

# Finding Value Through TCE Design

A STARTING POINT FOR EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS



## About the Author

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Garrett Colburn works across nearly every project at LEVEL, solving complex business challenges by identifying insights about consumer needs or behaviors and mapping solutions to the touchpoints a customer has with the brand. With project experience ranging from travel marketing to enterprise business strategy, Garrett has a bird's-eye view into today's marketing and business challenges and is an advocate for using Total Customer Experience Design to develop simple, actionable and innovative solutions.

## About LEVEL

LEVEL delivers integrated marketing and product development for global brands. Through the interplay of branded content, technology platforms and connected devices, we design a total user experience that amplifies the relationship between brand and consumer. Our methodology is proven; our behavior is adaptive.

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## Introduction

LEVEL believes the brands that create the most value for their customers are the ones that generate customer preference, satisfaction and loyalty.

To create value, marketers and product developers must uncover where the biggest opportunities exist for solving challenges, simplifying experiences and improving processes. At LEVEL, we use a framework called Total Customer Experience (TCE) Design to help us find ways to add value and exceed consumer expectations. The methods outlined in this paper are some of the ways in which we get started in identifying ways to add value.

Value is created when a brand finds a need, designs a solution that addresses that need and dramatically improves the way the user does something. Insights about the customer enable us to find unmet needs and come up with innovative ways to address them. These insights can be applied to many parts of the product ecosystem, but the following three categories are most relevant:

01. Business Model
02. Content Strategy
03. Customer Experience and Service

For each of these, let's look at examples where insights led to an innovative solution and uncover how consumer electronics brands can benefit from this approach.

## Business Model

Business models that make products economical or more convenient to buy have the ability to strike a chord with customers. Parts of the business model where value can frequently be added include the revenue model, purchase channel (direct, retail, etc.), eCommerce experience or return policy.

**Looking at Warby Parker** | Innovative eyewear company Warby Parker was founded based on a simple observation. The founders, all of whom wear glasses, realized that inexpensive, but stylish glasses did not exist. Most people are accustomed to spending \$300 for lenses and frames. In response, Warby Parker introduced a model where each pair of glasses (including lenses) is just \$95. To keep costs low, there are just two showrooms (one in New York and one in San Francisco),

and the glasses are sent via mail. Because some people like to try on their glasses before buying, Warby Parker has a free home try-on program that allows users to pick five pair of glasses and have them sent to their home for free. On top of all of this, the company donates a pair of glasses to a child who can't afford them every time one pair is purchased via their website. The company has received incredible press and is redefining the way the eyewear industry has traditionally done business.

**Lesson Learned: Observation** | A simple observation can lead to new ways of doing things and tremendous customer value, even if that means overcoming perceived barriers. In this case, the founders observed firsthand that the process for getting stylish eyewear was restrictive and expensive. They overcame consumers desire to try on the glasses before a purchase by offering a free home try on program. For many, the benefits of convenience and a lower price point outweighed the benefits of working with an optician and buying an expensive designer brand. Redefining business models for consumer electronics manufacturers might require overcoming barriers like the higher cost of goods or a desire for the consumer to see products before making a purchase.

**“Value is created when a brand finds a need, designs a solution that addresses that need and dramatically improves the way the user does something.”**

## Content Strategy

Consumer electronics are gateways to content. As such, products get judged based on the quality of content available, discoverability and the ease of accessing that content across other devices. As various players in the consumer electronics ecosystem continue to readily make high quality content available, differentiation and value may have to come from other unique content strategies.

**Looking at Enterprise Collaboration** | The adoption of mobile applications, social media and online video all have an instrumental impact on the way consumers interact with content and with one another. Today, enterprise collaboration tools aggregate things like social media, video/web conferencing and personal applications (like Pandora or Outlook) to enable employees to communicate more freely. The power of aggregating individual applications or project details is amplified by the ability to bring together recommendations, conversation and collaboration with others in an organization. Users have new ways of discovering personally relevant content and new ways of sharing important details with colleagues. This convergence offers valuable ways for individuals to increase productivity, manage their lives, stay organized and perform better on the job.

**Lesson Learned: Cross-Pollination** | Collaboration companies like Cisco cross-pollinated trends from multiple industries and audience segments to identify a completely new way to add value. After seeing how social media impacted consumers in their personal lives, watching online video consumption increase and identifying challenges in workplace collaboration, they defined a totally new category of product and service offerings. The next phase of content strategy differentiation for consumer electronic manufacturers will be finding better ways to aggregate content, make it more social, help people discover it and encourage them to use it in ways that add genuine value to their personal lives.

## Customer Experience and Service

Consumers typically develop a perception of a brand through their personal experiences with that brand. The sum of all these experiences represents the total customer experience, something that dictates whether a person does or doesn't buy a brand. Adding value to the customer across the different touchpoints that make up their experience creates differentiation.

**Looking at the St. Regis** | When you call the St. Regis Hotel to make a reservation, the staff knows everything about the hotel. They will put you in a special room or leave a surprise when they find out you are there celebrating an anniversary. When you get there, the valet takes your car, and the bellman walks you to the room and points out anything important along the way. At the restaurant, they serve great food and fine wine. If you ask them to get your shirt out of your car and they notice it's missing a button, they will fix it on the spot. Every last detail, down to the premium shampoo, is perfect. When you check out, you'll get an email making sure you had a great stay and thanking you for joining them.

The point is, the experience at the St. Regis is memorable. Everything about it is distinct and separates it from other fabulous hotels.

**Lesson Learned: Total Customer Experience Mapping** | At the St. Regis, they have thought of everything. Before you get there, while you are there and after you leave, it is clear that they have mapped out the journey of a guest and built their business around the guest. It's a great example of a total customer experience. Because individuals are so dependent on their consumer electronics products, CE brands have the same ability to form close connections with their customers as a hotel. By mapping out the interactions with consumers, opportunities will arise for exceeding expectations online, in the store and at home. Start by looking more deeply at the user need at each of the individual customer/brand interactions.

## Conclusion

Every change that occurs in an industry should be seen as an opportunity. In today's consumer electronics industry, the competitive pressures from outside industries create specific opportunities for any brand that is willing to find new ways to create real value for the customer. The challenge will be in understanding which insights about the customer can have the greatest impact. Through observation, cross-pollinating ideas from other industries and mapping out the total customer experience, the important insights may be easier to identify and used to transform businesses.