How to Think Outside Your Industry and Revolutionize the Customer Journey

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Traditional industries often change slowly, but they have a considerable market share and continue to succeed despite this because they are what customers are used to. They may hope for a more innovative product, but they have been content to settle for what the industry giants offer.

However, in a post-Covid world, consumers are interested in something other than the same old tired products and services they've always dealt with. Instead, they're demanding newer, better solutions. To stay alive, companies must rethink the customer experience and offer the public something fresh.

Well-established industries can be slow to adopt new solutions, but there are a few ways to build a disruptive tech product and shake things up.

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1. Build detailed customer profiles from scratch

It's time to toss out everything you think you know about your customers and start with a clean slate. A recent report from WeTravel found that travelers are increasingly looking for more personalized experiences, but how and why they travel has

shifted in a post-Covid world.

So, the best way to get to know your customers again is to throw away your notes, roll up your sleeves and figure out who they are and what they want. McKinsey recently found that there are more nuanced customer segments post-pandemic, so you might discover new categories of travelers with unique pain points and preferences.

For instance, premium travelers are now more interested than ever in feeling like they're part of an exclusive community. Meanwhile, boomers are looking for more hands-on human assistance when booking trips.

The things that are most popular with your audience outside of your industry are the same things that will draw them to your product.

As an example, millennials are a "subscription lifestyle" generation. They like products and services that allow access with a simple subscription fee. That's why brands like Dollar Shave Club and Hello Fresh remain popular with that age bracket. Travel brands like Inspirato and Bidroom use this subscription-style model to provide better, customer-focused service.

Gen Z, on the other hand, is more interested in the YOLO (you only live once) lifestyle and gamification. They're spontaneous, experience-driven and attracted to things with fun game mechanics like the ability to unlock achievements or "level up."

Travel booking app Hopper has leaned into this, creating daily login streak bonuses, dropping surprise destination deals and offering "loot crate"-style rewards to use in-app.

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2. Look to other industries to find ways to disrupt your own

Remember that you're not the first to try to win against big players. Thousands of startups in dozens of industries are playing the same underdog game. Many are succeeding, so it's worth considering what they're doing right.

Always monitor new emerging products and business models in related industries. The most popular models with different demographics in other areas, such as dating, dining or entertainment, can give you insights about what to incorporate into your disruptive product.

This strategy is already working for companies like Turo, which utilizes an Airbnb-style model of peer-to-peer car sharing for short-term and long-term rentals. This was a truly disruptive idea. It opened up the car rental industry, allowing owners to earn money and renters to access vehicles at lower prices.

Dating apps like Tinder and Bumble have long been popular with Gen Z, so travel app OfftheGrid decided to capitalize on that trend to create a brand-new travel experience for the younger generation of travelers.

The brand allows users to "swipe on" and chat with travelers who share their interests while discovering new destinations. The result is a unique travel product that breaks away from the traditional model of sites like Expedia.

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3. Follow the tech trends

It's important to follow where technology leads you to

maintain a competitive advantage. If your company can get ahead of the curve, it sets you up to control a huge market share once the tech you've already adopted starts trickling down to your competitors.

For instance, once the internet became widespread, online travel agencies suddenly became popular. The logical progression that followed was moving from web browsers to phones as mobile internet overtook the telecom industry.

We're now in the early days of the era of big data and generative AI, so it's natural for innovations like ChatGPT to start changing everything we know about travel. Big names like Expedia and Kayak have already begun leveraging ChatGPT to allow customers to build trips through natural conversations with their chatbots.

By keeping abreast of technology trends, you can ensure the product you build is cutting-edge and can catch travelers' attention.

4. Think beyond your product

Disruption won't happen overnight. It usually has to be incremental because customers and competitors have to get used to the idea of being outside of what they already know.

Because of this, you need to think about more than just the disruptive product you're creating. Remember, if you succeed, you're essentially turning your sector upside-down. Other brands will want to follow in your footsteps.

So, ask the big-picture questions while you create: How will this change the market in the long term? What will the ripple effects be?

For example, AI and ChatGPT are taking over nearly every industry (including travel!), even though they started as tech industry ideas. Now, we're seeing companies that aren't

willing to jump on board with AI get left behind while the ones that dive in are finding success in unprecedented ways.

We’ve figured out that a total overhaul of the customer journey is the key to successfully disrupting a traditional sector. If you’re looking to start a revolution in a well-established industry, you have to be willing to admit what you don’t know, get down in the trenches and figure out ways to make every customer segment feel like they can’t live without your product.

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