

2.4: Key digital concepts influencing customer behaviour

The impact of digital

Digital disruption, which is discussed throughout this book, can appear in many small and large ways. If there's one thing the past 10 years has taught us, it's that there is constant disruption and upheaval in the digital world. How we communicate with one another, how we shop, how we consume entertainment, and ultimately how we see ourselves in the world, has all changed because of digital. And these changes are continuing, even accelerating.

One of the results of digital tools and media is a destabilising of the status quo. All industries are vulnerable to change when a product or service comes along that meets user needs in an unprecedented way. Netflix has disrupted the media industry, Airbnb has changed travel, and Uber has dramatically impacted what individuals can expect from transport options.

Consider that people born after 1985, more than half the world's population, have no idea what a world without the Internet is like. They only know a rapid pace of advancement and some tools that serve them better than others.

The Internet seeks no middlemen. Established industries or organisations can be bypassed completely when people are placed in control. Your customers can find another option with one click, and are increasingly impatient. They are not concerned with the complexity of the back end. If Uber can offer them personalised cash-free transportation, why can't your product offer something comparable? People will use the service that best serves them, not what best serves an industry or existing regulations.

The global citizens and their tribe

Coupled with these empowered digital consumers, who are changing digital and driving disruption as much as digital is changing them, is the contradiction evident in the relationship between a global citizen and increasingly fragmented and differentiated tribes built around interests. National identity, given global migration and connectivity, has shifted as the world has gotten smaller. On the other hand, the Internet has created space for people to create, form, support and evolve their own niche communities. This duality forces marketers to keep cognisant of global shifts while tracking and focusing on niche communities and specific segments within their market.

The attention economy

The attention economy is a term used to describe the large number of things competing for customer attention. Media forms and the mediums through which they can be consumed have exploded over the last decade, and it's increasingly difficult to get the attention of those you are trying to reach. Your customer is distracted and has many different things vying for their attention.

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