

# ICXI -POST newsbriefing

Vol 3 – Issue 10 – MAR 2024

## Introduction From The President

It is well known that Small to Medium Size Enterprise are critical to the financial and operational performance of every economy in the world. They are ubiquitous and operate in or around very sector from agriculture to zoology and are a major force in employment and wealth creation. The definition of what an SME is varies a little from region to region and while here isn't a single, universally accepted definition of an SME that applies to every country in the world. Instead, individual countries and organizations set their own criteria, often using a combination of factors like:

- **Number of employees:** This is the most common criterion used to define an SME. However, the specific number of employees that defines an SME can vary significantly from country to country. For example, the United States defines an SME as a company with no more than 500 employees, while the European Union defines an SME as a company with fewer than 250 employees.
- **Annual turnover:** This refers to the total amount of revenue a company generates in a year. Again, the specific amount of revenue that defines an SME can vary depending on the country or organization.
- **Balance sheet total:** This refers to the total value of a company's assets minus its liabilities. It can also be used as a criterion for defining an SME, although it is less common than the number of employees or annual turnover.

Here are some examples of how different countries and organizations define SMEs:

- **The United States:** The Small Business Administration (SBA) defines an SME as a company with no more than 500 employees. However, the SBA also uses different size standards for different industries.
- **The European Union:** The European Commission defines an SME as a company that meets two of the following three criteria: fewer than 250 employees, an annual turnover of no more than EUR 50 million, and an annual balance sheet total of no more than EUR 43 million.
- **The World Bank:** The World Bank does not have a single definition of an SME, but it generally considers SMEs to be companies with fewer than 250 employees.

The definition of an SME can also vary depending on the context. For example, a government agency might use a different definition of an SME for tax purposes than a bank would use for lending purposes.

Whatever the definition used does not change the fact that these organisations are important as employers and both as suppliers of, and customers for, goods and services. There is also a perception that the SME sector is often overlooked when it comes to the help and support necessary to optimise its growth and contribution to the world economy

## As Employers their Role in the Global Economy is Significant.

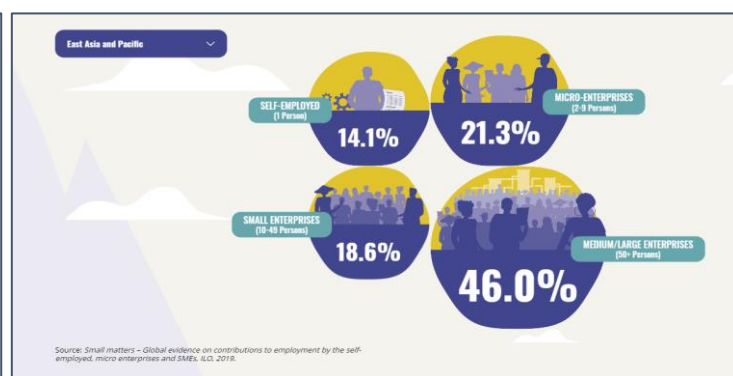
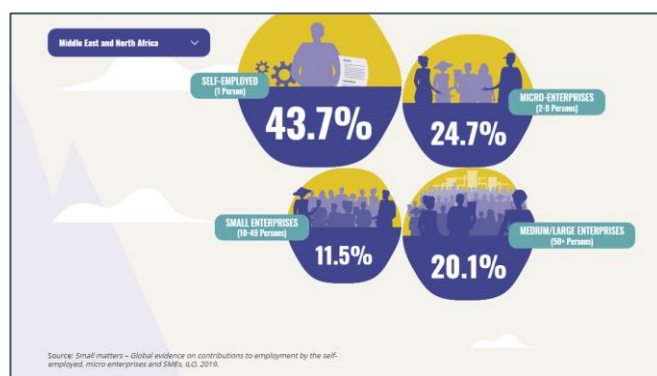
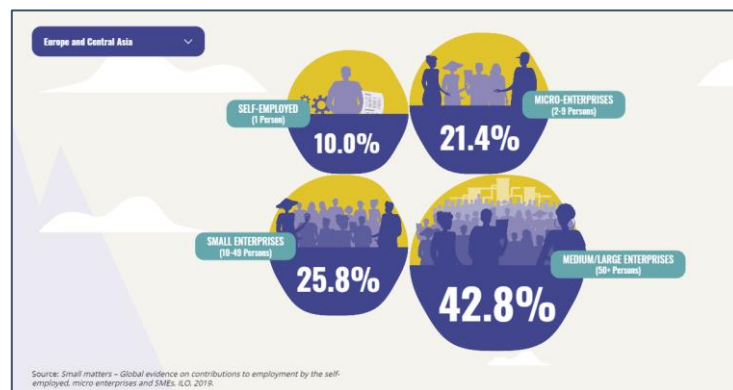
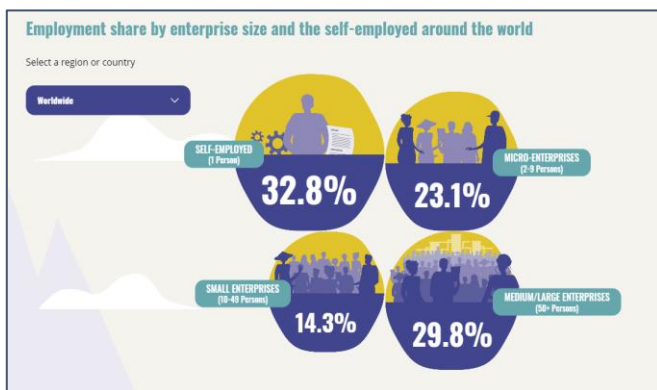
The World Labour Organisation in their report

*Small matters – Global evidence on contributions to employment by the self-employed, micro enterprises and SMEs, ILO they report*

### **The Power of Small**

*Small and medium-sized enterprises – or SMEs – typically have fewer than 250 employees. In many countries, more than 90% of all enterprises can be classed as SMEs, and a large share of those can be classed as micro firms, with fewer than ten employees.*

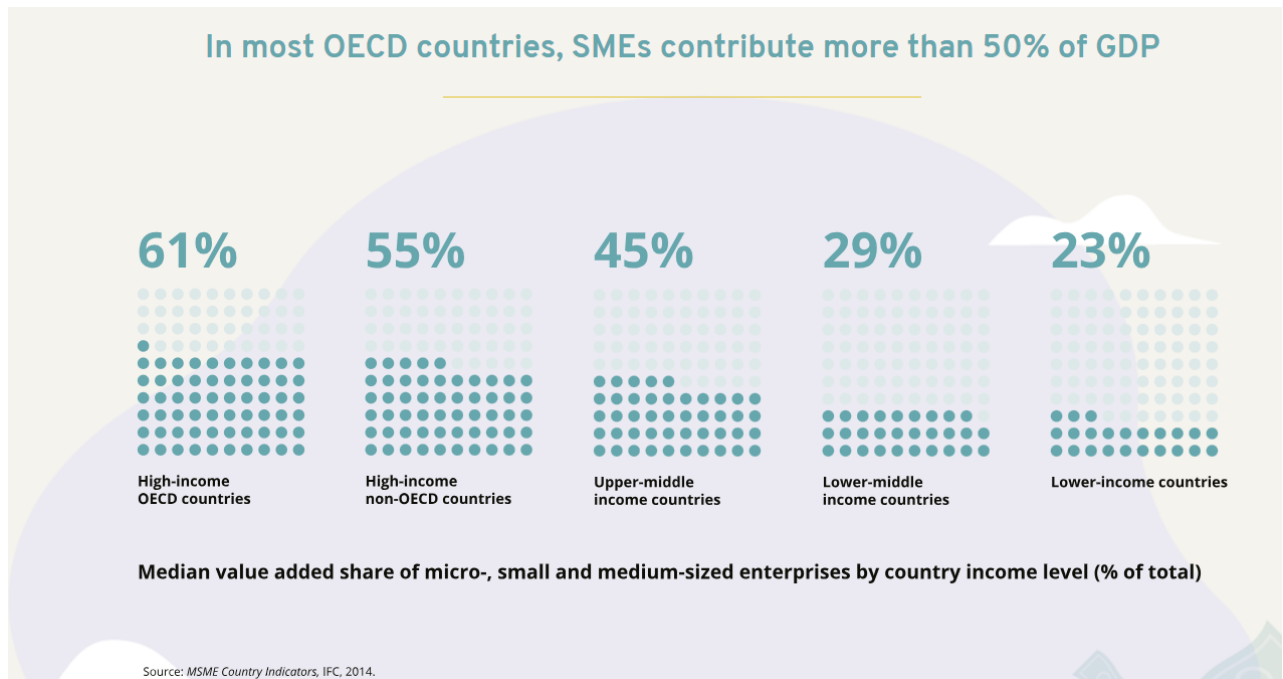
*While they may be small individually, new ILO data show that micro- and small enterprises, together with own account workers, account for a staggering 70% of employment worldwide. As we work to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the ILO's Decent Work Agenda, we cannot afford to ignore the potential of SMEs and the challenges they face.*



***SMEs are also more likely to hire from groups with lower chances of finding employment such as young people, older workers and less-skilled workers.***

## Engines of development

Across all countries, SMEs do more than create employment: they are also engines of economic growth and social development. In most OECD countries, SMEs contribute more than 50% of GDP, and some global estimates put this figure as high as 70%. This contribution varies across sectors, and is particularly high in the service industry, where SMEs account for 60% or more of GDP in nearly all OECD countries.



## Understanding the challenge

SMEs are crucial to the future of work, not just for employment creation and economic growth, but also to drive innovation and competition in markets. But large enterprises can invest more in training and equipment, pay higher wages and offer better working conditions, and so outmatch SMEs when it comes to productivity and quality of employment.

In developing countries, this productivity gap leads to low income generation, informality and poor growth performance. To close the gap, we must first understand the problems faced by SMEs, both from the perspective of employers and employees, and in context of broader challenges facing the world of work.

In summary, the new ILO database provides empirical evidence that the smallest enterprises and the self-employed are by far the most important drivers of employment. This finding is highly relevant to the design of programmes aimed at promoting job creation, start-ups, and the formalization of enterprises and of the workers they employ. Key aspects of the world of work, such as job creation, job quality and enterprise productivity, need to be considered from the perspective of the smallest economic units, for these represent the largest share of employment

[https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms\\_723282.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_723282.pdf)

The World Bank somewhat ironically it might be observed, highlight that one of the issues constraining the development of the SME sector is access to finance.

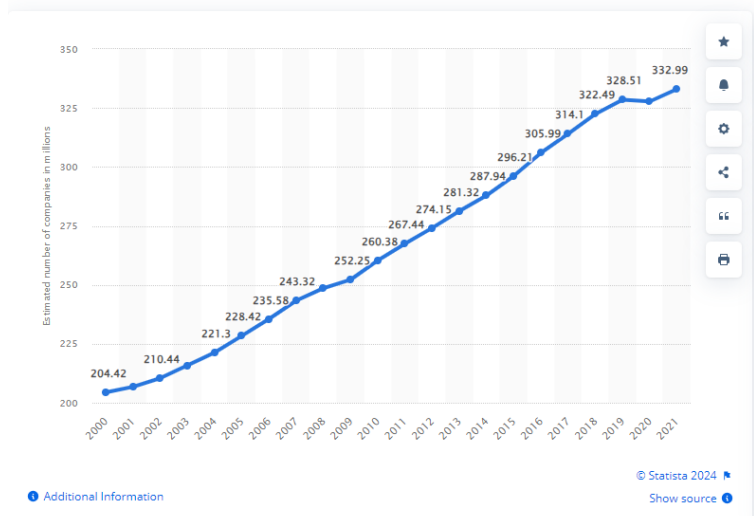
In their SME Finance Report it is stated that

*Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) play a major role in most economies, particularly in developing countries. SMEs account for the majority of businesses worldwide and are important contributors to job creation and global economic development. They represent about 90% of businesses and more than 50% of employment worldwide. Formal SMEs contribute up to 40% of national income (GDP) in emerging economies. These numbers are significantly higher when informal SMEs are included. According to our estimates, 600 million jobs will be needed by 2030 to absorb the growing global workforce, which makes SME development a high priority for many governments around the world. In emerging markets, most formal jobs are generated by SMEs, which create 7 out of 10 jobs. However, access to finance is a key constraint to SME growth, it is the second most cited obstacle facing SMEs to grow their businesses in emerging markets and developing countries.*

*SMEs are less likely to be able to obtain bank loans than large firms; instead, they rely on internal funds, or cash from friends and family, to launch and initially run their enterprises. The International Finance Corporation (IFC) estimates that 65 million firms, or 40% of formal micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in developing countries, have an unmet financing need of \$5.2 trillion every year, which is equivalent to 1.4 times the current level of the global MSME lending. East Asia And Pacific accounts for the largest share (46%) of the total global finance gap and is followed by Latin America and the Caribbean (23%) and Europe and Central Asia (15%). The gap volume varies considerably region to region. Latin America and the Caribbean and the Middle East and North Africa regions, in particular, have the highest proportion of the finance gap compared to potential demand, measured at 87% and 88%, respectively. About half of formal SMEs don't have access to formal credit. The financing gap is even larger when micro and informal enterprises are taken into account.*

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/sme/finance>

According to Statista there were estimated to be approximately 332.99 million SMEs worldwide in 2021, slightly more than in 2019 when there were 328.5 million. The number of SMEs in the most recent year was the highest in the provided time period.

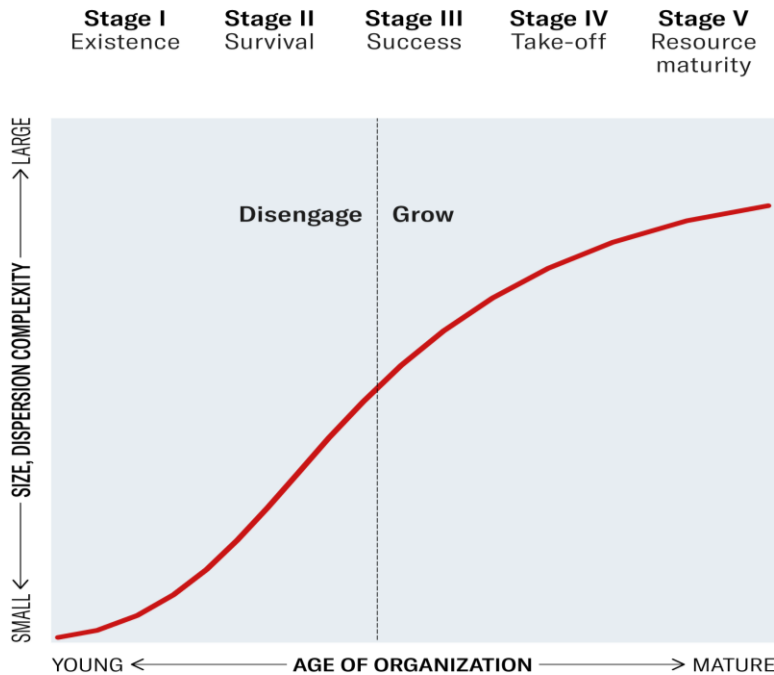


<https://www.statista.com/statistics/1261592/global-smes>

So a major global banking customer development opportunity there???

## A Surprise ?

There is plenty of other advice to SME's for the gurus of the internet. But generally the more well know names never venture in the area of customer experience management. Given that income is a factor of the utmost importance to SME's and the customer is the only source of revenue this is perhaps surprising. Even more surprising if Harvard Business review are right with their 5 Stages of organisation and the first two stages are so important if the organisation is to survive and thrive



### Stage I: Existence.

HBR

In this stage the main problems of the business **are obtaining customers and delivering the product or service contracted for**. Among the key questions are the following:

- **Can we get enough customers, deliver our products, and provide services well enough to become a viable business?**
- **Can we expand from that one key customer or pilot production process to a much broader sales base?**
- **Do we have enough money to cover the considerable cash demands of this start-up phase?**

### Stage II: Survival.

In reaching this stage, the business has demonstrated that it is a workable business entity. **It has enough customers and satisfies them sufficiently with its products or services to keep them**. The key problem thus shifts from mere existence to the relationship between revenues and expenses. The main issues are as follows:

- **In the short run, can we generate enough cash to break even and to cover the repair or replacement of our capital assets as they wear out?**
- **Can we, at a minimum, generate enough cash flow to stay in business and to finance growth to a size that is sufficiently large, given our industry and market niche, to earn an economic return on our assets and labor?**

### **Stage III: Success.**

*The decision facing owners at this stage is whether to exploit the company's accomplishments and expand or keep the company stable and profitable, providing a base for alternative owner activities. Thus, a key issue is whether to use the company as a platform for growth or as a means of support for the owners as they completely or partially disengage from the company*

### **Stage IV: Take-Off.**

*In this stage the key problems are how to grow rapidly and how to finance that growth. The most important questions, then, are in the following areas:*

**Delegation.** *Can the owner delegate responsibility to others to improve the managerial effectiveness of a fast-growing and increasingly complex enterprise? Further, will the action be true delegation with controls on performance and a willingness to see mistakes made, or will it be abdication, as is so often the case?*

**Cash.** *Will there be enough to satisfy the great demands growth brings (often requiring a willingness on the owner's part to tolerate a high debt-equity ratio) and a cash flow that is not eroded by inadequate expense controls or ill-advised investments brought about by owner impatience?*

*The organization is decentralized and, at least in part, divisionalized—usually in either sales or production. The key managers must be very competent to handle a growing and complex business environment.*

### **Stage V: Resource Maturity.**

*The greatest concerns of a company entering this stage are, first, to consolidate and control the financial gains brought on by rapid growth and, second, to retain the advantages of small size, including flexibility of response and the entrepreneurial spirit. The corporation must expand the management force fast enough to eliminate the inefficiencies that growth can produce and professionalize the company by use of such tools as budgets, strategic planning, management by objectives, and standard cost systems—and do this without stifling its entrepreneurial qualities.*

### **Key Management Factors**

*Several factors, which change in importance as the business grows and develops, are prominent in determining ultimate success or failure.*

*We identified eight such factors in our research, of which four relate to the enterprise and four to the owner. The four that relate to the company are as follows:*

- 1. Financial resources, including cash and borrowing power.*
- 2. Personnel resources, relating to numbers, depth, and quality of people, particularly at the management and staff levels.*
- 3. Systems resources, in terms of the degree of sophistication of both information and planning and control systems.*
- 4. **Business resources, including customer relations, market share, supplier relations, manufacturing and distribution processes, technology, and reputation, all of which give the company a position in its industry and market.***

**So if managing the customer experience is seen as a crucial factor in the establishment and growth and on going survival of an SME what can they be doing to ensure they optimise and sustain the success of their organisation?**

To some degree it depends upon who is asked. SAP Africa has some interesting suggestions in their report **“How SME’s Can Build Great Customer Experiences”**

*Many small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) take for granted the level of investment required to build and maintain a good reputation. There’s growing acknowledgement of the importance of becoming a Customer Experience (CX) leader to help build that reputation, but too few are taking appropriate steps to embrace and prioritise a true CX culture.*

*Delivering exceptional CX requires that every part of the business is in sync and enabled by the right technology. CX is an important part of managing and growing a company, yet, it is one of the most understated business priorities. Customer service is the level of service that customers expect to receive in exchange for their money.*

*CX, on the other hand, is how customers feel when they interact with a business. From researching the product to the actual purchase and use, it spans the entire customer buying journey. Customers, now more than ever, will never return if the initial interaction is poor. CX is therefore a key element of customer retention – and a key differentiator.*

**Steps to improving CX**

*SMEs often juggle multiple priorities with limited resources. Balancing operational priorities and implementing CX strategies can be a real challenge.*

**Here are some practical ways of improving CX for SMEs:**

- 1. Implement additional support channels to make it easier for customers to interact with the company. Using Artificial Intelligence (AI) for automation, SMEs can provide self-service options that make it easier for customers to track their orders independently, enabling a self-help approach that improves efficiencies and lowers costs.*
- 2. Prioritise your website as a different way of interacting with customers 24/7. SMEs that did not have online stores could not continue trading under lockdown conditions. Moreover, adding a Frequently Asked Questions section can empower customers to be self-sufficient, allowing the company to refocus valuable human resources on income-generating activities and innovation.*
- 3. Adopt technology-driven query management processes that are customer-centric and cost-effective. Using AI, SMEs can develop chatbots that handle repetitive functions such as order delivery queries.*

## How technology enables great CX

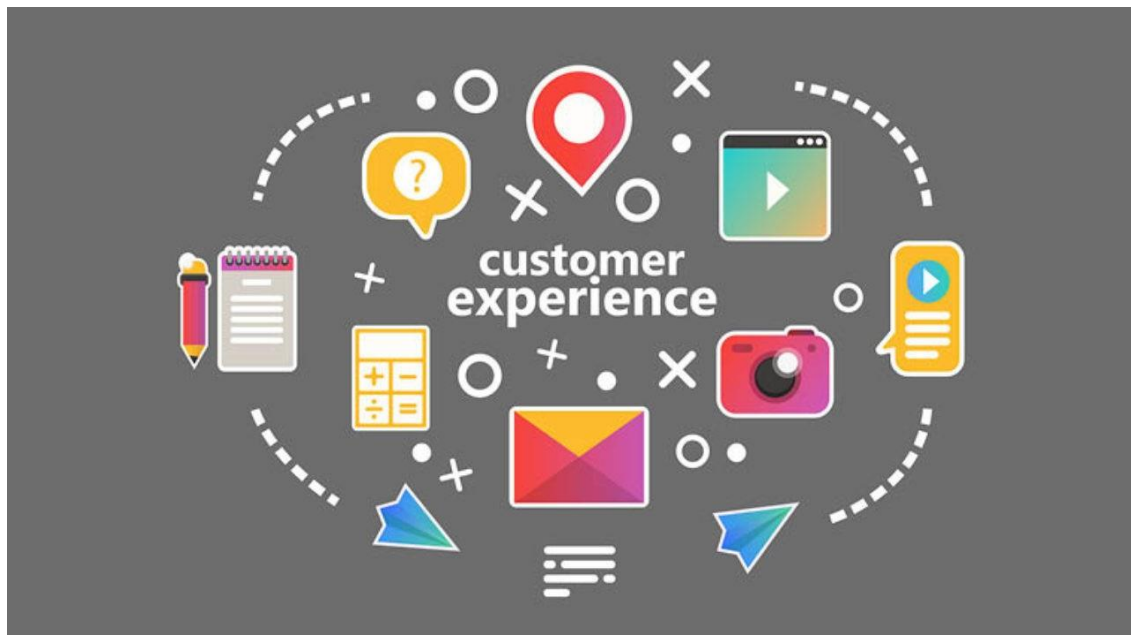
A recent study by Qualtrics and Forrester Consulting that looked at Return on Investment from deploying CX solutions produced some interesting findings:

- **Customer care:** companies were able to gather actionable insights that enabled them to institute measures that reduced the cost of incident management by shifting incidents to a self-help platform.
- **Customer retention:** aligning the company on key metrics and shifting to a customer-centric view of data had a positive impact on CX. Companies reported an increase in customer satisfaction and more personalised experiences and customer buying journeys that led to higher customer retention.
- **Data and customer-centric culture:** companies were able to create standard, consistent, and trusted data sources across departments, resulting in a unified view and measure of CX throughout the company.
- **Business outcomes:** companies were able to identify things that needed to change quickly. While some seemed mundane, they had a meaningful impact on customers and resulted in quick wins.
- **Better insight and decision-making:** companies benefited from having a centralised database for all customer insights, enabling them to move quicker and provide better insights for decision making.

CX is about proactively managing and curating the entire customer buying journey to ensure that customers walk away with a feel-good experience.

Delivering a positive CX requires a customer-centric strategy that is underpinned by the right technology investment. Technology empowers all companies, of all sizes, to connect with current and prospective customers.

<https://news.sap.com/africa/2020/09/how-smes-can-build-great-customer-experiences/>





So should SME's themselves pay more attention to customer experience management? Intelligent SME Tech provide some advice in their publication by Ellen Flannery

### **Customer experience solutions for SMEs: How important is it?**

#### *The importance of CX for SMEs*

*In the UK, complaints have reportedly risen to their highest level on record – in part due to staffing shortages. Handling this issue alone is costing British businesses £9 billion a month in lost staff time.*

*For companies of all sizes, the pandemic put CX at centre stage. With employees and customers based at home, businesses invested in digital channels, leading to more online traffic and therefore a greater need for better customer engagement. Ultimately, CX has become vital for keeping customers on-side and reinforcing your business' relationships. Understanding customers and digital audiences can be complicated, but it is essential. Bad reviews can cause long-term business damage, severely impacting your reputation and revenue.*

***For smaller businesses, it might only take a single negative customer review or social media comment to spiral a business into a crisis.*** While larger household names may have the benefit of sweeping one negative comment under the rug, a high number of visible complaints can still have permanent negative effects on a brand's image.

*One thing I always drive home to my staff and clients alike is that **your business is only as successful as its least happy customer.** Actively and accurately listening to your employees and customers is essential. One way to improve this is through technology. Having the right tech in place enables teams to respond and take action faster.*

*No business is immune to the impact of poor CX. The right response to a moment of crisis can ensure your company continues to be viewed as honest, trustworthy and reliable – traits highly regarded among both customers and employees.*

#### **Customer and employee experience as one**

*An overwhelming 95% of customers believe customer service is essential to brand loyalty and research indicates that 50% of consumers would switch to a new brand after just one bad experience. But have business leaders considered that the same relates to their own employees too? Feedback doesn't just affect your brand; it impacts employee motivation and your company's general mood too.*

*Happy employees deliver better customer services. Research shows that when looking at Millennials' and Gen Z's values, nearly two in five say they have rejected a job or assignment because it did not align with their beliefs. Similarly, those who are satisfied with their employers' societal and environmental impact and their efforts to create a diverse and inclusive culture are more likely to want to stay with their employer for over five years.*

#### **HR leaders play a part in the overall CX**

*Would you decline a job offer if you discovered the business had a bad reputation? Current and prospective talent may have reservations about working for organisations with tarnished reputations or ones whose personal values don't align with their own, or if they have concerns about how they may be perceived by peers, family and friends.*

*Employee engagement in a remote-first world has become a priority for many HR leaders. But gathering and digesting employee feedback is essential for taking the next step and turning it into meaningful action.*

*In the current climate, with The Great Resignation rolling on, organisations cannot afford to deter talent or lose employees. A survey from McKinsey showed that during the pandemic, 24% of SMEs were concerned about retaining their employees, and according to a survey by Vistage, 62% of UK SMEs said that their current hiring challenges mean they cannot operate their business at full capacity.*

*The Great Resignation has taught HR professionals one important lesson: the employee is in control. Even amid economic uncertainty, HR leaders must keep the employee experience top of mind, as employee feedback across channels can directly impact a brand. Employees are not afraid to speak up about their experiences, with social media and forums like Glassdoor and Indeed making it easier than ever.*

*Rather than avoiding all feedback, or only focusing on the positive comments in employee satisfaction surveys, HR leaders and their teams must take the time to analyse and understand all of it — the good, the bad and the ugly. Using that feedback can be used to celebrate and encourage the culture you are starving for.*

### **The employee experience**

*Protecting a business' reputation doesn't just rely on good customer feedback, it also means being attentive to the employee experience.*

*Transparency within the workplace is essential to retaining talent. Fostering a culture of trust drives a positive atmosphere, which in turn motivates a team and contributes to more successful business outcomes.*

*Mirroring customer experience by creating closed loop feedback is one way to start that mindset shift while reviewing sentiment data and using it to enhance employee engagement surveys could be another.*

### **From listening to acting**

*It is critical that businesses employ the right tools to ensure they can properly capitalise on employee and customer feedback. For any successful business, ensuring you remain aware of the perceptions and ideals of your customers and employees is a full-time job. Because it is not just about listening to what they're saying, but also reacting to what you're hearing. The key for small business is not to over complicate it, particularly where they may not have the sample size to delve into the insights. Focusing on the basics, listening to feedback and taking real time action are the drivers for success.*

*For local businesses like bars and pubs, dips in positive reviews caused by poor customer service or increased wait times could make all the difference when trying to maintain a loyal customer base. Similarly, noticing emerging trends, like attention to corporate social responsibility practices, can help businesses direct their communications.*

*Consumer values are continuously evolving. It is only through careful monitoring of feedback from customer experience programs that businesses can properly align with their customers' values and expectations.*

## It may be difficult for SME's but should they make the adjustment to focus on CX ?

Keap believe so. In their business-success-blog

### Customer-experience-why-customer-experience-must-be-a-small-business-priority

Jamie Davidson explains *Why customer experience must be a small business priority*

*First of all, "customer experience" does not equal "customer service" (or even "customer success," a term that's widely used in the SaaS world). According to industry expert Jason Bordeaux, customer experience is, "the impression you leave with your customer, resulting in how they think of your brand, across every stage of the customer journey."*

*With that in mind, possible customer experience activities might include, among others:*

- *Adding new support channels (such as live chat) to make it easier for customers to get the answers they need*
- *Increasing the amount of helpful information on your website by building out blog content, FAQs, or knowledge base articles*
- *Minimizing friction in the checkout process by eliminating unnecessary steps or condensing form fields*
- *Building policies around how quickly you'll follow up with questions and/or issues (such as committing to responding to all requests within 48 business hours)*
- *Practicing positive communication and active listening when interacting with customers (for example, by making instant video conferencing available for solving tricky customer support issues)*
- *Establishing a returns process that customers feel good about*

*Customer experience isn't about bending over backward to prioritize your customers' needs over your company's well-being. You don't have to give in on every issue just to keep customers happy. Instead, it comes down to helping customers feel good about choosing to work with your company over your competitors.*



Organize info



Always follow-up



Close more leads



Automate daily work



Get paid



Impress clients

## **Why prioritize customer experience ?**

*Still not convinced? Consider that, beyond the data points listed above, PWC's Future of CX report found that:*

*Step 1: Identify opportunities to improve these four areas at your business*

*Customer experience is such a wide-ranging discipline that it can be difficult to tell where to start, especially for small businesses that have limited time, resources, or bandwidth to implement change. Do you tackle checkout problems first? Invest in building out new customer service channels?*

*The correct answer will vary from company to company, but you can take your cues from the four areas highlighted by PWC:*

- *Speed*
- *Convenience*
- *Helpful employees*
- *Friendly service*

### **Speed**

*Speed can manifest in a number of ways. The time needed to complete a checkout process is a speed consideration, as is the time between when an order is placed and when it arrives at your customer's location. In the context of professional services, speed concerns might include how quickly emails are replied to or when deliverables are sent. The good thing is that you'll know if you have speed problems. Customers will let you know.*

### **Convenience**

*Issues affecting convenience can be more difficult to identify than speed challenges. If your website is difficult to navigate, for example, customers may not reach out for help finding the products or information they were seeking. They may just leave, in search of competitor websites that are easier to navigate.*

*One of the better tools in your arsenal for identifying convenience issues is your website's analytics program. Tools like exit intent pop-ups and live chat sessions can be helpful in resolving website-based convenience challenge..*

### **Helpful employees**

*If your business is so small that you don't have employees, save your time and focus on the other three areas listed here (as long as you, yourself, are providing customers with a great experience). And if you do have team members operating on your company's behalf, make sure they're as committed to customer experience as you are.*

### **Friendly service**

*If you've invested in making sure your employees are helpful, the issue of providing friendly service may take care of itself. However, it can still be valuable to focus dedicated effort here, as helpful doesn't always translate directly to a perception of friendliness. Take the time to think through the friendliest customer service interactions you've experienced. What was it that made those encounters so positive? Are you offering something similar to your customers?*

*The great news is that offering friendly service is one of the more cost-effective ways to improve your small company's customer experience. Greeting every person who enters your location or sending a handwritten thank you note to new clients costs almost nothing, but can have a major impact on customer satisfaction.*

## Step 2: Establish metrics that quantify your performance in these areas

If the four factors above don't resonate with your specific type of business, feel free to choose something else to focus on. But regardless of where you turn your attention, translate the specific opportunities you want to focus on into metrics you can track.

A few common CX metrics include:

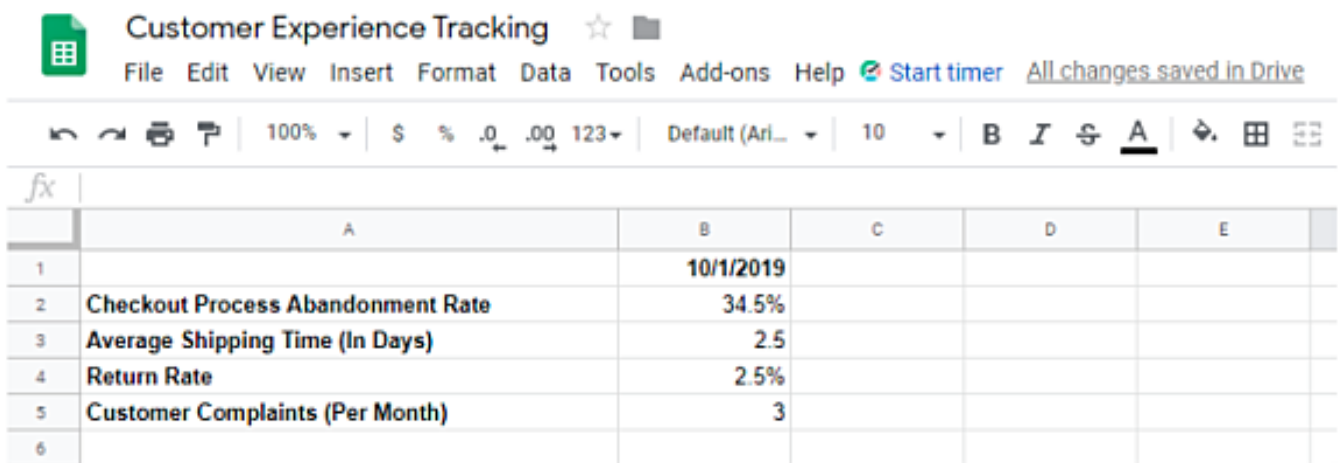
- **Return rates** - Higher than average return rates suggest that your customer experience isn't giving customers the information they need to make an educated decision (or that it's misleading customers, unintentionally or otherwise).
- **Average customer lifetime value** - As your experience improves, customer loyalty and referrals should as well. CX investment should result in an upward-trending CLV.
- **NPS** - Net promoter score measures how likely your customers are to refer you to others. Average scores below 7 suggest CX problems.
- **CSAT scores** - Conduct customer satisfaction surveys on a periodic basis to ensure positive performance (or to catch emerging issues in order to resolve them quickly).

Try to identify three to five key metrics that seem as if they'd have the biggest impact on your company's customer experience. If you're an ecommerce shop, for example, you might want to track checkout process abandonments, average shipping times, return rates, and customer complaints.

## Step 3: Take baseline measurements

Once you know which specific metrics you want to focus on, establish a baseline measurement for each. Without these critical starting points, you won't be able to tell whether changes you implement are making an impact—or whether new issues are arising that you need to address quickly.

Put these initial numbers into a spreadsheet and plan to update them at least once per quarter to ensure your customer experience is improving.



Customer Experience Tracking

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	A	B	C	D	E
1		10/1/2019			
2	Checkout Process Abandonment Rate	34.5%			
3	Average Shipping Time (In Days)	2.5			
4	Return Rate	2.5%			
5	Customer Complaints (Per Month)	3			
6					

#### **Step 4: Implement changes, based on the resources you have available**

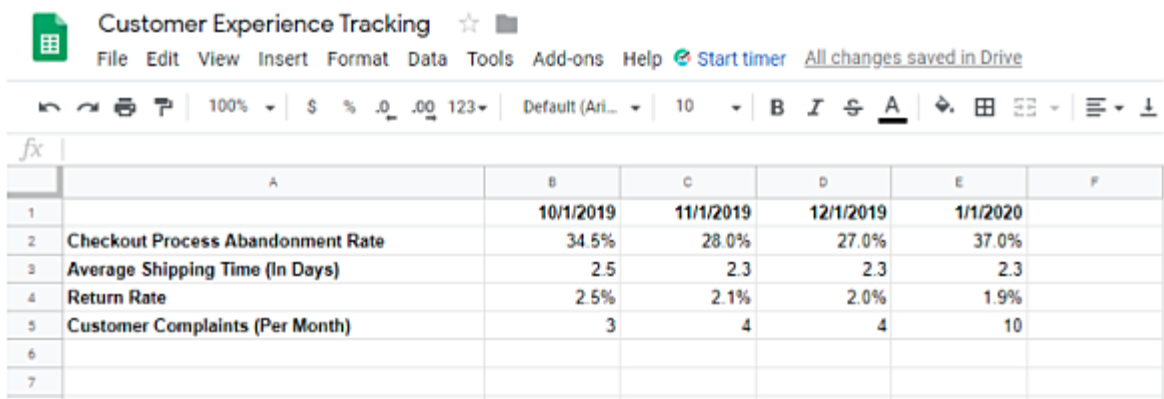
As tempting as it might be to make dozens of customer experience changes at once, adopting a more scientific approach will produce better results in the long run.

Based on your target metrics and the baseline data you observed, try to guess which improvements will have the greatest impact on your business.

Looking at the sample data above, if you received three customer complaints in the past month and all of them had to do with technical errors in the checkout process, you could conclude that making improvements to your checkout flow is likely to produce the biggest CX wins. By making changes to a smaller number of variables at once, you'll be able to determine whether or not your actions are having an effect—all while making smarter use of the smaller number of resources available to you as a small business.

#### **Step 5: Monitor your progress and iterate as needed**

As you make changes, continue to measure your progress and look for trends



	A	B	C	D	E	F
1		10/1/2019	11/1/2019	12/1/2019	1/1/2020	
2	Checkout Process Abandonment Rate	34.5%	28.0%	27.0%	37.0%	
3	Average Shipping Time (In Days)	2.5	2.3	2.3	2.3	
4	Return Rate	2.5%	2.1%	2.0%	1.9%	
5	Customer Complaints (Per Month)	3	4	4	10	
6						
7						

In this example, it's clear something happened around the January 1st measurement data that produced a higher number of checkout abandonments and customer complaints. CX is expected to be a critical competitive differentiator, but it doesn't have to be the kind of nebulous, poorly defined pursuit many companies anticipate when they hear the words, "customer experience." By understanding the importance of customer experience and launching a data-driven process to improve it, even the smallest of businesses can benefit from greater customer goodwill without having to invest an untenable level of resources.

- Customers are willing to pay up to a 16% price premium on products and services, plus increased loyalty when they have a positive experience
- One in three consumers (32%) say they will walk away from a brand they love after just one bad experience
- 82% of U.S. and 74% of non-U.S. consumers want more human interaction in the future

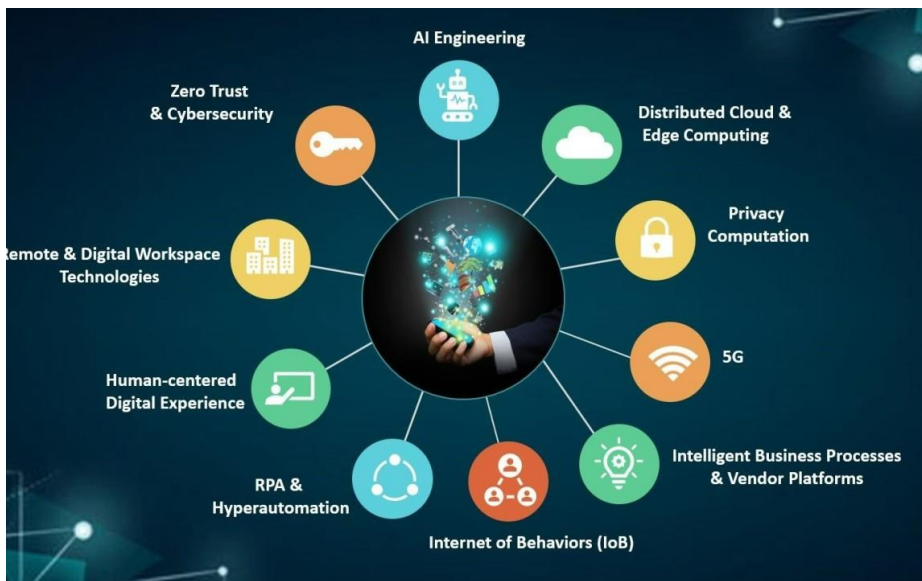
Simply put, if you invest in building a great customer experience, your small business stands to earn more sales, retain more customers, and create stronger relationships that'll carry your company forward in today's increasingly competitive business landscape.

<https://keap.com/business-success-blog/customer-service/customer-experience/why-customer-experience-must-be-a-small-business-priority-in-2020>

Many SME's are not so small,. Looking at the Bigger Small to Medium Enterprise Picture

This newsletter highlight the really significant role that SME's play in the global economic performance. There are suggestions on why and how SME's can improve their customer(and employee) experience.

What may also be taken into consideration is that not all SME's are corner shop, sole trader, mum and pop shops. Depending the definition used SME's can employ up to 500 people and have an annual revenue of up to \$US 50m. Many of such organisations have aspirations to develop further including many at the lower end of the "medium" scale who are enjoying outstanding growth, many of whom are in the ever developing technology sector.



<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/trends-change-technology-industry-going-forward-kumar-gm/>

These organisations are competing already with large scale organisations who have a wide range of tools and resources available to them to measure and develop the level of their customer experience delivery.

Some of the tools include internationally focussed performance measurement Standards certificated by independent external organisations like The British Standards Institute or Frameworks accredited by organisations like The International Customer Experience Institute



These tools undoubtedly provide a deep understanding of the level of customer experience performance expected and delivered but may seem a little too complex for larger SME's at their current state of development. To address this perceived need the International Customer Experience Institute has developed a new product to give SME's a clear measurement platform that works at the stage they are now and grow with them as their organisation grows in the future

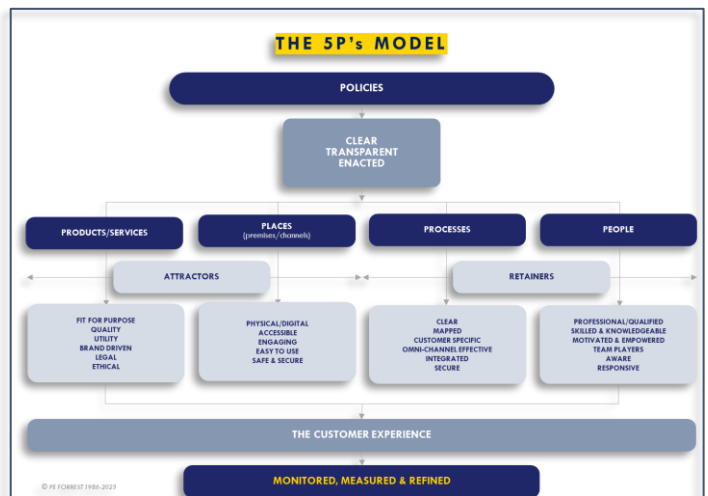
## Introducing the International Customer Service Institute's **NAVIGATOR ICXN 2024-1 For SME's**



CXN2024 is designed to address the critical factors that support the delivery of the highest quality customer experience by organisations delivering products and services. **Developed specifically for SME's from Start-ups to those seeking to achieve large company status**

ICXN IS based on the same internationally proven 5 P's Model platform as the *ICXI CX Standards ICXS 2019, IDX 2022 and Frameworks ICXF 2023 and IDCXF 2023* so providing a seamless stepping stone to those organisations seeking to go on to greater things

The CX Navigator ICXN2024 is published by the International Customer Experience Institute (ICXI) on 1st March 2024. Further information and background regarding this publication can be found at the [www.icxi.com](http://www.icxi.com) website.



CX Navigator ICXN2024 will provide SME's of all sizes the map and compass to navigate a secure path through the sometimes complex issues of measuring, monitoring and delivering a consistent upper quartile customer experience.



## The Last Word

Customers and their experiences are the most important factor for the enduring success of every organisation but it may be argued that to SME's these have even greater significance. From start up to ongoing management delivering a satisfactory customer experience is mandatory if stability and growth is to be achieved. In the physical world SME's may compete with more local rivals but in ever growing onlineland they may find themselves competing with major corporations anywhere in the world. This situation creates both a risk and an opportunity where nimble SME's can deliver a better experience to their customers.

Assistance and guidance on finding the best way to do this is often most readily available to larger organisations but now the ICXI Navigator provides the model, platform and structure for to SME's the organise, manage and measure their customer experience performance.

SME's are a major driver of the global economy and the quality of the customer experience they deliver is a key factor in sustaining the effectiveness of their role.

## Recommended Reading

[https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms\\_723282.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_723282.pdf)

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/smefinance>

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/1261592/global-smes>

<https://hbr.org/1983/05/the-five-stages-of-small>

<https://news.sap.com/africa/2020/09/how-smes-can-build-great-customer-experiences/>  
[linkedin.com/pulse/from-ux-cx-evolution-customer-experience-tech-industry-brad-pinto/](https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/from-ux-cx-evolution-customer-experience-tech-industry-brad-pinto/)

<https://www.intelligentsme.tech/2022/09/22/customer-experience-solutions-for-smes-how-important-is-it/>

<https://keap.com/business-success-blog/customer-service/customer-experience/why-customer-experience-must-be-a-small-business-priority-in-2020>

## More on SME's

<https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/public-sector/our-insights/beyond-financials-helping-small-and-medium-size-enterprises-thrive>

<https://www.ifac.org/knowledge-gateway/contributing-global-economy/discussion/foundation-economies-worldwide-small-business-0>

[http://www.edinburgh-group.org/media/2776/edinburgh\\_group\\_research\\_-\\_growing\\_the\\_global\\_economy\\_through\\_smes.pdf](http://www.edinburgh-group.org/media/2776/edinburgh_group_research_-_growing_the_global_economy_through_smes.pdf)

<https://globalnaps.org/issue/small-medium-enterprises-smes/>

[https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/how-the-ilo-works/ilo-director-general/statements-and-speeches/WCMS\\_886260/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/how-the-ilo-works/ilo-director-general/statements-and-speeches/WCMS_886260/lang--en/index.htm)