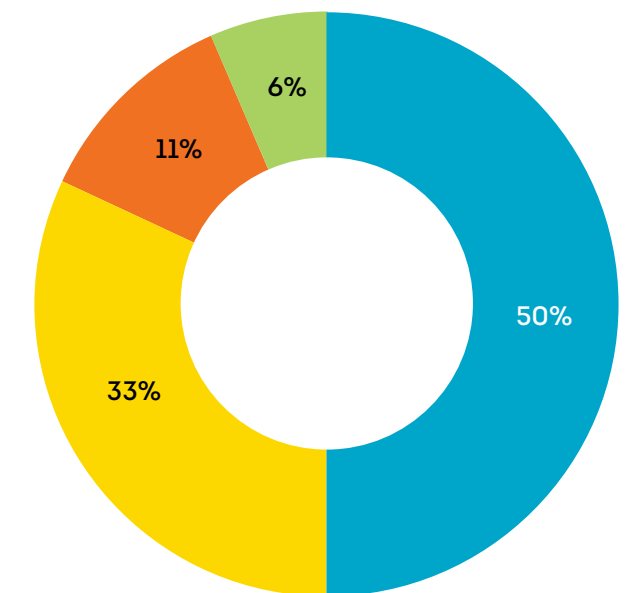
50% of consumers surveyed said that they have dropped out of a previous credit application process due to poor CX. Of this 50%, dropouts occurred most frequently in applications for short term payday loans (61%) and credit cards (55%).

There is nothing more frustrating than losing a good customer once they've made the effort to turn up onto your site and start the application process. Combine this with the recent Bank of England's Credit Conditions Survey - 2019 Q1, which reports that lenders expect a decrease in the demand for credit

card lending in Q2 and that demand for other unsecured lending is expected to decrease<sup>2</sup>, and it is clear that great CX that reduces abandonment rates is essential to growth.

Supporting the argument that CX influences decisions, our research indicates consumers are proactive in shopping around for the best levels of service or latest deal - 55% of consumers surveyed either switched bank accounts or opened a new bank account in the last 12 months.<sup>1</sup> Operating in a credit market where lenders are competing for a smaller consumer base, there is a clear need for providers to optimise onboarding and customer management approaches.

**50% OF CUSTOMERS HAVE DROPPED OUT DUE TO POOR APPLICATION PROCESS OR A BAD EXPERIENCE.**



■ HAVE DROPPED OUT  
■ HAVEN'T DROPPED OUT  
■ DON'T KNOW  
■ NONE OF THE ABOVE



## ii. Speed wins every time

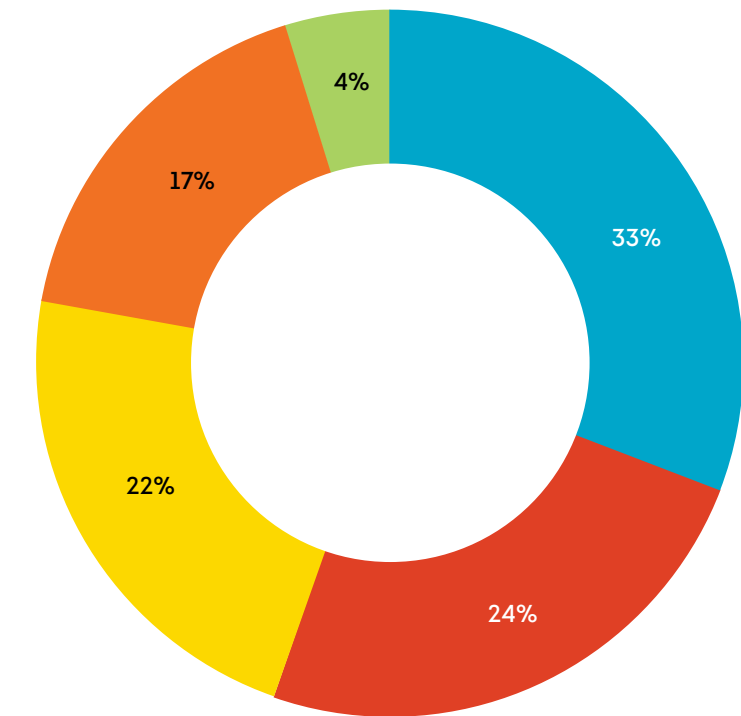
Speed is a significant factor for consumers when selecting a provider. Over a third of respondents said speed of application impacted their choice, and 31% said ease of application was their primary concern.

Digging deeper, over a third of respondents who dropped out of the application process cited 'time taken' as their main reason for doing so. 24% dropped out due to too many questions and 22% dropped out if they were required to go into branch.

It's clear that the mass adoption of one-click, fast apps have set the bar higher for financial services and anyone believing that the complexity of a lending product negates this expectation is likely to be left behind. Lenders need to focus on the pivotal and influential role of speed throughout the process and work with specialists to design systems that allow for smooth verification and authentication, and gives the consumer faster and fairer decisions.

**33%** dropped out due to process being too time-consuming and **24%** due to process asking too many questions.

WHY CUSTOMERS DROPPED OUT OF THE APPLICATION PROCESS:



- Process too time-consuming
- Asked too many questions
- Required me to go into branch
- Asked for paper copies of documents
- Other

## iii. Brands need to be human-centric

Whilst digital fluency and speed are key aspects of the application process, hard-earned customers need to be managed properly to encourage loyalty and optimise their lifetime value. This can involve tools that empower and educate consumers.

39% of respondents said they would expect to be proactively contacted following a change in financial circumstance and 37% said they would contact their credit provider if their financial situation changed. This means that over three quarters of respondents (76%) understood that it was helpful and better for their credit provider to be aware of their financial situation.<sup>1</sup>

### THE OPPORTUNITY TO EDUCATE CONSUMERS

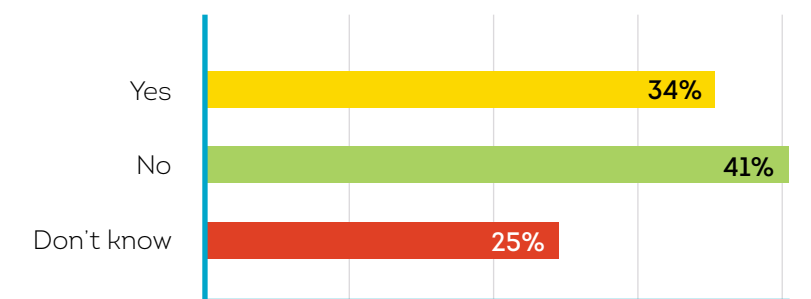
It is worth noting that whilst consumers would appreciate proactive communication to discuss their financial situation, our research revealed that two thirds (66%) of consumers don't know what their credit score is and almost four out of 10 (38%) felt confident they knew what information was stored in their credit report. This suggests that organisations need to work harder in educating consumers to fully understand their financial situation and give them confidence in the decisions they can and cannot afford to make.

The opportunity to provide tools that educate users is underscored by the fact that 84% of responders regard safety as important during the application process.<sup>2</sup> With fraud an evolving and expensive battleground for organisations, education and better interaction with consumers on a broad range of financial issues must be top of your CX priority list.

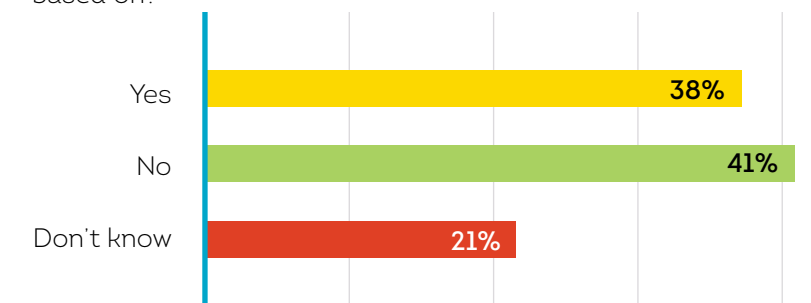
Being human-centric is about your organisation valuing your relationships with consumers through effective communication and giving consumers easy access to the tools and information they need to make the best decisions they can.

### 2/3 OF CONSUMERS DON'T KNOW WHAT THEIR CREDIT SCORE IS.

Do you know what your credit score currently is?



Do you feel confident that you know what information is stored within your credit report, which your credit score is based on?



## Section 3

# How to win in the experience economy

- › Personalisation through data innovation.
- › Understanding 'friction right' design.
- › Consumer empowerment:  
data / value exchange and education.

[← RETURN TO CONTENTS](#)



# Personalisation through trended data

Over the last few years we've worked extensively to introduce trended credit data to markets across the globe.

This experience, coupled with our advanced analytics capabilities, will shortly provide UK organisations with a more precise picture of a consumer's ability to manage their financial commitments. In the era of consumer empowerment it is more important than ever for organisations to optimise their decision-making process through the use of data.

Melanie Zimmerman, who helped introduce the concept of trended data to 12 countries, understands the power of this information and is excited to bring this game-changing capability to the UK:

"Organisations have been making decisions for decades from credit data, which has enabled them to get a robust view of a consumer's credit risk at a specific point in time. Until now, they were unable to understand how consumers arrived at that point, leaving valuable insights

hidden and hindering greater segmentation and personalisation of offers."

"The introduction of trended and alternative data provides UK organisations with fresh consumer credit insights, bringing consumers to life in new and meaningful ways. Metaphorically it's akin to the switch from still photography to HD video," explains Zimmerman. "The reality is that you can have three totally different people that appear to present the same credit risk. Where a traditional credit report offers a snapshot of the consumer at a single point in time, trended data insights leverage rich, field-level historical data to understand how consumer credit commitments have changed historically.

"For example, a traditional view may show you that a consumer has £3,000 of credit card debt but would not show you if that balance has built up or been paid down over time. Time and again, our studies show this data insight as an important risk management tool."

## THE NEW INSIGHTS UNEARTHED BY UK TRENDED DATA

Pilot studies have revealed previously unseen insights delivered through scores, models and algorithms. These new and powerful insights will allow UK organisations to make a better, more accurate decisions when acquiring new customers or managing their existing customer base. For Zimmerman, trended data represents the cornerstone of the Consumer First era and will set the standard of data usage in years to come.

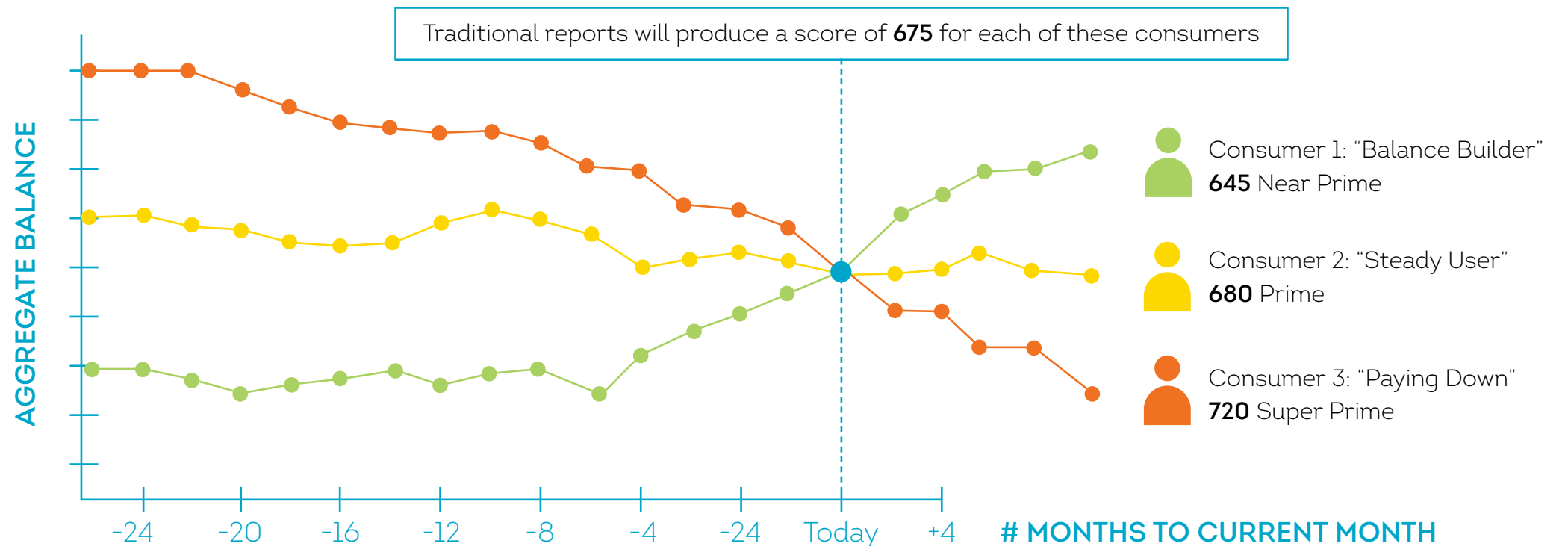
**By using trended credit data, lenders can:**

- > Gain a competitive advantage through risk differentiation and competitive pricing, resulting in higher conversions.
- > More accurately predict an application's performance and approve more applications, leading to a better experience and healthier bottom lines.
- > Gain access to emerging credit consumers who may have previously been at or below the lender's credit risk tier cut-off.
- > Identify account issues early, including potential delinquency.

In the UK market, changing economic conditions and the volume of competition means traditional institutions, challenger banks, and alternative lenders are all trying to convert the same shrinking group of consumers. And as the sector moves into the Consumer First era there is a clear need to make more optimal decisions to support an aspirational customer experience. Trended data solves these challenges.

The information it offers is incredibly powerful, helping organisations make better decisions and offer products and services that are more finely tuned to suit individual consumers based on their historic behaviour. Harnessed correctly it can supercharge a well-designed CX proposition and offer real commercial advantage.

**ILLUSTRATION OF THE PREDICTIVE POWER OF TRENDED DATA**



## Trended data case study

An example of how trended data can improve performance comes from the US mortgage loan giant, Fannie Mae. Using trended and alternative data in combination with advanced analytics to help underwrite applicants slightly above and below their former cut-off, the lender approved 37% of the loans that had previously been declined. And with better insights from their improved data and analytics, these approved loans had a delinquency rate 25% lower than would have been experienced if traditional data and scores has been used to approve these consumers.<sup>1</sup>

**Funding even a mere 20% of these newly approved loans would result in portfolio growth of up to 25% but also enable consumers to take the financial decisions they could afford and wanted to make. This is the essence of great CX.**



# 'Friction right' design

## FROM FRICTION FOR ALL TO SEAMLESS AND SAFE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCES

We've referenced how online retailers and businesses are raising the CX bar. The reality is, most consumers understand that if they want to take out a loan or apply for a credit card, there's going to be a higher level of scrutiny and potentially security measures to access this product or service and these types of customer journeys will include some friction.

Research shows that 83% of Millennials would switch banks for a better digital experience when applying for a product.<sup>1</sup> Financial institutions need solutions that help them deliver this through quickly establishing identities, authenticating consumers and preventing fraud. It is essential that they develop a 'friction right' experience that reduces any drag on good consumers and minimises frustration.

## WHAT IS 'FRICTION RIGHT' DESIGN?

'Friction right' refers to the design of a process or a journey that delivers an optimal experience for a particular consumer regardless of time of day, product or service they are applying for.

Its design includes layers of protection for businesses and consumers, solutions and technology that interrogates information and understands the risk level and what should be deployed, resulting in secure, user-friendly and best-in-class CX. These processes include:

### 1. VALIDATING GOOD CUSTOMERS

As more consumers search for offers and apply online, they expect financial institutions to provide a seamless and safe experience. A 2018 Forrester study, commissioned by TransUnion, found that 71% of financial firms say consumer

expectations have significant influence on their fraud detection methods.<sup>2</sup>

The most modern identity verification solutions incorporate both personal and device data, allowing lenders to validate the applicant's identity quickly. Lenders are recognising the importance of the customer onboarding experience, but many still need to modernise both the systems and data they use to establish identities and authenticate consumers.

### 2. DELIVERING THE SAME OR A BETTER OUTCOME WITH LESS INTERACTION

When lenders have confidence in their authentication methods, they can further strengthen their strategies by pre-filling a consumer's application with their personally identifiable information (PII), which can be accessed from third party sources or uploaded and verified by enabling the consumer to take a picture

of any relevant document and upload it from their smartphone.

A verified pre-fill can save a customer time and increase the likelihood that they will complete the application. Lenders who can quickly verify consumers, deliver solutions to make the process more seamless, and reduce friction, can convert more applications into acquisitions.



Passive authentication can satisfy the requirement of embedding and implementing security measures without burdening the user and as transactions get increasingly risky, the checks to verify them become more overt. This balance makes it more difficult for fraudsters to tamper with or circumvent checks.

#### **FOCUSING ON THE OFFER AND ITS SUITABILITY**

CX is greatly improved when customers are presented with products and services tailored to their needs. Lenders need to show offers that they know a consumer will have a high degree of likelihood to be approved for, and narrow the choices to a subset of products, where there is a high likelihood of approval and high propensity of interest. This is a key component of 'friction right' design.

## 'Friction right' design in action

As indicated by the consumer research, the speed of the customer journey is important. For Brendan le Grange, a data researcher and author of TransUnion's quarterly Industry Insights Report, the time from the bureau enquiry to the account being opened by the lender plays an influential role in future customer loyalty: "There is more to a great customer experience than turnaround time alone but the delay between a consumer applying for a credit account and that account is being opened is a decent proxy. Customers obviously enjoy faster turnaround times, but in studies around the world we have also seen a link between faster turnaround times and real financial benefits to the lender.

"In Canada, a customer whose new credit card was opened on the same day as their initial application was 8% more likely to open their next product at that same lender than a customer with similar risk levels who'd had to wait a few days longer. This loyalty gap increases as the delay stretches, and is mirrored in shape across all products. Unsurprisingly it is younger customers who have the highest expectations when it comes to fast turnaround times. A similar internal study conducted in South Africa

(2019) found that Millennials (born 1980 to 1994) were 60% more likely to open a second product with a financial institution who offered them a loan on the day of enquiry, compared with one which made them wait a week.

#### **POOR CX SIGNALS POOR PERFORMANCE**

le Grange also points out that it is often consumers with few options who are willing to put up with a bad experience: "The Canadian and South Africa studies found that the default rate was characterised by turnaround times, even when controlling for risk. Credit cards that took more than a fortnight to open in South Africa had default rates 43% higher than those opened within a week. As we look ahead to economic conditions that are likely to worsen in the UK this insight should be food for thought for providers."

This commentary illuminates just how many elements go into designing a 'friction right' experience and that the commercial rewards outweigh the climb to get there.



# Speed is integral to innovation

We've referenced the importance of speed within CX, and a key area the industry needs to explore is speed in relation to delivering immediate or near real-time fulfilment. For example, when a consumer applies for a card and wants to start using it as quickly as possible, they're reluctant to wait five days for it to turn up in the post. Or if applying for a car loan, they'll want the money immediately so they can buy the car as quickly as possible.

This kind of final fulfilment and disbursement is an area of innovation that needs to happen and solving these common pain points would benefit both consumers and lenders.

## ADDING CARDS QUICKLY TO E-WALLETS

And it is not only about dispersing funds. With the rise of e-wallets and electronic payments, it's about giving the consumer the ability to add a new card to an Apple Wallet or Google Pay so they can use it immediately.

This layer of instant gratification satisfies the need of the consumer - the faster you can get them that card, the bigger the incentive to start using it. In this scenario not only do you convert more but you gain active customers.



# Consumer empowerment: data / value exchange and education

## THE DATA / VALUE EXCHANGE

The introduction of legislation such as GDPR highlights the shift in the balance of power towards the consumer in terms of what data organisations have access to, how long they have that access to it and what they can use it for. Wherever possible, from a legal and compliance perspective, organisations must look to encourage consumer understanding of data and how it can help them.

Consumer empowerment is likely to influence future product development, especially as younger generations – Millennials and Generation Z – become active users of financial services and, through the lifestyles they have, are likely to be more comfortable with the use of data and how it tells the story of who they are. They are likely to be receptive to

trading their data or some of their privacy to get access to better products and services.

Organisations must think of ways to create a clear value exchange with the consumer, operating within regulations, in return for access to their data.

Forrester Consulting research into Open Banking, commissioned by TransUnion in 2018, found that 84% of consumers surveyed indicated that they would, to some degree, allow a financial services business direct access to bank statement data if it improved the experience of applying for a new financial product.<sup>1</sup>

How willing are you to provide regulated financial services firms with direct access to use your bank statement data to improve the following experiences?

Application process for a new financial product (e.g. mortgage application)



Initial set up of the account



Budgeting and financial management



Ongoing customer services



Tailored products and services



Personalised promotional offers and discounts



Targeted online ads



Very willing    Willing    Might consider    Somewhat willing    Not willing

In contrast 68% of respondents 'would not be willing' for financial services to directly access bank statement data to improve targeting of online display advertising. This highlights that consumers are likely to have a higher propensity to share information if it can give them a tangible benefit.

It's fair to say that the adoption of Open Banking will rest on making it accessible and educating consumers on its benefits. We're also likely to see the continued growth in aggregators where consumers have access to multiple financial institutions and are matched with the best financial services provider both in terms of best pricing and best offer but also best fit. This area is ripe for growth because people are short on time and, as they become more financially and digitally savvy, want to go to one place and be offered a choice of relevant products.

**POWERING LOYALTY THROUGH CONSUMER EDUCATION**

It's in the best interest of organisations and consumers to provide educational tools that

explain credit reports and financial products, and raise consumer awareness of risks. The more educated consumers are about their financial standing, the more likely they are to improve their performance and to share data or engage in programmes like Open Banking.

The trend for tools that visualise credit reports and educate consumers on the value of building up their score, such as those offered by Credit Karma and TotallyMoney are set to continue upwards and be more widely adopted by both consumers and businesses.

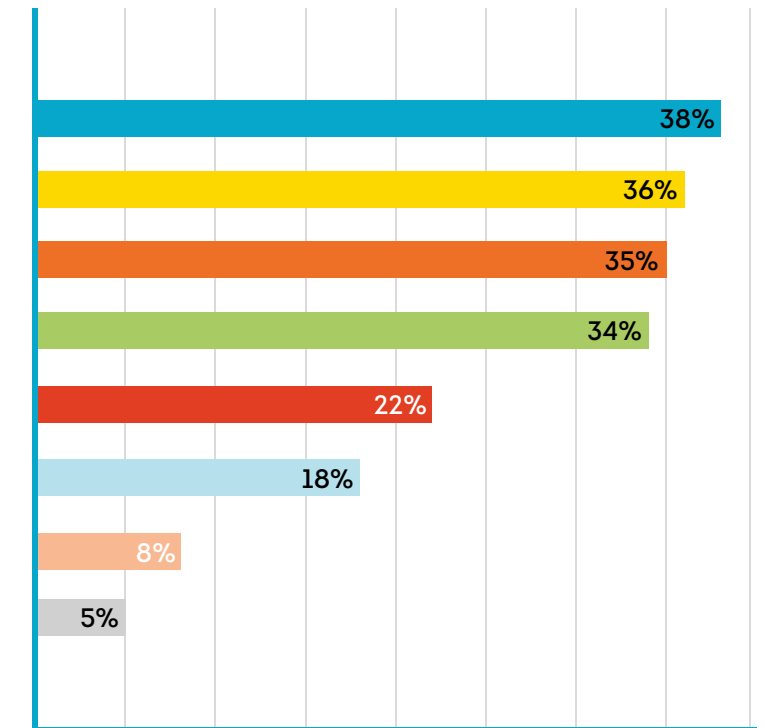
One in five consumers surveyed by TransUnion said that their credit score has helped them to achieve a life goal. However, our research also found that 66% of consumers don't know what their credit score is, suggesting that consumers need to be encouraged to use these tools consistently and educated on their long-term value.<sup>1</sup> Brands need to put effort into not only developing innovative consumer-facing products but commit resource into effectively educating consumers on how they can use them and the benefits they offer.

**COMBATING FRAUD THROUGH EDUCATION**

Likewise tools that allow consumers to spot fraudulent interactions, or to be aware that their details are for sale on the dark web, should be a key part of any CX approach.

We asked consumers about the fraud risks they look for: over a third responded that they look for a padlock (SSL protocol) when using a website; just 35% check the sender's email address; and only 5% have a Cifas report subscription. Viewed within the wider context of the publication of the Contingent Reimbursement Model code by the Payment Systems Regulator, there is a clear need for providers to better inform consumers around the risk of digital fraud. Getting this right will not only be best-in-class CX but it will also help efforts to combat fraud.

**WHICH IF ANY OF THESE DO YOU REGULARLY DO TO ENSURE YOUR DETAILS ARE SECURE ONLINE?**



- I always check for the padlock or https sign
- I do not click on email links
- I check the sender email address
- I research the company and look for reviews before applying
- I always use a new password for each account
- I always read the privacy policy
- I have a Cifas report subscription
- None of the above

# Recommendations and horizon scanning



[< RETURN TO CONTENTS](#)

# The Consumer First era is set to be dominated by innovation in customer experience, consolidation and maturity of technology, and further regulation changes.

It's likely that the way FinTechs operate will become the norm as opposed to an exception, and it will be interesting to see how many organisations move towards banking without actually being banks. For example, in the US we've seen Amazon dip its toe into financial services with the launch of a credit card for the 'under-banked'.

To optimise the opportunities that lie ahead, or counter potential competition, those working in financial services need to develop strategies and execute plans for customer experiences that don't just match, but exceed customers' expectations. It is key that organisations focus on the following components of CX: personalisation, education, speed and security. Aligned correctly these will give your brand definition and differentiation, and be an asset that protects or increases market share.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- > Good CX is about much more than a slick web interface or app for financial services. It's about delivering a secure, 'friction right' experience that gives the consumer the best possible outcome and complements their lifestyle and aspirations. Delivering this requires cutting-edge solutions and an understanding of the components that make a best-in-class CX proposition.
- > To offer excellent CX you need to know your customer and how you can exceed their expectations. Start reviewing the insight you have but also look for knowledge gaps and consider how they can be filled. Match this against your business capability to discover what could be done better for both your consumers and your commercial performance.
- > Investment can be a barrier to improving your organisation's CX. Identify relevant teams you can collaborate with or a third party expert, and look to demonstrate how a change in approach could bring commercial benefits. This could be through pilot studies using existing data or ROI models that demonstrate performance uplifts.
- > Fraud is a constant and evolving threat to any digital experience you aspire to create. Look to use solutions that you can implement as part of a 'friction right' design that protects your consumer and your organisation.
- > Empowerment and education have key roles to play in building relationships with consumers. Think about how your organisation could provide tools and information that could help give consumers a better understanding of their financial situation and enable them to make better decisions. An effective strategy could help to aid acquisition, reduce instances of fraud, and help consumers manage their money better.



Want to know how mastering CX  
can deliver happier customers  
for your business? Get in touch.

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