

MICHAEL KORS

BRAND SPOTLIGHT

Michael Kors



Balancing Innovation and the Human Touch in Luxury Retail

In this Brand Spotlight, Ebrahim Hyder, Vice President of Customer Service at Michael Kors, reflects on his global CX career and how the brand blends personalization, omnichannel service, and digital innovation with human connection. He shares strategies for creating memorable customer experiences, leveraging AI for efficiency and personalization, and mentoring emerging CX leaders. Ebrahim also explores future trends like augmented reality and multimodal AI, offering insights into how Michael Kors stays at the forefront of customer experience innovation.



MICHAEL KORS

Ebrahim Hyder

Vice President,
Customer Service



Execs In The Know (EITK): You've spent two decades in CX across different continents. What are the biggest global shifts you've observed in customer experience, and how have these influenced your approach at Michael Kors?

Ebrahim Hyder: Over my two decade journey, I've witnessed some remarkable transformations. The most profound shifts have been in personalization, omnichannel service, and blending digital innovation with genuine human connection. I vividly recall working in Europe in the early 2000s when customer communication from some EU countries primarily meant handwritten or typed letters – a stark contrast to today's instant, multi-platform interactions.

At Michael Kors, we've embraced these changes by strategically investing in tools that help us understand and anticipate our customers' needs. However, technology is just part of the equation. We've empowered our Style Consultants to deliver experiences that are both authentically Michael Kors and deeply personal. It's a nuanced approach where we use technology to enhance, not replace, human interaction. Additionally, we love weaving in stories about Michael Kors himself –sharing the inspiration behind a

particular piece – which adds a layer of brand storytelling that transforms a simple transaction into a memorable experience. Our goal is finding that perfect balance: leveraging cutting-edge technology while preserving the warm, personal touch that makes a customer feel truly seen and valued.

EITK: Your team has achieved remarkable outcomes, like boosting customer satisfaction by 15 percent while reducing costs by 30 percent. Can you share some of the strategies or innovations that made this possible?

Ebrahim: Our remarkable outcomes – a 15 percent boost in customer satisfaction and a 30



percent cost reduction – weren't just happy accidents. They resulted from a meticulously crafted data-driven strategy that put our customers at the heart of everything we do. We took a deep dive into our customer journey, using the Four Disciplines of Execution framework to prioritize and tackle our most critical challenges.

One of our most significant transformations was reimagining our warranty process. What used to be weeks-long – sometimes months-long – transaction was condensed into a matter of days, sometimes hours. Imagine waiting weeks for a resolution to getting answers on the same day! We didn't stop there. We partnered with a renowned global training provider to develop a custom sales and service training curriculum that empowered our Style Consultants to deliver exceptional experiences.



Simultaneously, we built intelligent self-serve capabilities into our IVR system, allowing customers to independently check order statuses or initiate warranty claims. The magic happened in the balance – by enabling customers to handle simple tasks independently, we freed up our team to focus on more complex, high-value interactions that require a human touch. It was about working smarter, not just harder, and putting our customers' time and experience first.

EITK: You've maintained an impressive Call Resolution rate across your phone channel. What advice would you give to other CX leaders aiming to empower their frontline teams to drive similar results?

Ebrahim: Achieving our 90%+ FCR isn't just about having a great team – it's about creating an environment where our Style Consultants can excel. We've built a culture of empowerment and accountability that gives our frontline agents the tools, knowledge, and confidence to resolve customer issues on the spot. It's like giving them a toolkit that allows them to be problem-solving





champions. Our commitment to quality is underpinned by continuous monitoring and real-time performance coaching.

During our weekly calibration sessions, we sometimes identify training opportunities and develop coaching to address those needs. We've also introduced Tier 2 support roles, creating a safety net that allowed our Style Consultants to quickly escalate complex issues to more experienced team members. But empowerment isn't just about skills – it's about motivation. We've implemented a recognition program that goes beyond traditional metrics.

Cash incentives and Michael Kors product rewards create tangible recognition for Style Consultants who consistently deliver exceptional service. It's our way of saying, "We see you; we appreciate you, and we want you to shine." The result? A team that's not just solving problems, but creating memorable customer experiences that turn interactions into relationships.

EITK: With a passion for the intersection of human connection and technology, how do you balance emerging technologies with maintaining a personal touch in luxury retail?

Ebrahim: In retail, technology isn't about replacing human connection, but enhancing it.

At Michael Kors, we view emerging technologies as powerful tools that amplify our ability to create meaningful, personalized customer experiences. Our recent implementation of AI-powered agent assistants is a perfect example. These intelligent systems handle routine inquiries with remarkable efficiency and consistency, ensuring we maintain our distinctive brand voice.

By automating these standard interactions, we've liberated our Style Consultants to do what they do best – provide deeply personalized, consultative support. Now, we let technology handle the mundane, allowing our human experts to focus on creating those extraordinary, tailored moments that make a customer feel truly special. That's the sweet spot we aim for – where cutting-edge tech and authentic human connection come together seamlessly.



EITK: How is Michael Kors leveraging AI to enhance the customer experience, and what role do you see AI playing in the future of CX for luxury retail?

Ebrahim: AI is transforming our customer experience in ways that are both innovative and



deeply human. We're using AI to create rich, comprehensive case notes that tell a complete story of each customer interaction. Gone are the days of cryptic, fragmented account notes and histories. Now, our Style Consultants can quickly understand a customer's entire journey at a glance thanks to detailed, yet succinct, AI-generated case notes.

Our AI Tools are like silent, intelligent partners working alongside our team.

They help identify potential fraud, preventing abuse of our e-commerce platform. During live calls, the AI listens in real-time, suggesting the most appropriate next steps based on conversation nuances. It's like having a knowledgeable coach whispering strategic advice, ensuring consistency and adherence to our brand standards. Looking to the future, AI will be our gateway to hyper-personalization. We're heading towards a world of predictive analytics and automated workflows that anticipate customer needs before they articulate them. The goal isn't to replace human interaction, but to make every interaction more meaningful, efficient, and tailored to the individual.

EITK: You've been an Advisory Board Member for Execs In The Know since 2019. How has this role shaped your perspectives on CX, and what insights have you gained that you bring back to Michael Kors?

Ebrahim: My role on the Execs In The Know advisory board has been nothing short of a



professional masterclass in customer experience. It's like having a backstage pass to the most innovative minds in CX across different industries. Working alongside exceptional leaders has been transformative for my career and professional growth. Each conversation is an opportunity to share ideas, challenge existing paradigms, and discover new approaches to customer service.

This network isn't just about learning; it's about collective innovation. We're a community of CX professionals relentlessly pushing boundaries and sharing insights that elevate service experiences across industries. The perspectives I've gained influence our call center strategy at Michael Kors, ensuring we're always one step ahead in delivering exceptional customer experiences. To quote Execs In The Know's President, Chad McDaniel, "We're leaders learning from leaders."

EITK: Creating inclusive environments is a priority for you. How does this commitment to inclusivity translate into the day-to-day experiences you deliver for customers?

Ebrahim: At Michael Kors, inclusivity isn't just a buzzword – it's the heart of our customer experience. We've cultivated a team of Style Consultants who are not just multilingual, but truly culturally fluent. Our training goes beyond language skills; we're building a team that can connect authentically with customers from all backgrounds and abilities. Our commitment is simple yet powerful: create an environment where every customer feels genuinely seen, heard, and valued. Whether it's adapting

communication styles, understanding cultural nuances, or ensuring our service is accessible to everyone, we're dedicated to making every interaction feel personal and meaningful.

EITK: Mentoring emerging CX leaders is something you're passionate about. What key lessons do you emphasize when working with new leaders in the industry?

Ebrahim: Mentoring emerging CX leaders is about passing on more than just skills – it's about sharing a philosophy of leadership. I always emphasize that true customer experience excellence starts with empathy and genuine connection. One of my most powerful mentoring lessons is the importance of staying close to the frontline. I make it a point to personally take customer calls when I visit our call center.

It's not just about understanding challenges – it's about experiencing them firsthand. These moments provide invaluable insights into both customer needs and the daily realities of our team. The key messages I share are simple but, hopefully, transformative: Lead with empathy, empower your teams, and never stop learning.

As CX leaders, our most important job is to create an environment where both customers and team members feel truly valued.

EITK: How has your approach to customer-first digital transformation evolved, especially as customers increasingly expect seamless, personalized experiences?

Ebrahim: Digital transformation is an art of balance – we're not just automating tasks, we're creating experiences. Our approach has become more nuanced, focusing on seamless,

personalized interactions that feel effortless and human. We've developed AI technologies that are incredibly flexible, allowing us to create real-time, customized solutions that quickly adapt to both business and customer needs.

The magic happens when we can anticipate and respond to customer expectations without losing the personal touch that defines luxury retail. It's about reimagining digital interactions as opportunities for connection, not just transactions. Our goal is to use technology to make customers feel understood, valued, and cared for – every single time.

EITK: What future CX trends excite you the most, and how are you preparing your team at Michael Kors to stay at the forefront of these changes?

Ebrahim: At Michael Kors, we're always looking to the future to find ways to elevate our CX. I'm most excited about the advancements in AI and AR (Augmented Reality) and their potential to revolutionize customer service. These technologies are set to transform how businesses interact with customers, offering more immersive, efficient, and personalized support experiences.

Key CX trends we're looking forward to:

Augmented Reality Integration

- Visual Remote Assistance will enable our agents to provide real-time visual guidance by seeing what customers see through smartphone cameras
- Virtual product demonstrations will allow customers to view 3D models, customize features, and assess product fit before purchasing
- These capabilities should increase customer confidence and reduce return rates

AI-Powered Customer Service

- Developing multimodal AI assistants that integrate voice, text, and visual interactions seamlessly
- Implementing predictive AI to anticipate potential customer issues and enable proactive support
- Exploring Emotion AI to analyze customer sentiment and adjust interactions accordingly

Our strategy balances technological innovation with maintaining the human touch that our customers value. In the future, if we implement some of these advanced capabilities, we will always aim to create more personalized, efficient, and emotionally intelligent customer experiences. 🌐



Execs In The Know

Execs In The Know partners with brands that provide outstanding customer service (CX) experiences. The Brand Spotlight Series showcases innovations and solutions to CX challenges today's leading brands face.

Thank you to Ebrahim Hyder and the Michael Kors team for contributing to the Execs In The Know Brand Spotlight.

Interested in participating in a future Brand Spotlight feature and sharing your story? Contact us at info@execsintheknow.com.

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