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Welcome to the CX50

**A unique partnership between Zone,
Cognizant and Marketing Week.**

This list aims to celebrate the individuals who are leading the customer experience economy for brands of all shapes and sizes. Orchestrating great customer experience requires organisations to break down silos and develop new capabilities. It demands a blend of strategy, technology, data and creativity.

But it also demands cultural change – which is why leadership is so important. The CX50 highlights the leaders who are tackling that challenge head on, creating effective, efficient and differentiated customer experiences that will help their companies win in a world where digital is mission critical.

We congratulate them all.



Jon Davie
Chief client officer
Zone



George Porteous
Head of Cognizant
Digital Business, UK



Foreword

Whether you're an established brand or a start-up – in consumer goods, utilities or finance – today it is customer experience that sets a brand apart from its competitors. Consumers now know they can make a purchase and receive their goods the same day, without even having to leave the house; they know brands can record their preferences and shape their service accordingly; they know it doesn't have to be hard to have the information they want at their fingertips, instantly. So companies that can't provide these things when their competitors can are inevitably going to fall behind in today's economy.

But achieving these unique selling points – imagining them, implementing them and making them both practical and profitable – is not just about organisations and products; it's about people. It's about individuals who excel at understanding customer needs as well as company capabilities, and at mobilising their budgets and colleagues to do special things.

The professionals in this list have demonstrated just these qualities. They have a range of job titles and come from an assortment of industry sectors, but cutting across all these differences are unifying characteristics. They have achieved – and are achieving – results of the highest order, both for their customers and their businesses. They are creating new ways of doing things.

In order to compile the CX50, Marketing Week generated a shortlist of customer experience professionals known to excel in their field, using the expertise of an advisory board consisting of its own editorial team alongside those of its Centaur Media sister brands Econsultancy, Design Week and Creative Review.

Using our own first-hand research, we benchmarked these individuals based on three key criteria: innovation (the development, evolution or transformation of best-in-class customer experiences); influence (within their own organisations and beyond); and impact (the tangible results of their efforts, particularly in commercial terms). We then filtered the list down to those with the most impressive overall pedigree.

To ensure the list is representative of the variety of business approaches to customer experience, we assessed a wide range of both industry sectors and job functions – covering marketers, designers, technologists, entrepreneurs and CEOs. The result is a comprehensive record of the people making a difference in the marketplace today.



Russell

Russell Parsons
Editor
Marketing Week





Sarah Barron

**Chief marketing officer
Costa Coffee**

You'd be hard-pressed to find a CMO remit as broad as Sarah Barron's. Since 2016, the former Cadbury marketer has been responsible for global marketing and brand strategy across more than 30 markets from the UK to China.

Then there's managing the global brand equity; leading global innovation and add in supervising the digital customer experience, not forgetting store format and design development. All this, and she is a member of the executive board too.

With more than 2,400 stores plus licensed coffee products, continued international expansion¹ and new corporate owners in Coca-Cola, that to-do list won't be getting shorter any time soon.



Anna Bateson

**Chief customer officer
The Guardian**

When newsprint brands are suffering at the expense of their digital counterparts, it helps to get inside knowledge on board. In a 'poacher turned gamekeeper' turnabout, former Google and YouTube marketer Anna Bateson joined Guardian News and Media (GNM) as its first chief customer officer in 2017.

Bateson hasn't so much switched sides as become the glue that brings them together. Her role is to manage partnerships with Google and Facebook as well as oversee events, brand, syndication, subscriptions and all Guardian marketing.

She's already seeing the fruits of the new reader-centric policy that encourages them to become 'supporters' by making voluntary payments, and has stewarded a radical redesign of the newspaper and website. Revenues are up 1% with digital up 15%, overtaking print for the first time.



Alessandra Bellini

**Chief customer officer
Tesco**

Once the retailer by which all others were judged, a number of missteps saw Tesco's fortunes fall a few years ago. Alessandra Bellini is in charge of reversing that trend.

An experienced FMCG marketer with two decades at Unilever, Bellini has an instinctive feel for what makes customers respond to brands – and what drives them away. Since her appointment in 2017 she has undertaken a complete overhaul of the company's messaging as well as its own-brand positioning. But above all, Tesco will have to live the values she is bestowing on it: "We always say you don't talk yourself out of a problem, you behave yourself out²."



Sarah Bentley

**Chief customer officer
Severn Trent**

If the chief customer role can be described as all-encompassing, Sarah Bentley stretches that to the very limit. As CCO of Severn Trent, her job description covers retail P&L and group CIO, as well as the small matter of heading up group transformation.

She would describe her remit as customer advocate and change agent, and is thankful to have such a wide-ranging remit. Bentley claims it helps her push for and prove change more effectively than her CCO peers, who are left trying to influence rather than take direct action. Her push towards technology-driven transformation and a keen focus on what customers want ("cheaper bills, not marketing³") underpins the utility's strong annual results.



Tom Blomfield

**CEO
Monzo Bank**

To be called the future of banking at the ripe old age of 32 isn't bad going, but then, Tom Blomfield isn't one for following convention. Not many financiers start out selling bits and bobs on Hong Kong street corners, for example⁴.

But it's this sort of initiative-taking that has helped him create a banking brand for the next generation that has investors falling over themselves to take a slice of the pie.

His trajectory hasn't been without its hiccups – some stints in staid consultancy and the odd false-start startup. But, like the lurid yet eminently recognisable Monzo bank cards, the Blomfield future's bright.



Kerris Bright

**Chief customer officer
BBC**

If anyone can get inside the mind of the consumer, it's Kerris Bright. With a PhD in molecular neuroscience, Bright is captivated by knowing what makes people tick. Marrying an analytical mind with creative flair, this former British Airways and Virgin Media marketer is now getting personal at the BBC.

She is charged with driving increased personalisation for BBC audiences, which is no mean feat considering the broadcasting institution reaches just under 400 million people worldwide⁵. In this drive towards a more personal, customisable BBC, Bright oversees both the marketing and audiences function and the licence fee unit, while also playing her part in driving strategy as an executive board member.



Tom Broughton

**Founder
Cubitts**

Despite the fact that Tom Broughton himself claims to have a “very emotional⁶” relationship with ‘face furniture’, his reasons for launching eyewear brand Cubitts are wholly practical.

Firstly, more than two-thirds of the UK population wear glasses. Secondly, they will always need to buy at least one more pair. And lastly, he determined the customer experience was “shit”, so he decided to do something about it.

After launching in 2012 at his kitchen table and opening his first retail outlet in 2014, the company doubled in size every year to 2017 and has gone from one employee to more than 40.



Lara Burns

Chief digital and technology officer Age UK

One of 2018's top 100 CIOs, Lara Burns has a track record for bringing traditional organisations to the forefront of technological innovation. At the Royal Horticultural Society she managed the 15-strong digital team behind the Grow Your Own iPhone app, which was downloaded more than 300,000 times in its first year⁷.

For Age UK her challenge has been to digitise the charity's approach while maximising its financial resources. Burns has been behind award-winning initiatives such as the Call In Time befriending service and works closely with CAST, the Centre for Acceleration of Social Technology, to reach the 4.5m older people who have yet to gain digital access to age-related support services⁸.



Zoe Burns-Shore

Chief customer officer Yorkshire Water

For a former agency executive, now a board-level marketer, Burns-Shore isn't afraid of going off-script. Before her recent move to Yorkshire Water, she spent nearly six years at First Direct - famously market-leading on customer service. Yet Burns-Shore insisted that neither customer-centricity nor being mobile-first were plaudits the brand aspired to hang its hat on.

"Good customer service comes with the territory - it's just something people expect," she argues. As the quintessential challenger bank marked its 30th birthday, facing a glut of new entrants to the market, Burns-Shore was still encouraging it to keep pushing boundaries, challenging the challengers.

At Yorkshire Water, Burns-Shore will be leading enterprise-wide customer experience strategy and delivery⁹.



Dave Clark

**SVP worldwide operations
Amazon**

With 20 years' service in the Amazon machine, Dave Clark has witnessed every transformation from the day it branched out beyond books to its status as the behemoth marketplace we see today. It recently recorded record quarterly profits of \$2.53bn (£1.9bn).

With his LinkedIn CV at the company beginning from a role based “wherever I was needed¹⁰”, Clark now heads up the retailer’s global supply chain and logistics. In today’s environment of incredibly high customer expectations, this is a field that may not receive the plaudits and attention of other business functions, but which is clearly crucial to delivering consistent customer experiences.

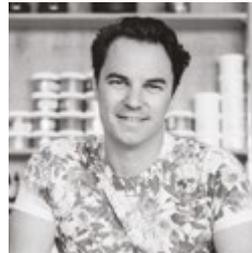
“In the next 10 to 20 years, businesses will be driven by experts in the supply chain because of technology revolutionising the way customers are served¹¹,” says Clark.



Andrew Clarke
Global president
Mars Wrigley Confectionery

Formerly UK chief marketing and customer officer at Mars, Andrew Clarke embodies the long striven-for goal of many a marketer – not just making it to the board, but in a general management role. Promoted in 2018 to lead Mars’s confectionery business globally, Clarke has reached these dizzy heights with his “track record for driving ambitious change while delivering results¹²,” according to his CEO, Grant F Reid.

His sector is not without challenges, but with 18 years’ experience at Mars, he is surely one of the best placed to meet them. Espousing a practice of ‘agile long-termism’, he cites the company’s decentralisation and private ownership as a boon to potential innovation that will help him and his team respond to “changing customer dynamics¹³”.



Jack Constantine
Chief digital officer
Lush

Under Jack Constantine’s stewardship, Lush has been on an organisational shift from bath bomb to tech bomb.

With the brand already a regular fixture at the top of KPMG Nunwood’s Customer Experience Excellence list, Constantine hopes to improve the customer experience still further by introducing an app-based payments system. It allows salespeople to roam the store, serving customers quickly and increasing capacity for more product.

The Android-based tablet till, built on open-source software, is the first of its kind on the UK high street and offers a personalised mobile checkout that will eventually roll out to its 950 stores worldwide¹⁴.



Tom Daniell

**Retail and brand marketing director
Aviva**

Tom Daniell's promotion from a digital role to covering retail and brand reflects the fact that Aviva is looking to break out of the customer-unfriendly status quo. He is behind the insurer's 'Digital Garage', a hub that created the award-winning MyAviva and Ask It Never functions.

Stocked with analysts, data experts and tech gurus from all walks, not just insurance, Daniell is insistent that the Garage isn't innovation for innovation's sake. It drives the Aviva business, including trading, sales and customer retention, with its own P&L.

Aviva wants to address the biggest pain points in insurance. Daniell has proved he's doing much more than just tinkering under the hood.



Peter Duffy

**Chief customer officer
Just Eat**

Recently recruited from easyJet, Peter Duffy is recognised as bringing marketing-driven growth not only to the airline but to other blue chip brands including Barclays and Audi UK¹⁵.

As easyJet's chief commercial officer, he was responsible for driving the brand's customer experience focus and digital innovations, as passengers show an increasing preference for making and managing their bookings on mobiles. Profits and customer numbers have both recently soared.

Announcing his appointment to the newly created role of chief customer officer at Just Eat in mid-2018, the company pointed out he was arriving during an "important phase of growth for the business across all our markets". As the take-away company moved into the FTSE 100 for the first time in 2017¹⁶, Duffy's customer experience expertise and growth track record will be welcome.



Kristof Fahy

**Chief customer officer
Hostelworld**

Kristof Fahy's career has been less of a path, more a professional jigsaw – each new appointment finding a missing piece of experience, whether it was joining Yahoo to bolster his digital knowledge or William Hill to understand the fast pace of the gambling world¹⁷.

In early 2018 he packaged up that experience and brought it to the newly created customer role at Hostelworld, extending his remit beyond marketing into data and analytics. “There is so much more that can be done for customers now and in the future,” he says. “The opportunity is to get smarter when it comes to interacting and engaging with them.”



Mark Fells

Chief customer officer Whitbread

Mark Fells takes his leisure seriously. With a background of marketing roles across travel and hospitality, his latest sees him take the customer helm for Whitbread's Premier Inn & Restaurants division.

Having been behind the Premier Inn brand in a number of marketing capacities since 2011, Fells has seen it take TripAdvisor's certificate of excellence and Which?'s top-rated hotel chain¹⁸ and travel brand of the year. Brand Finance ranks it as the world's strongest hotel chain brand.

The customer role is key as Premier Inn's success to date is due to the emotional connection it makes with customers, backed up with its promise of 'A good night's sleep, guaranteed' and its life-event advertising.



George Goley

Chief technology officer Sainsbury's Argos

George Goley believes more is more. The merger of Sainsbury's with Home Retail Group makes Sainsbury's Argos the UK's biggest non-food retailer. Goley sees this as an opportunity to work with more colleagues, enable more stores to use technology and have "more fun¹⁹".

Goley brings serious retail technology experience from across the pond, having worked at both Sears and Amazon.com. In 2012 90% of Argos's transactions came from its catalogue, whereas by 2018 60% were online and 80% of those came via smartphone or tablet, making it Retail Week's Tech Retailer of the Year 2017²⁰.



Sinead Greenaway

**Chief technology and operations officer
UKTV**

For a broadcaster to achieve growth from £29m to £90m over eight years in a competitive ad market is no mean feat²¹. To sustain it is even more impressive. This is down, in large part, to the efforts of Sinead Greenaway and her team.

Since joining from a consultancy role in 2015, Greenaway has been bringing about organisational change that will help UKTV deliver the next generation of video on-demand (VOD) products.

From 2017 she has focused on bringing linear and VOD together in the business and developing tools to enhance and measure viewer data – a year-long project that takes most other broadcasters nearly a decade to do²².



Mark Holt

**Chief technology officer
Trainline**

All too often the train causes strain but Mark Holt is on a mission to change that. Harnessing massive amounts of traveller data, Trainline is working on a range of predictive tools that will allow users to find the quietest carriages, the most efficient routes and the best prices²³.

In 2016 Holt was working on getting Trainline cloud-bound. The results speak for themselves, from one product release every six weeks to 150 in a week – 800 times more agile²⁴.

From bots to smartphone barcode tickets, Holt describes Trainline's resulting innovations as "a train ticket that Harry Potter would carry²⁵".



Craig Inglis

Customer director John Lewis

Already John Lewis's top marketer, Craig Inglis also became marketers' top marketer when he was named the 2018 chair of The Marketing Society²⁶.

He will forever be known as the man in charge of the retailer's iconic Christmas campaigns but he has many more strings to his bow. Appointed customer director in 2015, the role was expanded to include oversight of the website, store development and design.

Difficult trading conditions on the high street will certainly test his mettle but a dip in profits recently masks significant IT investments – and the fact that the much-loved department store has held up better than most bricks-and-mortar counterparts thanks to its highly flexible delivery and returns services.

The review that expanded Inglis' remit in February 2017 is widely believed²⁷ to be the retailer's first salvo in adapting to a changing retail landscape.



Margaret Jobling

**Group chief marketing officer
Centrica**

Utilities customers may welcome the application of science to their energy supply, but not many would expect to find it in the marketing department. That said, Margaret Jobling brings an analytical mind from her former life as a research scientist to the gnarly issue of data, to extract what really matters to customers.

She has weathered the tricky issue of bringing a consumer product approach to the intangible and usually deeply unsexy business of energy. Helping the company launch internet of things initiatives such as Hive and folding in service elements such as the Dyno-Rod sub-brand, Jobling leads a team of around 50 marketers in delivering a “digital-first, always-on, personalised” service and accelerating top-line growth for shareholders.



Ed Kamm

**Chief commercial officer
First Utility**

A keen eye for a great deal is what has defined Ed Kamm's career, first at Lastminute.com and for the past six years with First Utility. Moving across several executive functions from CMO to chief commercial officer, Kamm has overseen the expansion of the UK's biggest utility challenger brand outside the 'Big Six'.

Though the low-cost ethos is still at the heart of Kamm's delivery to customers, he's aware that price isn't everything. Initiatives he's overseen include the move to a 'multi-utility' and bringing technology into customers' homes to make energy savings. That's why First Utility is the first utility to win 2017 Customer Service of the Year²⁸.



Mark de Lange

**Founder & CEO
Ace & Tate**

When is eyewear art? When entrepreneur Mark de Lange launches a creative fund to support emerging artists and give back to the creative community²⁹.

De Lange originates from the less-than-creative world of investment firms but in 2013 launched Ace & Tate in response to an industry he felt had become “stale and dusty³⁰”, inspired partly by his entrepreneurial, shoe-making parents.

On top of passions for art and craftsmanship, De Lange is pushing for accountability within Ace & Tate, having commissioned a research project on identifying the most harmful parts of the company’s value chain and seeking alternatives³¹.



Phil Lewis

**Director of digital experience
Boden**

Credited with reviving the stultified catalogue market, Boden recognises that its core yummy mummy customer set doesn’t have time to sit flicking through pages of jersey wraps and Henley tees. Enter Phil Lewis, brought in by Boden’s CEO to take the best of the catalogue multi-channel, allowing mobile browsing, image recognition, chatbots and mobile payments³².

Lewis’s CV blends tech with high fashion, with past roles at IBM and Ralph Lauren, latterly in charge of the brand’s global digital replatforming. The metaphor he uses for digital transformation is a rather visceral description of the process of metamorphosis – “where the caterpillar goes blind, eats itself, creates a pool of goop and becomes a butterfly³³” – implying his task is dramatic, but ultimately worthwhile.



Emma Mead

**Group digital director
Holland & Barrett**

Emma Mead is not one to hang about. Her speciality is bringing traditional retailers bang up to date on digital customer experience, and once she's got a project in hand, she moves fast. First in Mead's sights was Asda Direct, which she got up and running in nine months, and now she's moving with the same vim and vigour to turn high street health store Holland & Barrett into a fully omnichannel environment.

Fortunately, she says the retailer is a fast follower and therefore ready to get on board with her plans, including the launch of Healthbox, a subscription nutrition package. The company aims to reach £1bn turnover by 2020, helped no doubt by a daily dose of Mead.



Belinda Moore

**Marketing and communications director
E.ON**

Belinda Moore doesn't just lead customer experience at board level for one of the 'big six' utilities companies; having sold in E.ON's new 'un-utility' positioning, she has helped ensure it leads its five major rivals on consumer perceptions, according to YouGov's BrandIndex tool.

Moore's belief is that it isn't enough just to try to change the customer service aspect of utilities companies; they have to change the whole way they operate if they're to gain trust and loyalty. Harnessing energy from the air sounds like science-fiction, but Moore firmly believes truly serving customers is about exploring every option. With bespoke energy solutions for every customer in mind, Moore is subverting the genre and she's having a gas.



Bec Mortimer

Director of marketing Netflix

Bec Mortimer has entertainment running through her like a stick of rock. Over a 20-year career, she has worked on some of the biggest properties in cinema including the Jason Bourne, Harry Potter and Twilight franchises³⁴.

Since 2013 she has been convincing customers to switch their film viewing habits online, overseeing Netflix's rise in the UK from an online video store sending DVDs in the post, to a digital powerhouse.

In early 2018 Netflix overtook BBC iPlayer in YouGov's BrandIndex³⁵ ranking of consumer brand perceptions to take third place among the UK's top brands. The reason, according to YouGov, is "how effective it has been in delivering its 'quality original content' message to both new and existing viewers³⁶".



Simon Mottram

CEO Rapha

Starting with a hard-won £140,000 in 2004 (no Kickstarter and 200+ meetings)³⁷, Rapha has since racked up 37 factories and a £200m sale to Walmart heirs in 2017.

Founder Simon Mottram still retains a small share of the business he started, as well as keeping the CEO's metaphorical yellow jersey and he doesn't plan on slowing down any time soon.

A self-confessed Mamil (middle-aged man in Lycra), Mottram insists Rapha's success couldn't have happened if a passion for cycling – and translating that into the customer experience – wasn't coursing through his veins: "This business couldn't have been built if it had been set up by someone with just a spreadsheet. We really love what we do³⁸."

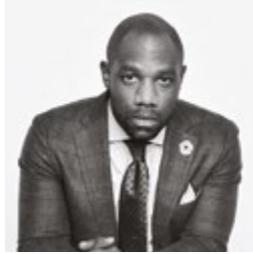


Anne Murphy

Chief customer officer Walgreens Boots Alliance

Now six years into her role as UK and Ireland commercial director for Boots, Anne Murphy also holds the role of chief customer officer in its partnership with US chemist Walgreens – a new position created in 2016 with responsibility for leading the global commercial strategy across the US, UK, Europe, Latin America and Asia³⁹.

Prior to joining Boots, Murphy served as managing director of Birds Eye where the power of relationships with customers was already on her radar: “Sometimes people get very immersed in the business agenda and don’t necessarily invest as much time in thinking about the people agenda. It’s intrinsic to great business performance⁴⁰,” she says.



Kenyatte Nelson

Chief customer officer Missguided

The Missguided clothing brand is taking fast fashion to new levels with former Very and P&G marketer Kenyatte Nelson at the helm. Responsible for the online retailer's partnership with reality TV sensation Love Island, Nelson has engineered a culture of instant gratification for the Instagram generation. Sales to the company's core 16 to 29-year-old audience shot up by 40% during the crucial 7pm to midnight period when the show aired⁴¹.

But Nelson's strategy extends far beyond making a quick buck. As at Very, where he helped the brand achieve double-digit sales growth, he is now focused on profitable growth that will help scale Missguided's digital brand both on and offline.



Iain Noakes

Chief customer journey officer The Economist

The first to take up this position at the publisher, Iain Noakes' role as journey officer means linking all the channels and platforms that deliver The Economist experience to audiences around the world. When exploring what the potential size of that audience might be back in 2015, he arrived at a modest 131 million⁴².

With initiatives such as a content hub and more interest-driven ads for the publication's discerning audience, Noakes attracted more than 4 million new prospects in his first year and by 2017, digital subscriptions had risen by 24% year on year and with no increase in spend⁴³.



Heather Payne

**Chief technology officer
Avon**

Avon, the 130-year-old manufacturer of household and personal care products, made a statement of intent this summer when it commenced an innovation programme driven by a newly formed 'digital board'. It plans to become a 'fast beauty' brand, transforming the digital capabilities of its representatives and improving interactions with consumers, including personalised shopping carts that can be shared by Facebook and WhatsApp.

Among its most significant hires was chief technology officer Heather Payne, who joined from MailOnline and Daily Mail publisher DMG Media. There, she had been responsible for transforming technology processes and co-creating the innovation strategy.

Payne has perhaps the key ingredient of any CTO - the ability to make technology comprehensible to fellow business leaders and ensure it aligns with and serves business needs, which means also serving the customer.

Her philosophy is that in order to innovate you have to care, and to ask "the questions everyone is scared to ask" - even if that means dealing with some uncomfortable consequences.



Chris Rhodes

**Chief products and propositions officer
Nationwide**

With the threats faced by the banking sector – reputational, financial and competitive – it's comforting to know there is a safe pair of hands at the helm. Chris Rhodes is an experienced C-suite executive with nearly 30 years' service within the financial industry.

In that time he has seen regulatory change, digital disruption, the rise of open banking and closing branches. Weathering this turbulence requires deft handling.

Even in challenging market conditions, the building society has managed to increase current account opening⁴⁴ to record levels. It continues to keep pace with innovation, including a five star-rated app⁴⁵ that provides user behaviour insights back to the business⁴⁶.



Michelle Roberts

**Group marketing director
BMW UK**

Named the most influential woman in the UK car industry by Autocar, BMW UK's number one marketer is also the only woman on its board. Michelle Roberts leads a team of more than 50 marketers charged with bringing the manufacturer's product and experience into the digital age.

Rising through the ranks from graduate trainee, Roberts has been involved in transforming the iconic MINI brand as well as playing a role in promoting BMW's concept cars as the company looks towards a more autonomous future. As the car industry faces a period of rapid change, Roberts is very much in the driving seat.



Ash Roots

**Managing director of digital
BT**

Aside from a brief foray into the world of insurance with Direct Line, Ash Roots has had his feet firmly planted in the world of communications for nearly two decades⁴⁷.

Following BT's acquisition of EE in a £12.5bn deal in 2016⁴⁸, Roots is now bringing his mobile experience to bear in a company looking to bring the traditional and mobile arms more closely together.

At Direct Line, Roots spearheaded a campaign of transformation to bring the insurer in line with more agile offerings. Managing change, he says, shouldn't be daunting: "Change creates opportunities. Without it things cannot improve⁴⁹."



Otto Rosenberger

**COO
lglu.com**

Otto Rosenberger's move from CMO to COO is the latest in a trend that sees marketers take the leap into general management. It is yet more evidence that fully rounded marketers are most successful when they are embedded across the business, rather than isolated by function.

Rosenberger is the latest recipient of The Marketing Academy fellowship to make a move into management or board-level positions⁵⁰. At conferences, his enthusiasm has been described as 'infectious', with commentators suggesting this is a valuable trait when it comes to having a singular focus on the customer.

"If an email is sent to customers that doesn't really serve their interests, that should make you angry," he says. "Marketing must raise excitement internally for improving every step along the journey⁵¹."



Christina Scott

**Chief technology officer
News UK**

As 2016's CIO of the year at the Women in IT awards, Christina Scott has 20 years' experience working in technology teams at companies such as the BBC, Financial Times and ITV Digital⁵².

Now with dual roles at News UK and News Corp (she is deputy chief technology officer of the parent company), she oversees the technology and product teams, integrating AI and machine learning into business processes to keep the publisher at the forefront of innovation⁵³.

In 2017, Scott launched the News UK start-up lab to foster relationships with agile innovators, promote their growth and access their expertise. "It's a great time for companies to work closely [with] and to support start-ups⁵⁴," she says.



Sigridur Sigurdardottir

**Chief customer and innovation officer UK
Santander**

As banking gets to grips with the new world order unleashed by challenger brands and open banking, it helps to have a digital transformation maven on the team. Sigridur Sigurdardottir previously led product innovation and digital platform development for American Express's emerging payment services unit, before joining Santander UK in 2015.

Far from going head to head with the disruptors, Sigurdardottir is bringing fintech companies and start-ups into the Santander fold to gain their expertise first-hand. Her strategy doesn't end at ideas – Sigurdardottir is looking to design a customer-centric bank of the future by taking on board the rapid prototyping and mobile-first behaviours of these digital counterparts.



Heather Smith

**Managing director, direct
LV=**

If marketers are looking for a solid KPI to prove they've got the right stuff, they could do a lot worse than Heather Smith's numbers. Having completed a transformation programme that involved mapping out every single customer journey as digital transformation director, Smith was rewarded with a boost in group profits to £158m from a £12m loss the previous year, and promotion to chief customer officer.

She oversaw a team of 50 and her role included digital marketing, user experience and analytics, with responsibility for driving the brand promise through all channels and making customer experience a commercial reality – “Hold the two together and it's a recipe for success⁵⁵,” she says.

Her success was such that she was promoted again to managing director of LV='s direct insurance business within six months.



Fiona Spooner

**Global marketing director B2C
FT**

Aside from an early stint cutting her marketing teeth at no lesser brand than Marketing Week⁵⁶, Fiona Spooner has been ‘Thinking Pink’ at the Financial Times for her whole career. Following a CRM and performance marketing path to the top, arguably the customer was at the forefront for Spooner long before centrality and experience became fashionable buzzwords.

Former head of ecommerce Spooner now oversees the FT's B2C activities and results have been clear. Digital subscribers exceed global print circulation, according to its most recent annual audience audit, with monthly global reach figures showing six million print readers and over 11 million on the web, with a small but growing audience of 400,000 readers using its app⁵⁷.



Swave Szymczyk

**Global director of digital and retail marketing
adidas**

Kick ass and be ready to screw up⁵⁸. That's Swave Szymczyk's advice as he continues to wrestle with the issue of bringing personalised, high-end customer experiences to adidas in an environment where online giants like Amazon dominate.

A career marketer, Szymczyk came back to adidas after a nearly 10-year absence⁵⁹ to tackle the high street challenge – how to stay relevant in bricks and mortar when price seems to rule. His solution is to blend on- and offline to deliver a new kind of shopping style: “We're never going to be the cheapest. We're looking to win with experience.”



Richard Tang

**Chairman
Zen Internet**

Stepping down as CEO in October 2018, Richard Tang is hoping he will be free to become something of an evangelist for the company that now challenges the likes of Sky and Virgin, and which is rated by Which? as the UK's top broadband provider based on customer satisfaction.

What this will mean, he isn't quite sure as his former chairman Paul Stobart takes the day-to-day reins as CEO. One possibility is "paragliding across the English Channel promoting Zen⁶⁰".

Having grown the business from scratch in 1995, Tang has no lesser ambitions for Zen following the change. Whereas he once predicted the business would scale to £250m in 10 years, he now reckons the company will do it in five⁶¹.



Simon Thompson

Chief product officer Ocado

Simon Thompson's career has been nothing if not varied. From stints at Motorola and Honda – where he oversaw the iconic 'Cog' campaign – to HSBC, Lastminute and Morrisons, Thompson brings an enviable amount of cross-sector, cross-discipline experience that Ocado is no doubt hoping will accompany its technological leap into next-generation grocery delivery.

His appointment in April 2018 comes on top of the retailer's major investment in technologies such as Ocado's Smart Platform – its grocery-packing robots. Thompson's experience will come in handy as the company looks to capitalise on this innovation and branch out beyond grocery retail, a key success factor going forward.



Shashi Verma

Chief technology officer and director of customer experience Transport for London

Shashi Verma and his employer, Transport for London (TfL), have pedigree in the field of customer experience, with his signature achievement being the introduction of contactless payments on the Tube, which he began developing in 2007 and finally rolled out in 2012. He had already been responsible for all TfL's revenue collection systems, including the Oyster card, since 2006.

Today Verma is also responsible for its technology and data strategy, and TfL has set itself apart as a leader in utilising these for customer benefit. It makes its data feeds available to third-party developers, enabling them to produce useful apps covering road, rail and river transport, and even air quality.

Analysis by Deloitte last year found TfL's open data creates benefits and savings to the London economy worth £130m per year.



Claudia Vernon

**Group marketing director
Richer Sounds**

Among the flashier brands strutting their stuff on the marketing stage, there lurks something of a sleeper hit. Richer Sounds, the specialist high street hi-fi shop topped Which?'s 2017 customer service poll of 10,000 shoppers, ahead of Apple and John Lewis⁶².

Claudia Vernon leads the marketing strategy that can be summed up in a single word: people. "We want the human contact," she says. Online may be important but she adds: "You can't replicate that one-on-one experience online."⁶³

With 15% of its £9m profits going to charity and staff enjoying subsidised holiday homes, it's not just customers who love the Richer experience.



Ruth Wassermann

**Design director
Made.com**

Covetable future classics at affordable prices is the crux of furniture retail, and talented designers who can marry form, function and price are at a premium. Made.com will be wanting to hang on tight to design director Ruth Wassermann as she's been responsible for a number of its already instantly-recognisable pieces.

Unsurprisingly, Wassermann has won a clutch of awards across her 15-year career including from the International Contemporary Furniture Fair and House Beautiful. At Ercol, collaborations with John Lewis led to year on year growth and her work for high street supplier, Willis and Gambler, helped drive growth up 40% over four years⁶⁴.



Eve Williams

**Brand experience director
Asos**

Eve Williams' experience at content agency Cedar stands her in good stead at Asos, where the brand thrives on the understanding that fashion is about so much more than the clothes on your back.

"Have a vision for your brand. And communicate it widely and wildly⁶⁵," she says and, since joining in late 2013, Williams has been doing just that.

The company says: "The brand story now defines where we're coming from, who we are and what we do⁶⁶." The result has been steadily climbing sales as the brand continues to dominate the fast fashion market⁶⁷, and a reputation for innovating on social media, using Instagram for both advertising and ecommerce.



Emma Woods
Chief growth officer
Wagamama

Appointed to the Japanese-style restaurant chain Wagamama in 2017, Emma Woods has extensive leisure and food marketing experience from previous roles at Pizza Express and Merlin Entertainments, bolstered by 17 years of heavyweight experience at Unilever.

She neatly sums up the role of any customer experience professional: “It’s about finding out if our visitors have had a great time and trying to get them to use us again.”

Often, she has used technology rollouts as a key tool in improving her brands’ abilities to do this. The philosophy will be key to Wagamama’s plans for international growth, particularly into the US market. The chain is one of the few growth stories in the UK casual dining sector, with numerous competitors shutting sites rather than opening them.



Zia Zareem-Slade
Customer experience director
Fortnum & Mason

You need careful hands when holding a 310-year-old antique⁶⁸ but Zia Zareem-Slade looks like she has it covered with the long-established department store in London’s West End. Charged with keeping the essence of Fortnum & Mason’s heritage while bringing it into the modern age, she treads a fine line between nostalgia and the bottom line.

Previous work as Selfridges’ head of online clearly contributed to her success overhauling Fortnum’s ecommerce strategy. By the start of 2016, just a year after relaunching its website, total sales had risen 30% year on year.

Zareem-Slade isn’t limited to digital experience and the past five years have seen her work across packaging, restaurant transformation and the transformation of its Piccadilly store into art space⁶⁹.



Dave Zimmerman

**Director of global customer experience
QVC**

Dave Zimmerman's previous job title at QVC, where he has worked for the past 22 years, perhaps best explains how he has approached the field of customer experience. As QVC's director of service innovation he led the TV shopping channel's efforts to remain constantly relevant to the habits of its customers.

His discoveries can be subtle, but effective. One insight from the channel's digital sales funnel found that customers frequently hunted for previous purchases to inform future ones. A reorder button was a simple but transformative solution.

Even someone as experienced as he insists customer insight must lead the process: "Fight the temptation to know the answer before being informed⁷⁰," he advises.



About Cognizant & Zone

Cognizant is devoted to designing and delivering world-class experiences for our clients. Being digital to the core, we take a human-first view to enabling experience transformation. From foresight services and experience design, to running some of the largest digital support services of their kind, we envision and operate tomorrow's products and services today. Specialising in applied innovation – platform-enabled, AI-driven and inspired by human insight – we help our clients deliver exceptional experiences across all parts of the enterprise at scale.

We have grown our capabilities by acquiring and integrating a network of speciality agencies, including Idea Couture and Mirabeau (innovation and experience design), Cadient, Zone and Netcentric (marketing and content). We are proud to be ranked by Ad Age as the #1 Digital Agency Network in the US and #3 in the world in 2018.

cognizant.com/en-uk/customer-experience

Zone is a customer experience agency with deep expertise in strategy, technology and content & experiences. Our team of 300 digital experts work in multi-disciplinary teams to create award-winning customer experiences for some of the biggest brands in the world.

We work with market-leading clients across every industry vertical – brands such as adidas, Aviva, Barratt Homes, BMW, British Gas, Electrolux, The FA and the John Lewis Partnership. Zone became a Cognizant Digital Business in 2017.

zonedigital.com



About Marketing Week

Marketing Week is the leading multimedia and events brand dedicated to meeting the information needs of senior marketers. Now in its 40th year, Marketing Week has moved from being a weekly magazine to being a multiplatform brand with a fast-growing and engaged audience for its website, social channels and digital platforms such as webinars and the Mini MBA in Marketing. In 2017 the PPA named Marketing Week as the coveted 'Digital Brand of the Year' at its annual digital awards.





Appendix

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