

# Forbes

## The Top 100 Most Customer-Centric Companies Of 2022

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As a customer you can feel it when a company has gone above and beyond for you, it feels...different.

But if going above and beyond for customers was so easy, every business would do it - but they don't. Why? Well it's hard to do! It's hard to create an amazing experience for all of your customers when you have not made it part of the bones of your company.

But some shining star brands actually do it, and they've figured out how to "do it" all the time. What is it they do? They make customers feel GOOD. That is why recent research shows that 89% of companies that lead with customer experience perform better financially than their peers.

These companies have a customer focus in everything they do, from how they treat employees to how they innovate and serve their local communities - because you can no longer just operate in a vacuum. Every action you take, every decision, has a butterfly effect, and being customer-centric today also means being self-aware.

Every year, I create a list of the most customer-centric companies to recognize companies that lead with customer experience. The companies I've recognized are not just known for great customer experience, they excel at being a great place to work, they have high customer satisfaction, they achieve culture awards, receive innovation recognition. I also see them come up again and again in my own research for my work as a customer experience keynote speaker.

The last few years have made this list different. These are companies that stepped up during the pandemic. Customers don't want to go back to the way things were pre-pandemic. They expect companies to continue to personalize customer experiences, and meet customers where they are, whether that is at a digital doorstep, or in a phygital experience.

According to Accenture, over 50% of customers have reimagined themselves, and are re-evaluating their personal purpose and what matters to them in life. Loyalty died during COVID. Customers didn't and still don't have the patience to wait around for a company to get its act together. According to Forrester, high-growth companies are 2.5x more likely to focus on solving customer problems than their competitors.

Today's companies are faced with changed customers, new pressures, and a stronger need to make a difference in their communities and the world. This year's list of top CX companies is based on five categories:

1. **COVID 911.** How did companies respond to the pandemic? Did they rise to the occasion for their customers and employees? *\*This was the most heavily weighted category because COVID impacted customers' lives more than anything else.*
2. **CX mindset.** How do companies treat customers through customer service and other channels? Does the company aim to reduce stress with quality products and services? Are executives involved in customer experience? Is there a culture where employees wake up excited to serve customers?
3. **Community and environmental responsibility.** Customers want companies to take a stand on racism and inequality. Do companies take a stand for critical cultural issues like diversity and the environment? Do they prioritize transparency and sustainability?
4. **Employee experience.** Are employees empowered to do their jobs well? Do they have the tools, physical space, and culture to feel valued at work and serve customers? Contact centers are notorious for providing staff too little too late. They treat contact center employees like children, making most customer service interactions very frustrating.
5. **Innovation.** Has the company found creative ways to solve problems? Are they leading their industry and creating innovative solutions? Innovative companies are always finding new and better ways to serve their customers.

With those criteria in mind, here are the top 100 customer-centric companies in 2022:

## Retail

1. **Discount Tire.** The company is known for its strong culture and focus on collaboration, customers, and integrity. Its Treadwell program helps customers find the right tires online before they go into the store, creating a blended shopping experience between online and in-store that saves time and allows employees to offer more personalized service.
2. **ThredUp.** ThredUp started a movement of reselling items and changed how people shop and think about secondhand clothing. Sustainability needs to be top of mind for every retailer. This retailer partners with stores like Macy's and JCPenney and more than 20 brands, including Adidas and Crocs, to make used clothing accessible and popular.
3. **Lululemon.** Lululemon was named a top 10 Best Place to Work in 2022 by Glassdoor because of its strong benefits and personal development opportunities for employees. The company found innovative ways to adjust to at-home fitness growth, including building a robust omnichannel experience, offering virtual classes, and acquiring Mirror.
4. **Depop.** Taking an innovative approach to connecting with younger customers, Depop combines retail and social networking with its marketplace of secondhand, designer, and handmade products. Adding a social aspect to shopping allows for instant feedback between buyers and sellers and faster transactions.
5. **CVS Health.** The store emphasizes health and changed its design to make it easier for customers to get what they need. New features include vending machines and kiosks for everyday personal care items and drive-thru over-the-counter medicine. CVS hired 50,000 furloughed hotel workers during the pandemic.
6. **Target.** The big-box store was widely praised for its COVID response. Target put employees first with increased benefits and pay and quickly expanded drive-up options for customers. Target also highlights social issues by partnering with POC designers to bring a more diverse product offering.
7. **Nike.** Nike continues to push boundaries and think outside the box. Its app offers recommendations through chat and connects customers to in-store workshops and events. Nike is also opening more Nike Live stores with a shoe bar and consultations.
8. **Trader Joe's.** Customers love the unique products, personalization, and great service of Trader Joe's, as do employees. The grocery chain is leading the way in sustainability to reduce food waste and listened to customer feedback to prioritize cleanliness and safety. Unlike other grocery stores, Trader Joe's didn't pivot to delivery during the pandemic because in-store discovery is essential to its business model.
9. **Ulta Beauty.** When customers couldn't try on products in person during the pandemic, Ulta quickly scaled its GLAMlab virtual try-on experience. In just months, Ulta added a skin analysis tool and AI-powered try-ons for hair, eyelashes, and more—with hundreds of products added every week.
10. **Canada Goose.** The winter clothing retailer takes immersive retail to the next level. Stores have Cold Rooms where customers can test coats in -27 degrees with gusts of wind and snow. It also turned some stores into interactive museums. Canada Goose's innovation and storytelling drive loyalty—its revenue increased more than 15% in 2020 despite stores being closed for months.

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