



BY **DAVID POSTILL**

## **THE EVOLUTION OF CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE**

COVID-19 has touched almost every facet of society: from macroeconomics, to how people work and lead their daily lives. It has been a catalyst in moving forward the future of work, digital transformation and has challenged the way organizations deliver their customer experience (CX).

From a marketing perspective, we've needed to navigate the shifting landscape in order to continually deliver on commitments to our customers. In my role as SVP Marketing and Customer Experience at AGI, I've been intently focused on working with the entire organization to identify critical success factors necessary to support and further our CX objectives.

## **THE CHALLENGE: COVID-19'S IMPACT ON CX:**

Like most things, CX has been impacted by the global pandemic. Gone are the days of trade shows, grand marketing events such as concerts or the ability to offer simple things in person, like trying new machinery or conversations with dealers.

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## KEY SUCCESS FACTORS FOR CX:

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**Leaders must ask the question, 'what do the customers need and what will help them succeed?'. Companies must continuously innovate to develop solutions that help customers do more business with you, make the business they do with you that much better and offer an increasingly enriched experience.**

**- DAVID POSTILL,**  
SVP Marketing and Customer Experience, AGI

Additionally, we identified the following key success factors for responding to COVID-19:

1

**Get the fundamentals right:** Above everything else, companies need to prioritize caring for their employees, customers and communities. During times of change, people need extra information, guidance, and support to navigate new challenges. It's more important to be a resource that customers can trust than to focus on selling.

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**It's critical for leaders to demonstrate empathy and be intentional about decency. How leaders treat people now and the culture they choose to foster will be remembered far longer than any brand strategy or marketing campaign.**

**- DAVID POSTILL,**  
SVP Marketing and Customer Experience, AGI

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2

**Embrace that we are in a virtual century:** The onus is on business and marketing leaders to meet customers where they are. Right now, that means having an active presence in the digital domain and recognizing that behaviours, more specifically channel behaviours, are changing. Increased trends of multi-channel social media use combined with massive shifts to e-commerce and online shopping may never fully return to pre-pandemic behaviours. We need to ensure we are providing relevant, helpful content to our audience, wherever they are active: YouTube, Facebook, e-mail, etc. Customers expect information to be available and quicker than ever before. In order to respond to the changes, we need to bring together online and offline resources to provide a holistic solution.

3

**Balance digital with human connection:** The focus on digital, does not negate the need for human interaction. We recognized that we provide better CX by incorporating a human component. To this end, we continually seek out new ways to leverage technology to deepen human connection.

4

**Build capabilities for a fast-changing world:** Today, an agile team structure, capable of responding to the shifting landscape, is imperative. Companies need people who aren't afraid to try new things, iterate and pivot. Right now, the power of providing quality, relevant content can't be understated. Companies need to find the right balance of in-house and external resources that will allow them to be as responsive as possible to their customers.



## AGI'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19:

Using these success factors as a guidepost, we launched the following large-scale initiatives in order to proactively fill gaps created by COVID-19 limitations:



1

**AGI LIVE** was launched in Spring 2020 as a proactive solution to not being able to attend trade shows, which AGI previously relied upon to disseminate product news, offer training and market our capabilities. With the onset of COVID-19, AGI quickly moved to the enhanced webinar model and started figuring out how to bring to life AGI equipment and content, engage with our customers and increase our audience. This resulted in a 4-day virtual event that showcased AGI's capabilities in Farm, Commercial and International. With 30+ presenters from around the world, over 8 hours of presentations and over 4,000 attendees, AGI Live was a huge success and positioned us as an industry leader in agtech. Webinars will become commonplace, but we know that what will differentiate us is the quality of content and expertise.

AGI Live continues to be a massive success for the company. It has evolved to become AGI Live "On Demand", a virtual series that includes webinars, interviews, panel discussions, and expert Q&A sessions. The series serves as dedicated, targeted initiatives that highlights complete ranges of systems and solutions. AGI Live also offers weekly digital "Coffee Talks" about our new software tool AGI SureTrack™.



2

**AGI VIRTUAL SHOWROOM:** Another way we demonstrated innovation throughout the pandemic was by launching a virtual showroom. Previous to COVID-19, AGI trade shows included significant installations and product demonstrations where people could enjoy hands-on experiences to get familiarized with AGI equipment. We knew this would be missed by dealers and customers and so we prioritized the development of photorealistic 3D renders to fill the gap. This allowed our customers to have a 360° immersive experience where they can see, touch and experience equipment. The trend towards digital has created a customer base thirsty for more information and product knowledge. By providing what they're looking for, we created utility - where the customers and AGI's interests are aligned. The AGI Virtual Showroom has been another significant success story for the AGI brand coming out of COVID-19.

AGI recognizes that companies can't do it all on their own. Beyond the large-scale initiatives, we look for meaningful partnerships that provide the mutual benefit that physical tradeshow offered, but in the new virtual world. For example, we leverage partnerships with Influencers, who bring customer experiences to life, and regularly explore new platforms that will help amplify our commitment to CX.

## CONCLUSION:

Without question, the global pandemic has been difficult and challenged everyone. Our focus on innovation and adaptability enabled us to strengthen our brand while meeting the needs of our customers and deepening relationships. This innovation elevated the CX AGI provides today and is moving the dial forward on the CX that we'll design and deliver tomorrow.