Running a connected business

The qualities and strategies required for true customer-centricity

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What does it mean to to run a connected business?

Simply put: Connected businesses run with more agility and more certainty.

A connected business has what it takes to elegantly adjust to ever-evolving, frequently disruptive markets. They are equipped with advanced digital technology and tools to reimagine business processes and enhance physical business interactions with customers, partners, and employees, across every aspect of the business. That means all parts of the organization have access to real-time data and can use this data to make decisions with certainty and business adjustments with confidence. And today, it means they are able to put customers at the center of everything they do.

When executed well, a connected business will help your organization:

- Improve customer experience and engagement

- Deliver comprehensive, actionable visibility

- Increase efficiency and automation

- Improve decision-making

- Make swift business adjustments

Read this guide and find out what it takes to run a successful connected business and meet the ever-evolving expectations of the reimagined customer.

The reimagined customer experience

Whether you are a product company, a services company, or in many cases both — to be successful in today's digital economy, you must deliver outstanding customer experiences.

Think about the years operating in the pandemic. Businesses that not only survived but also thrived during uncertain times had one thing in common: they were all connected businesses. They had the advanced tools and technology to anticipate and meet customers needs and make swift business model adjustments.

On the other hand, businesses that were late in adopting a digital strategy found themselves scrambling to find new ways to keep customers satisfied, operations going, and revenue coming in the door. The core reasons: disconnected teams, data, and applications.

Keeping customers happy is only getting harder

A recent study by Accenture revealed 72% of customers expect companies they do business with to understand and address how their needs changed after experiencing a pandemic. The study emphasized that every interaction they have with your organization from pre-sales to support to delivery to billing and renewal will either bring them closer to you or will send them in another direction. Accenture has coined the term: the reimagined customer.

What's the answer?

A connected, digital business.

Creating a holistic, personalized, and uninterrupted customer experience can be spearheaded and maintained by the customer success team.

Yet now, all internal departments including sales, services, and finance are touchpoints that influence the customer experience and impact satisfaction, retention, and revenues. Every department is interdependent, with a shared opportunity and responsibility to create a coherent and quality experience.

Accountability for customer satisfaction and resulting business success is shared by all. And it needs new and connected capabilities.
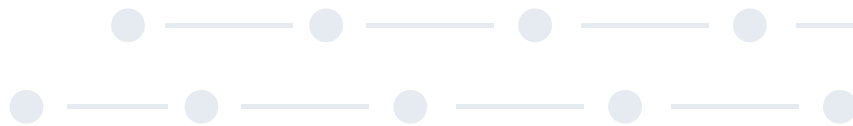
The customer experience programs of the future will be holistic, predictive, precise, and clearly tied to business outcomes…Those that stick with traditional systems will be forced to play catch-up in the years to come. **99**

McKinsey
Prediction: The Future of CX, 2021

The DNA of a successful connected business

As you start thinking about your own business systems and their role in enhancing the customer experience, below are some key characteristics that drive a connected business.

Cross-functional collaboration

True connected businesses are able to achieve cross-functional collaboration where integrated systems act as one and everyone in the organization will have access to the same data, where the customer remains at the core.

360° business views

With views across the entire business and customers, connected businesses are able to adapt quickly to market needs, redefine and automate processes, and drive new business models based on customer requirements.

Customer-focused automation

Connected businesses are able to spend less time on manual and tactical operations and focus more on accelerating timeto-value for customers.

Actionable insights

Connected businesses are able to capture, share, integrate, and unlock critical customer insights and use it to make decisions with certainty and quickly adapt to customer needs.

Personal touch

With the right insights and access, connected businesses are able to engage customers directly and in a personalized way at every touchpoint in the business, from the front office to the back.

Empowered workforce

From voice commands, to built-in collaboration, to role-based workspaces, connected businesses use the most advanced tools to keep employees happy and productive while creating innovative experiences with customers and partners.

It's extremely important that the business is connected completely around the customer, and you can't be connected around the customer if your business functions are operating in silos. "

Rachel Riley
CFO, Ansarada

What to focus on when building your connected business

Identify and eliminate silos

From data sets to processes, every organization must be able to rapidly identify and eliminate obstructions to customer happiness and business growth. In many cases, those obstructions take the form of internally-created silos of data or information. Whether through integrations or—even better—same-platform solution sets, eliminating silos helps the whole organization synchronize and drive toward the same goals.

Optimize customer-critical motions

How many different data points, processes, and people does it take to get a customer from an offer to product or service delivery? From delivery to billing? From any stage to the next? Businesses built around the customer look at every single customer-critical motion and optimize speed, efficiency, and overall experience for the customer. While streamlining each individual motion, they also apply the same perspective throughout the global lifecycle to automatically engage customers from offer to renewal.

Simplify and streamline

If you keep in mind the classic paradigm — systems, processes, and people — you'll realize that shifting to customer-centricity is about more than just technology architectures or process workflows. It's also about simplifying adoption of tech and processes for all your people involved. When selecting systems and designing processes, keep in mind that everything should take advantage of today's latest innovation, reduce complexity for users, and ultimately streamline customer experience.

Connect your front-and back-office systems

Your system should connect all back-office functions and data (ERP) to the front office (CRM) to produce a unified view of your business, structured around a master customer record. Get a single, seamless experience from customer acquisition, quoting, and contracts to internal financial operations and fulfillment.

Focus on innovation

Once you've created a unified, digitally charged infrastructure to work from, you've now freed your IT teams to focus on innovation and customer value. They can say good-bye to maintaining a mishmosh of disparate applications and homegrown solutions to produce the processes and insights leaders need.
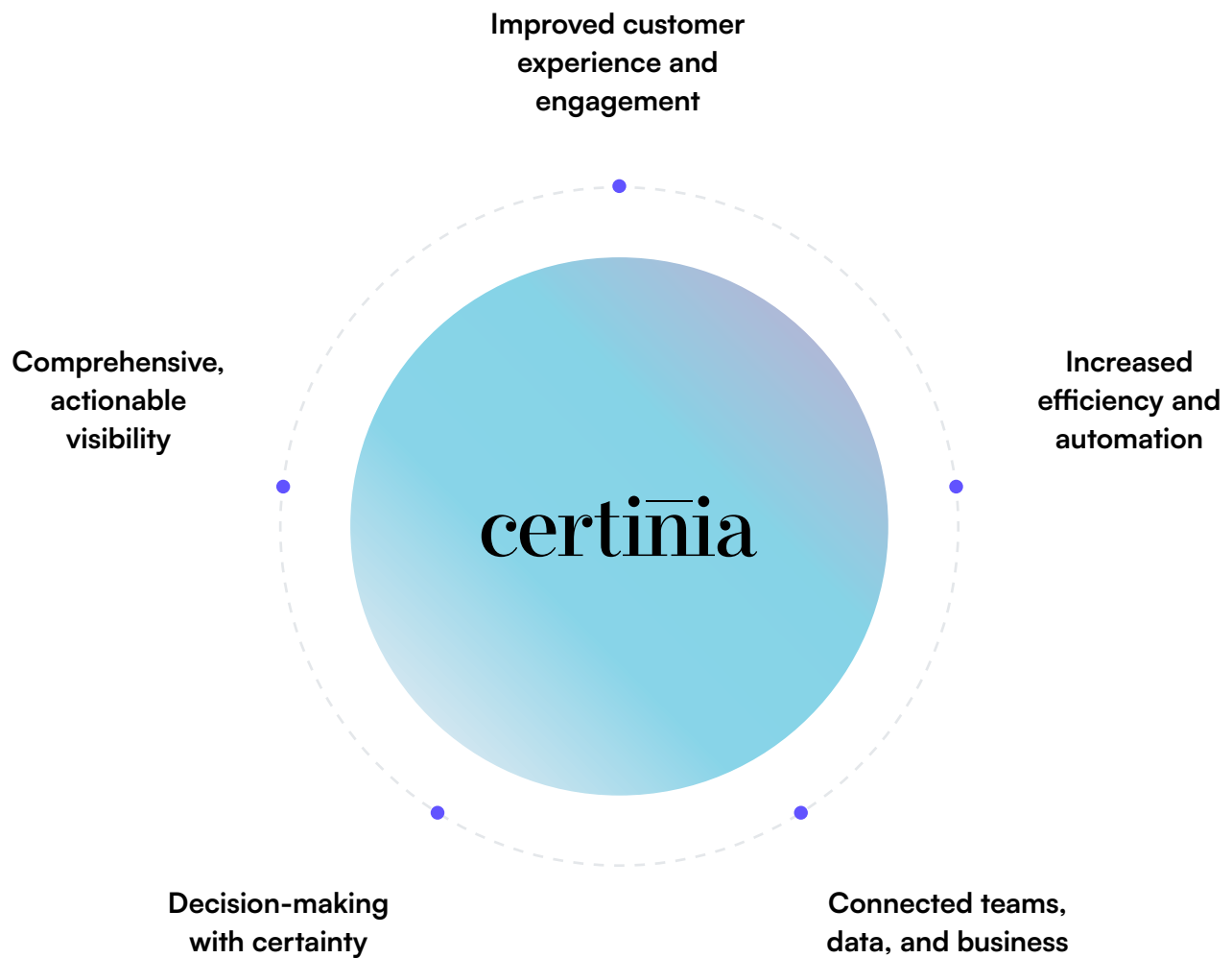
Several key ingredients must be in place to power client centricity with a 360-degree customer view. A fundamental decision is the technology platform — increasingly Salesforce has become the platform of choice.

SPI Research
Platform Matters! The Impact of Digital Transformation within the Salesforce Ecosystem

READ REPORT

A connected digital business delivers both customer delight and business value

Improved customer experience and engagement

Comprehensive, actionable visibility

Increased efficiency and automation

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Decision-making with certainty

Connected teams, data, and business

Companies that run a connected business experience figures like:

33%–50%

Improvement in Days Sales Outstanding (DSO)

50%–90%

Improvement in financial close times

2–4%+

Increase in utilization

A path to customers for life

It's for all these reasons companies turn to Certinia. Customer centricity is key to everything we do. We enable our customers to run their entire business digitally by connecting the front and back office. We unlock customer insights across the entire customer experience, from opportunity to renewal, without the need for integrations. We help create even more trust in you and your offerings, driving the Big 4 of customer outcomes: satisfaction, retention, expansion and referrals. And we do it all on the same Salesforce platform already loved by our customers.
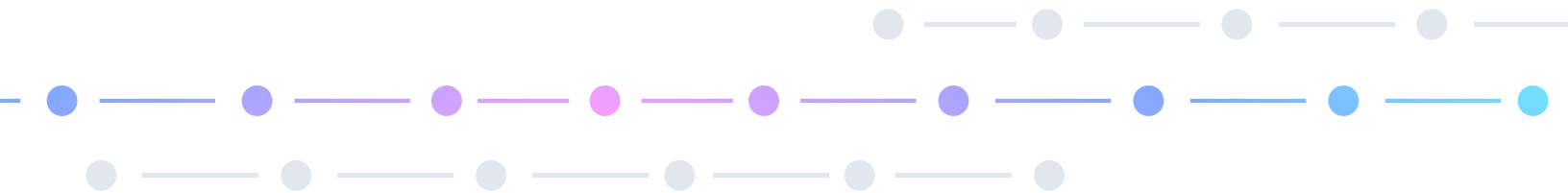
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Experience Customer Centricity

Certinia elevates business growth through a complete Services-as-a-Business solution spanning services delivery, finance, and customer success. Native to the leading cloud platform, Salesforce, Certinia enables organizations to run a connected business, deliver with intelligence, and achieve scalable agility. Founded in 2009 and headquartered in San Francisco, Certinia is backed by Advent International, Salesforce Ventures, and Technology Crossover Ventures. For more information, visit www.certinia.com.

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