

Announcing KPMG Nunwood ...

... the combination of the UK's leading customer experience agency with KPMG, one of the world's largest and most trusted consulting firms.

We now have a single combined capability that has the power to transform our clients' customer experiences. It enables our clients to deliver against their biggest strategic challenges and to create sustainable competitive advantage through improved customer experience and business performance.

Together we deliver:



Market leading CX strategies:

We bring global, cross-industry, best-in-class insights based on 18 years of customer research and analysis to help our clients understand what they need to do to excite their customers.



Enterprise wide CX transformation:

Customer focused methodologies and solutions that put customers at the heart of an organisations' decisioning processes. Using real time customer insight to drive real commercial benefits.



Customer journey transformations:

A single trusted advisor relationship to deliver innovative changes to how your customers engage with you - deploying advanced customer analytics, decision science, digital technology and culture change to build deeper and more enduring customer relationships.



Advanced customer experience measurement technologies:

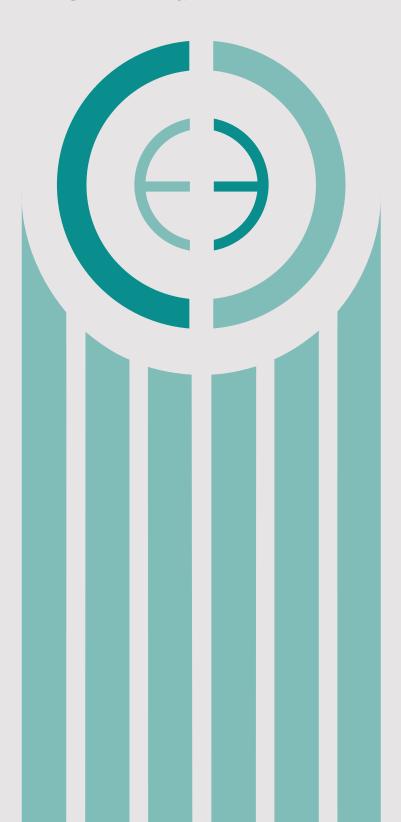
An economically proven framework and a propriety technology platform that can bring the voice of your customer to the people who can make a difference - in real time.

Overleaf is a report developed recently by Nunwood prior to the combination of the two businesses.

Customer Experience Excellence Centre

2014 UK Analysis •••••

Tim Knight, David Conway, Tamsin Jenkins & James Round





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Nunwood's Excellence Centre is focused on researching, analysing and applying customer experience best practice from around the world.



01. Foreword

Nunwood's Customer Experience Excellence Centre has been conducting reviews of the UK market for five years. Since its inception, Marketing Week has published this work for a reason: it provides deep analysis of how leading brands create world-class customer experiences.

With customer experience now firmly established as the main competitive battleground for ambitious leaders, this is a uniquely rich insight into the best practices needed to ensure success. For this 2014 phase, customer experience consultancy Nunwood has surveyed over 7,500 consumers to evaluate a total of 263 UK brands. This report focuses on celebrating the success of the top 100 of these: not merely who they are but, most importantly, what it is they do to achieve excellence.

This work, therefore, focuses on giving readers a true picture of what customer experience best practice really is. 'The Six Pillars' describe this through the lens of Personalisation, Expectation, Resolution, Integrity, Empathy and Time & Effort. Winning on all six is essential to top flight performance.

What makes this a vital read for executive leaders, brand marketers and customer strategists alike, is that the ranking is based on how these elements influence a consumer's likelihood to recommend a company and continue using its products and services.

The brand stories coming from the latest results are surprising and are sure to give some sectors encouragement that their customer experience investments are paying off, whilst giving others food for thought and ideas for improvement.

Mindi Chahal Features Writer,

MarketingWeek

02. Executive summary

Customer excellence is here: it's just not very evenly distributed. In 2014, the top ten UK brands extended their lead, whilst others successfully accelerated their rate of improvement. However, a large number of customer experience programmes have stalled. Re-igniting these with external best practice and more joined-up capabilities is critical to unlocking better overall progress.

- For most businesses, the link between customer experience (CX) and growth has moved from being a marketing theory to a fundamental principle of management. This principle now dominates corporate discourse, influencing conversations and investment plans from the boardroom to the frontline.
- How well businesses execute their customer strategies varies considerably, with many struggling to translate ambition into change. Customer experience is a long-term management strategy; consequently many organisations are only just starting the activities needed to propel them to success in 2016.
- Customer Champion brands the UK top 10, led this year by First Direct have extended their lead over others. Long-term investments in both capabilities and culture deliver clear returns for these businesses and their customers, millions of whom now experience excellence on a daily basis.
- Customer expectations are consequently set high for every brand, regardless of sector. Those in positions 11 to 100 are left to contend with this: whilst excellent in their own right, these are a tight pack, with much less differentiation. The risk of falling back on incremental improvement strategies is ever-present for these brands.
- Many businesses will get the most from understanding how best to accelerate their rate of improvement.
 Fast moving brands like ao.com, Skipton Building Society and Nationwide, are notable examples of brands who have made the right investments in culture and capability and, consequently, improved rapidly.
- Key to doing this is understanding at a deep level what 'excellence' really looks like. The Six Pillars first highlighted by this work in 2011 are again shown to be the universal characteristics of excellence. Brands that successfully focus on all six create the best customer relationships and achieve the strongest commercial returns.
- They back this understanding with the right investments in culture. A superior employee experience is a major theme across the top 10, something that rests upon strong executive leadership and ensuring HR colleagues are equal partners in creating customer experiences.

03. UK customer experience in 2014

This year's analysis sees some new customer champions emerging, though the majority of top 10 brands entrench their positions as clear leaders. The overall level of progress is complex, with individual beacons of excellence providing lessons for others struggling to meet rising customer expectations.

The 2014 Customer Champions

RANK 14	BRAND	SCORE 14		RANK 13
1	first direct	8.42		3
2	John Lewis	8.33	•	1
3	QVC	8.30	•	2
4	LUSH FRESH HANDMADE COSMETTES	8.22	•	7
5	amazon	8.17		4
6	go	8.04	NEW	-
7	Waitrose	8.00	•	10
8		7.95	•	26
9	Specsavers	7.90	•	12
10	M&S SIMPLY FOOD	7.89	•	6

First Direct moves into pole position, taking the crown as highest performing company in the UK. Outstanding empathy is central to this: customers praised their personable service, staff knowledge and ability to answer the phone quickly without the need to navigate a telephony routing system.

John Lewis remains the top UK retailer, maintaining its high score from last year. Respondents continue to be highly satisfied with the polished in-store experience and consistent cross channel service.

QVC retains its position in the top three. Customers refer to the level of personal engagement its sales presenters achieve, creating a personal connection, which is further reinforced by helpful call centre staff.



We are constantly looking for ways to ensure that the customer experience is seamless, regardless of how the customer is in contact with us.

James Keegan **Director of Customer Services, QVC UK**



Lush move up to fourth position. Its unique in-store experience engenders an ethical feel-good factor underpinned by exceptional personal service.

Amazon remains a beacon of customer experience excellence, though continues to slip slightly in the rankings for the third year in a row, as consumers react to declining perceptions of its integrity and the performance of its delivery companies.

Appliances Online (ao.com), new to the rankings, comes in sixth position. A clear value proposition wedded to an excellent service culture sets the brand apart. Appliances Online is keen to display competitor prices and publish thirdparty reviews wherever possible - something that resonated particularly well with respondents.



If I look at the top three important things in the business, number one would be culture. number two would be culture and number three would be culture. It's the one thing we obsess about at ao.com because it drives everything else.

John Roberts CEO and founder, ao.com



Waitrose and M&S Food continue to perform strongly and are well placed to avoid the emerging price-war among the big four and discount grocery retailers. Their food halls continue to be the place to go for quality products coupled with great

Nationwide enters the top 10 for the first time, benefiting from continued investments in its customer experience proposition including a 24/7 Twitter service team, a raft of mobile app improvements, the roll out of in branch video calls for mortgage applicants and continued support for CX initiatives at board level.



Our people and culture make the difference: we aim to engage and enable our people to deliver an exceptional member experience.

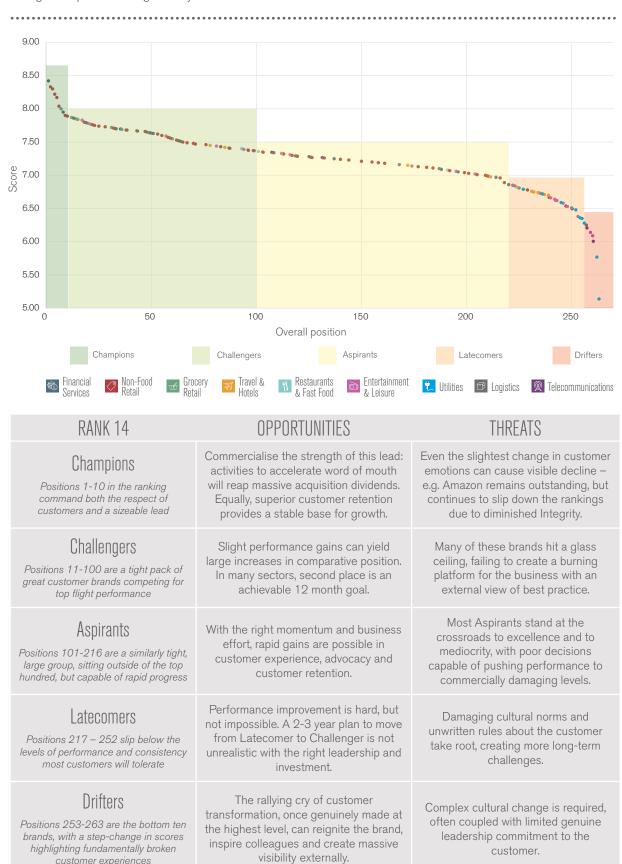
Jenny Groves **Director of Customer Experience, Nationwide**



Emerging CX Segments

customer experiences

In 2014, the challenges for brands that have arrived late at customer experience become clear. This is reflected in the growing lead of the top 10 'Champion' brands - heavy investors in CX, drawing commercial equity from a long-term commitment to delighting customers. For the remaining 253 brands, differentiation is present, though competitors are generally closer behind.



Spotlight on Customer Champions:

first direct

1st

Rank in 2014 of 263 brands



Places from 2013 Excellence Results

"

I was in Venice when my credit card was refused and it was quite stressful. I phoned First Direct and talked with a patient man with great sense of humour who spent time talking to me about the holiday, acknowledged that this was a stressful thing to happen and worked methodically to sort things out. I rarely phone First Direct as I can do almost everything online, but it was so important that when I needed them, they were unfailingly polite, human and ready to treat me as valued customer

First Direct customer, UK CEE 2014

"



2014 PILLAR SCORES VS INDUSTRY AVERAGE



+12%

PERSONALISATION



+12%

TIME & EFFORT



+15%



+16%



+17%



+18%

Cleverly, First Direct describes itself as the "unexpected bank". This must be a message for new customers because, with one of the highest scores in the survey for Expectations, First Direct customers know exactly what to expect and find their expectations consistently achieved and often exceeded.

This year's scores show a consistent 3-4% improvement across each of The Six Pillars; proof indeed that the great companies manage all The Six Pillars as an integrated whole.

The First Direct formula is a remarkably simple one, yet it has proved difficult to implement in other organisations: remove the barriers between customers and the bank, employ people who want to serve the customer and care about doing a good job, train them intensely and then empower them to handle and resolve any issues brought to them by their customers. First Direct's customers talk about the lack of IVR, being able

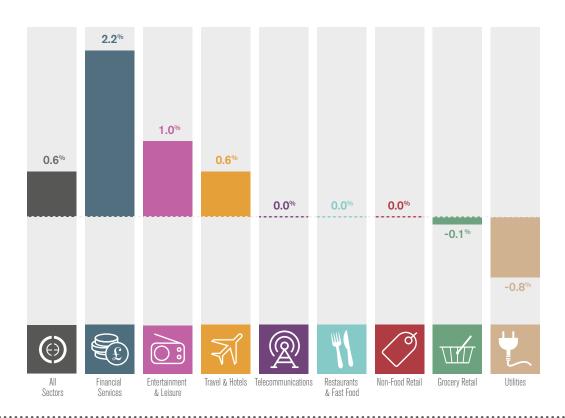
to get straight through to someone who wants to help and who is warm and empathetic. Several respondents even report that it feels like they are speaking to the same person every time they call. They know that this isn't true, but it's a tribute to the quality of the staff and their shared values.

First Direct's inexorable rise to the top of the UK CEE rankings is a function of a dedicated, continuous focus on the quality of the customer experience. Not resting on its awards or laurels, First Direct continues to find ways to improve.

Resources:

Beacons of excellence, but inconsistent overall progress

% Change in Sector Customer Experience Excellence Score 2014 vs 2013



Five years ago, when Nunwood's Excellence Centre started these annual reviews, the phrase 'customer experience' was just starting to tentatively creep onto the executive agenda. Wind the clock forward to 2014 and we see it dominating top table discussions amongst marketers, operational managers, strategists and leadership teams. Investment and interest has never been higher.

As such, is this prominence translating to universal, rapid improvement for customers?

In instances, yes. A minority of brands are shining ever brighter, extending their leads or massively accelerating their pace of change. Long-term investments in customer capability and its cultural root causes are paying off.

These examples of brilliance are dimmed by a larger set of brands whose efforts have stalled. Either because they have hit cultural glass ceilings (a clear issue for many utilities brands) or the ambition of their leaders has failed to match the rising expectations of UK consumers (a problem for many larger grocery retailers). This has meant that across all 263 brands analysed the overall improvement in performance was less than 1%.

There are some notable sector differences: financial services have made decisive headway in overcoming issues around Integrity, which has led to a 2% overall improvement. Similarly, the entertainment, leisure and travel sectors make slight gains. Conversely the utilities sector, already the weakest performing in the UK, slips further into disrepute.

Overall, UK consumers are being exposed to ever more brilliant experiences, but often in lonely isolation. Excellence is here, it's just not evenly distributed.

As such, the message for most businesses is clear. To genuinely improve they need to look outside their own sector norms and internalised views of the world. They should challenge the organisation to adopt the mind-set and ambition of those brands that genuinely encapsulate excellence.

Resources:

Access the Customer Experience Excellence Centre online for the UK rankings, profiles on all leading brands and digital resources.

Spotlight on Customer Challengers:



13th
Rank in 2014

of 263 brands



Places from 2013
Excellence Results

"

Moving into the top 20 for customer experience and ranking second of all building societies is a great accolade for Skipton Building Society. To be recognised by our customers for standing out within the industry by meeting their expectations and acting with both integrity and empathy when compared to our competitors is an achievement of which we are very proud. This result reflects how we have developed our customer experience strategy over the last 12 months using The Six Pillar System to guide our strategy and action planning

Rebecca Allsop, Head of Customer Strategy
& Planning, Skipton Building Society



2014 PILLAR SCORES VS INDUSTRY AVERAGE



+3%

PERSONALISATION



+5%

TIME & EFFORT



+10%



+10%



+7%



+10%

New into the top 20 this year, Skipton Building Society has jumped 23 places in the rankings and stands behind only Nationwide of all the high street financial services brands in the 2014 Experience Excellence results.

Owned by its members, they remain central to everything the building society does. Always reflecting its original, mutual values, Skipton ensures it meets the needs of its members through long term good value, relevant products, and a commitment to personal service.

Recognised for increasingly meeting or exceeding the expectations of its customers in this year's study, Skipton Building Society has made recent investments in branch, service and technology, all of which demonstrate Skipton's

commitment to delivering experience excellence. The last year has seen a branch refurbishment programme as a result of customers highlighting the value they place in its face to face service, alongside investment in a cutting-edge telephony system, built to reflect the 'human approach' that Skipton Building Society aims to take at all times with its customers. Customer feedback informed the system design – another example of the role customers play in Skipton's success.

Resources:

04. The Six Pillars of Customer Excellence

For most brands 'Customer Excellence' is frequently discussed, but rarely well defined. What really differentiates a Customer Champion from those that are merely good? Where does an ambitious brand focus to accelerate its rate of improvement?

Across three continents and five years' work, we consistently see the same answer emerging. The Six Pillars describe how every great brand – regardless of sector – creates consistently brilliant results for customers. They are the DNA of customer experience excellence: universal factors derived

from root cause analysis of over 250,000 customer verbatim and subsequently linked to commercial outcomes. They show the critical success criteria every leadership, operational and marketing team need to obsess about in order to succeed.



Personalisation

Using individualised attention to drive an emotional connection

Personalisation involves demonstrating that you understand the customer's specific needs and circumstances and will adapt the experience accordingly. Use of name, individualised attention, knowledge of preferences and past interactions all add up to an experience that feels personal. It makes the customer feel important and begins to build an emotional connection.



Expectations

Managing, meeting and exceeding customer expectations

Customers have expectations about how their needs will be met, increasingly set by the best brands they have encountered. Understanding, delivering and, if possible, exceeding expectations is a key skill of great organisations. Some organisations are able to make statements of clear intent that set expectations (e.g. "never knowingly undersold") others set the expectation accurately ("delivery in 48 hours"). And then delight the customer when they exceed it.



Time & Effort

Minimising customer effort and creating frictionless processes

Customers are time poor and are increasingly looking for instant gratification. Removing unnecessary obstacles, impediments and bureaucracy to enable the customer to achieve their objectives quickly and easily have been shown to increase loyalty. Many companies are discovering how to use time as a source of competitive advantage.



Integrity

Being trustworthy and engendering trust

Integrity is an outcome of consistent organisational behaviour that demonstrates trustworthiness. There are trust-building events where organisations have the need to publicly react to a difficult situation, and trust building moments where individual actions by staff add up to create trust in the organisation as a whole. For all customers, it is the degree to which the organisation delivers on its promises that is consistently top of mind.



Resolution

Turning a poor experience into a great one

Customer recovery is highly important. Even with the best processes and procedures things will go wrong. Great companies have a process that not only puts the customer back in the position they should have been in as rapidly as possible, but also make the customer feel really good about the experience. A sincere apology and acting with urgency are two crucial elements of successful resolution.



Empathy

Achieving an understanding of the customer's circumstances to drive deep rapport

Empathy is the art of letting the customer know that you can genuinely understand what it is like to be in their shoes. Empathy creating behaviours are central to establishing a strong relationship and involve reflecting back to the customer that you know how they feel. Then going that one extra step because you understand how they feel.













Personalisation

Integrity

Expectations

Resolution

Empathy

Strong Performance Across The Six Pillars



05. Applying The Six Pillars

The Six Pillars are not only a framework for understanding excellence, but also applying this best practice from one organisation to another. This starts by understanding the behaviours that sit behind each pillar.

The Six Pillars are the emotional outcomes that all customer experiences should be focused on. Strong performance creates both outstanding customer relationships and superior commercial outcomes. So, what kind of behaviours do businesses need to encourage, coach and design in order to achieve these goals?

Analysis of UK verbatim shows that certain behaviours are more effective than others in creating successful Six Pillar results:



- 1 Be friendly & polite
- 2 Understand specific personal needs
- 3 Offer only relevant products & services
- 4 Treat customers as individuals
- 5 Know the customer from their personal history



- 1 Treat customers with respect
- **2** Follow through on promises
- 3 Keep the customer informed at all times
- 4 Deliver consistency for all experiences
- 5 Show genuine appreciation to customers



- 1 Do the right thing at an individual level
- 2 Be seen to be doing the right thing as a company
- 3 Don't be associated with negative press
- 4 Take corporate social responsibility seriously
- **5** Be recommended by customers to others



- Provide a gesture of goodwill after an issue
- 2 Keep the customer apprised of progress
- 3 Acknowledge when a mistake has been made
- 4 | Provide temporary solutions during issues
- 5 Deal with issues consistently each time



- 1 Explain exactly what is needed at each stage
- 2 | Manage queues & delays effectively
- 3 Offer alternative ways to get things done
- 1 Tell the customer when an issue arises
- 5 Use the latest technology to enhance efficiency



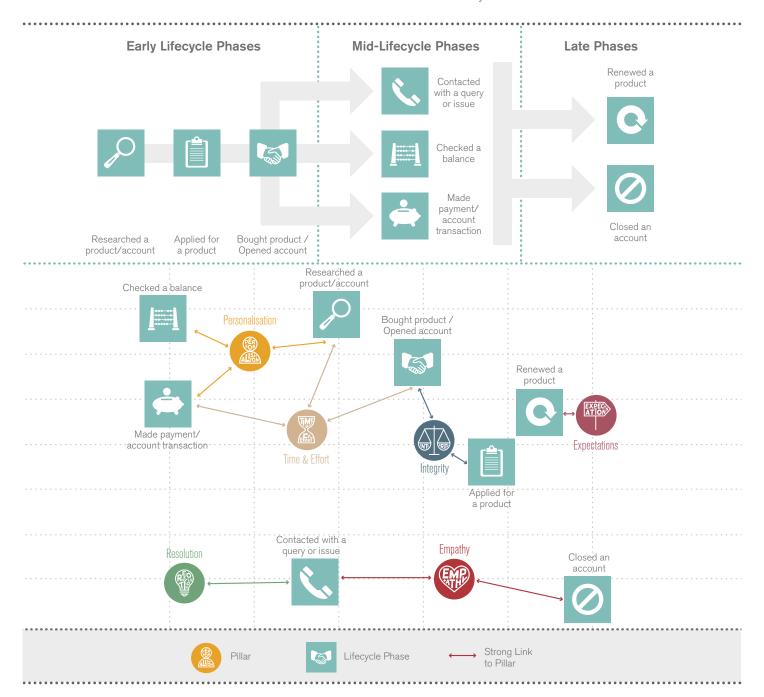
- **1** Go the extra mile for the customer
- 2 Explain things in a way the customer can relate to
- 3 Understand the customer's individual circumstances
- 4 Acknowledge the customer's feelings and act
- **5** Be willing to bend the rules

Identifying where The Six Pillar behaviours need to happen

In each of the last five years' analyses, we've seen Customer Champions and the fastest improving brands achieve strong performance across all of The Six Pillars. Winning on just four or five is not an option for those seeking to achieve the best possible experiential and commercial outcomes.

However, this doesn't require every one of The Six Pillars to be designed into every single interaction. Rather, the analysis shows that great brands understand which customer journeys correspond to which of the pillars. For instance, for the rapid, transactional journey through a digital channel, Time & Effort reigns supreme. This is well understood by brands like Amazon, which engineer journeys and UX principles on this basis. For other interactions, such as customer care, agents are trained to display Empathy and achieve rapid Resolution.

From the 2014 analysis, the below example shows how financial services companies can understand where in their experience different pillars need to play a role in the customer lifecycle:



The above is just one example. Please <u>get in touch</u> if you would like to understand more about how The Six Pillar System® can be used to diagnose your organisation's customer experience and apply targeted best practice.

06. Customer Experience Themes

Across the 2014 UK analysis, there are a number of high-level themes, working across sectors and influencing performance across all of The Six Pillars.

Put Your Customers Second?

With only a single exception, the top 10 'Champion' brands are characterised by their evangelical employees and superior cultures. Employees who are exceptionally proud of the brand they represent and the job they do each and every day for customers. Their culture plays this pivotal role in creating an outstanding customer experience and they value that same culture first and foremost. In a very real sense, employees come first and customers come second.

These companies recognise that value is created at the interface between employee and customer. They know that in order to be exceptional, something magical has to occur. So it is no accident that members of the top 10 also feature highly in The Sunday Times best places to work survey.

first direct

First Direct secures 44% of its new employees from referrals by existing staff. Like recruits like; great people recruiting more great people. It draws on the caring professions and the hospitality industry to find staff who genuinely care about people.



Lush has fans rather than employees. People who love the products and are proud to be involved in selling them. But it is more than just selling great products; at a deep level staff are entirely in tune with the ethical standards that Lush sets for its products and its business.



Nationwide is very clear on the positive relationship between empowered, engaged employees and great customer experiences. Its values are captured in the acronym PRIDE (Putting members first, Rewarding membership, Inspiring trust, Doing the right thing, Excelling at service). PRIDE lays out a behavioural standard that employees aspire to consistently achieve.





The much-publicised John Lewis and Waitrose partner ownership model lies at the epicentre of their customer experience.

Ownership of the experience is made more effective by shared ownership of the business.



Marks & Spencer set the agenda for employee engagement in the 1960s and has continued to push the envelope since, with M&S Food encouraging staff ownership of the customer experience through linking specific staff to display areas.



Appliances Online is number four in The Sunday Times Best Companies to Work For list. Respondents talk about "wonderful, happy, eager to please" delivery crews and staff. John Roberts, CEO and founder, states the top three priorities for the business are culture, culture and culture.



QVC began its process of reinvention in 2005 and it was the restatement and re-engagement of its staff around its values that began to move the needle for customers.



Specsavers' vision as an employer is to "treat people as we would want to be treated ourselves" and to support staff to be the best they can be. A sense of partnership with staff is "at the heart of everything we do" as is giving something back to local communities.

These excellent companies realise that value is created commercially and reputationally at the interface between employee and customer – and it really does happen in that order.

As such, the management lesson for brands aspiring to join the top 10 is clear: those responsible for the employee experience need to be fundamental and genuine partners in building customer experiences. Internal values, behavioural frameworks, competencies, training plans and recruitment principles are fundamental determinants of CX success.

Many organisations are not yet in this space. Colleagues in HR are seen as playing a role in implementing some customer journeys, but are not genuine partners in the overall strategy. Putting in place more progressive customer governance, which unites marketing, operational and HR professionals, is an important consideration for these businesses. For many of the most advanced, the CIO will also have representation in this group – as systems and technologies become a vital determinant of the kind of employee and customer experiences these brands are seeking to forge.



When you go into one of our shops you are being served by an owner and that is bound to see you getting better customer service at the front line

Andy Street, Managing Director, John Lewis



Spotlight on Customer Challengers:

Marriott

17thRank in 2014
of 263 brands



UP 104

Places from 2013
Excellence Results

"

The hotel was superb and the staff even better. On arrival they gave us an upgrade, then provided us with great recommendations for places to visit and child friendly eating places, as well as explaining how to get bus and Tube tickets. The staff were always friendly to our children in particular, which made them happy too!

Marriott customer, UK CEE 2014

"



2014 PILLAR SCORES VS INDUSTRY AVERAGE



+8%

PERSONALISATION



+5%

TIME & EFFORT



+11%

EXPECTATIONS



+9%



+13%

RESOLUTION



+13%

A key part of the Marriott mission is the intent "to make every customer stay with us unforgettable and effortless". It is making solid progress in achieving this.

Staff that are encouraged to consistently deliver extraordinary levels of courtesy, and to be friendly, outgoing and attentive to customer needs, spoken and unspoken, are reported by our respondents.

Porters that sneak a look at luggage labels, so they can find and use the name of the guest, is one of several examples of this approach in action.

Marriott has turned room cleaning into a science with detailed multi-point checklists ensuring that, due to pressure or the frailty of memory, no aspect of room cleanliness will be missed or overlooked.

With a huge increase in overall score this year, Marriott has jumped 104 places to just outside the top 20. Whilst all six indicators saw a substantial improvement, two in particular stand out: personalisation and expectations, which saw a year on year increase of 9% and 11% respectively.

Within the Marriott Group is Ritz Carlton, the epitome of customer service in the hospitality industry. It is now so good that its training centre now trains the staff of other companies. Being available mentally and physically, eye contact, conversation starting and a general willingness to engage, are all hallmarks of the Ritz Carlton experience which now seems to have expanded into Marriott. The increases in Personalisation and Expectation management being good examples.

Resources:

The expectation cycle

The UK's best organisations can no longer benchmark themselves against their competition. Instead they have switched their focus to the best organisations in the world. They have realised that simply emulating their immediate competitors is often the start of the road to mediocrity.

They recognise that experienced, well-informed consumers have expectations that are no longer industry-specific. A consumer's experience with Amazon or Appliances Online resets their expectations for all digital experiences. The same for the purchase experience in Lush for all retail experiences. In fact, the excellent companies are simply following their customers in expanding their field of vision to discover what great looks like and then building that into the experiences they create, fuelling a constant cycle of setting and resetting expectations.

Respondents to the study highlighted three aspects of the top 10 organisations which are forming their expectations:

1. Consumer research: the new entertainment

Consumers have never enjoyed doing research, 'competitive analysis' and 'benchmarking' as much as they do now, and doing it far more diligently than most organisations. It is almost as if prepurchase research has become its own form of entertainment as consumers educate themselves and each other. Amazon has led the way in equipping customers with a vast database of reviews, but Appliances Online has gone one step further, publishing reviews of its performance online, as have First Direct.

2. Seamless omni-channel

John Lewis has set the benchmark for online retailing. Customers are empowered to purchase how they want, in the way that they want – without being pushed to low cost channels. First Direct works seamlessly across online and telephony, as does Appliances Online.

3. Values-based buying

Lush, and before it Body Shop, are indicative of a shift towards values based buying. The increased expectation that, not only are the products and service great, but they also bring with them some form of attached meaning. Consumers buy into what the firm stands for as much as its products.

Marks & Spencer's Plan A still resonates strongly with consumers, as does the Waitrose green token that apportions local charitable giving. Conversely, Amazon's reputational issues manifest itself in a slightly weakening, though still excellent, customer experience. In 2014, customers expect ethics as standard.

The setting, delivery and exceeding of expectations is necessarily becoming a core competence of the excellent organisations. They realise that somewhere in the world are new innovative ways of doing things that will almost certainly arise outside of their category. Identifying and harnessing these innovations is key to keeping ahead of the expectation cycle.

07. UK Industry Trends





The financial services sector sees the largest improvement in performance, largely driven by improvements in Integrity and Personalisation. In the wake of 2008, the sector was quick to identify that delivering experience excellence required cultural, organisational and systems change.

This is in no small part due to the burning platform created by the government, media and regulators. New FCA-mandated focuses on customer outcomes (which, by definition, are also customer experiences) have led to massive investments and exhaustive leadership attention.

Similarly, the new requirements by the Payments Council to allow switching mobility have been in force for over a year now. Consequently, changing banks is no longer a daunting task, making loyalty more valuable and magnifying the value of customer experience to the sector.

This year is the first time that a financial services provider has topped the CEE rankings, with First Direct surpassing John Lewis to take an overall lead. Mutuals have performed particularly well in 2014, their traditional values of trust, fairness and mutuality, wed to significant investment in experience redesign, see Skipton, Nationwide and Yorkshire Building Society all rise up the rankings

"

The world of banking has changed beyond recognition in the 25 years since we launched on 1 October 1989 and started a service revolution. Our future will continue to be based around our customers - which is exactly how we started all those years ago.

Tracy Garrad, CEO, First Direct

Spotlight on Customer Champions:



8thRank in 2014

of 263 brands



UP 18

Places from 2013 Excellence Results

"

Three key elements have contributed to our performance in the 2014 CEE study:

- 1. Our continued focus on our members: we aim to be the clear number one for customer satisfaction.
- 2. Our people and culture: we aim to engage and enable our people to deliver an exceptional member experience.
- 3. Our business model and corporate strategy this has remained broadly unchanged for over 160 years: safeguarding members' financial interests, helping them to save, helping them to buy their own homes and helping them to make the most of their money

Jenny Groves, Director of Customer Experience, Nationwide





2014 PILLAR SCORES VS INDUSTRY AVERAGE



+8%

PERSONALISATION



+8%

TIME & EFFORT



+7%

EXPECTATIONS



+9%



+8%

RESOLUTION



+9%

Nationwide has been relentless in pursuing customer experience excellence. As the leading building society, every aspect of its business is focused on what great looks like and what it needs to do to achieve it. Four years ago it set out to put "clear blue water" between itself and its competitors in the area of customer experience. It now looks like Nationwide is achieving that aim.

As a business it is firmly values driven. The acronym 'PRIDE' describing the attitudes, beliefs and behaviours that will lead to ever improving levels of employee and customer satisfaction.

The brand positioning of "On your side" puts a distance between Nationwide and the banking category. It spells out why a business that is owned by its membership is different and only does things for the betterment of its members. This is reflected in its scores for Integrity and Expectations, with both increasing by 4% as the message is understood by its customers.

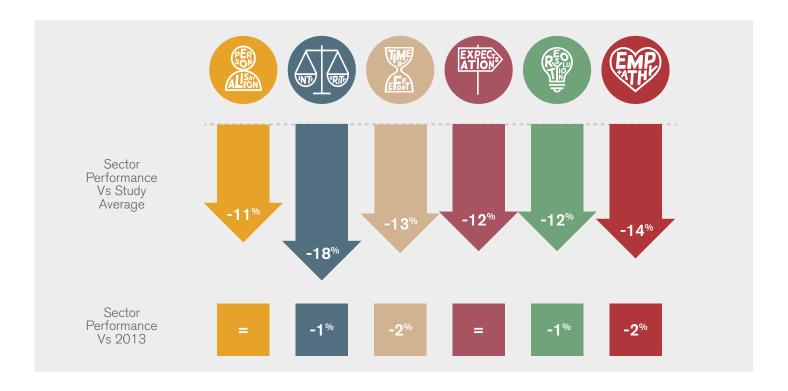
For our respondents, it is the Nationwide people that make the difference. Friendly, helpful and willing to take on and personally resolve issues. It is at the cusp of staff and customer interaction that the Nationwide magic occurs. Add to this investments in

back office systems and processes that have enabled staff to deliver a great experience. When things go wrong, as they will do sometimes, then Nationwide staff are focussed on a quick and painless resolution.

Central to the Nationwide approach is a system that captures customer feedback after every interaction and drives local recovery and celebration as well as head office root cause analysis.

Nationwide, like others in the top 10, realise that customer experience is always a work in progress and is relentlessly focussed on continuing to improve things for its customers.

Resources:



This year is yet another challenging one for the utilities sector. As the only vertical to see a real decline in the CEE metric, it is unsurprising to see the big six energy providers sitting in the bottom quartile of the study with scores well below those achieved by the top 100.

Integrity continues to be a key issue for the sector as consumers simply don't feel they are getting a fair deal from their energy provider. The forthcoming Ofgem investigation into the big six's debt collection tactics will only serve to further erode confidence in the sector. Equally, a recent set of open letters from Ofgem to energy firms' CEOs bemoans a decline in effectiveness dealing with complaints and further highlights the impatience of customers and the regulator.

In a commoditised industry such as utilities, the key levers of differentiation centre on value and service. The increasing prominence of switching and comparison sites has provided a platform for challenger brands to enter the market with compelling value propositions, despite minimal brand awareness.

Consequently, in some cases, challenger brands have faced administrative difficulties in dealing with a sudden influx of customers, leading to a sub-optimal customer experience. As such, this 'first wave' of new challengers has largely failed to disrupt industry norms.

However it is only a matter of time until new entrants improve their systems and service proposition – in fact these smaller,

lean, legacy free organisations are well placed to very quickly define and deliver experience excellence. For incumbents, protecting market share through competitive tariffs, service excellence and developing a more transparent and fair renewal process are the big challenges facing C-suite executives.

"

Almost all energy suppliers need to improve their complaints handling as a matter of urgency. There are real business benefits to good complaints handling schemes, and it shouldn't need a regulator to tell companies about the importance of this

Dermot Nolan, Chief Executive, Ofgem

"





The grocery retail sector continues to face a challenge in giving consumers value as the rise of the discount chains continues to turn the market on its head. The battleground centres on the traditional big four retailers: Tesco, Asda, Sainsbury's and Morrisons, as the challenger brands, Aldi and Lidl, continue to gain market share fuelled by their compelling value proposition.

While Tesco, Asda, Sainsbury's and Morrisons all dropped down the rankings this year, Aldi and Lidl both improved. Unsurprisingly, consumers see Aldi as the sector leader for value in 2014. Locating stores outside of premium real estate areas, operating comparatively small square footage units whilst limiting the volume of product SKUs, wed to a lean supply chain and aggressive buying function ensures the brand is well placed to fulfil its competition pricing strategy.

Meanwhile the old adage that the cream always rises to the top accurately reflects the success seen by M&S Food and Waitrose as they retain their positions in the top 10. Benefitting from clear brand identities centred on quality and service, the differentiated proposition these brands provide has to a large extent insulated them from the much anticipated 'race to the bottom'.

M&S Food's continued focus on innovation, quality and service, blended with an ability to tailor its offering to reflect austerity-driven trends - such as dining in at home rather than dining out - has resulted in the brand posting another robust set of half year results with like-for-like performance outstripping that of the market as a whole.

"

Customer service really does mean a lot to our customers. Also to everyone who works at Waitrose - particularly because we all own a share of the business."

Andrew Hoad
Head of Customer Experience, Waitrose

35

Spotlight on Customer Challengers:



15th Rank in 2014 of 263 brands



UP 5

Places from 2013
Excellence Results

"

I shopped there yesterday and the store was spotless and fresh produce was displayed really well, everything looked fresh. At the checkout, as always, the assistants are friendly, polite and extremely efficient. Never any queues so waiting time is very limited. I really like this store and their customer service is second to none.

Aldi customer, UK CEE 2014

"



2014 PILLAR SCORES VS INDUSTRY AVERAGE



+5%

PERSONALISATION



+2%

TIME & EFFORT



+5%

EXPECTATIONS



+3%

REGIONAL

+2%

RESOLUTION



+1%

Aldi has been on a journey of Anglicisation. Originating in Germany, the discount retailer now describes itself as a "British business sourcing British food". Carrying less than 10% of the line items carried by its competitors, Aldi has sought to ensure that it moves from a "top up retailer" to a location for the weekly shop by skilful purchasing and range management.

Strategically, it seems to be meeting its objectives with a basket size that is beginning to rival Sainsbury's and Morrisons. Its no nonsense approach to the customer experience eschews focusing on the soft factors around the brand promise in favour of consistently delivering on low price, high value brand positioning. "No smoke and mirrors" is its mantra as it discounts price directly rather than using loyalty cards or indirect pricing mechanisms.

It is this single minded focus that attracts and satisfies its customers. Year on year, respondents have lauded the extended product range, the special sales and bargain promotions, as well as the small number of luxury goods (e.g. Champagne) that are available when required.

Whilst for our top 10 companies the role of their people in delivering the experience is paramount, with Aldi that is less the case than the consistency of the experience and its single minded dedication to "everyday low prices". Consequently, Aldi is the highest ranked company in our survey for delivering value for money. It is also one of the highest ranked for loyalty.

Aldi scores high on Personalisation, as the product range locks onto the needs of its customers, and Time and Effort as consumers know exactly where to find what they want. It is shopping with a purpose rather than shelf browsing.

Resources:

Spotlight on Customer Champions:

Waitrose

7th
Rank in 2014
of 263 brands



UP 3

Places from 2013 Excellence Results

"

Listening to our customers is hugely important and great face to face relationships in our shops make this happen. We supplement this with our customer feedback survey, in which nearly 300,000 customers have participated this year alone. This means that we can be really focused on the areas that matter to our customers and develop our Partner training accordingly.

Andrew Hoad, Head of Customer Experience
Waitrose

"



2014 PILLAR SCORES VS INDUSTRY AVERAGE



+8%

PERSONALISATION



+10%

TIME & EFFORT



+8%

EXPECTATIONS

±19%

INTEGRITY



+12%

RESOLUTION



+14%

Despite the challenges the grocery retail sector has faced over the last year, Waitrose not only retains its position in the top 10 for customer experience excellence, but continues to progress up the ranks as the leading grocery retailer.

The rise of the discount chains, and the ensuing focus on value, has affected the big four grocers, but Waitrose's ongoing experience success is in line with its sales performance, continuing to outperform the industry.

As with its sister company, John Lewis, its employee-owned partnership model remains at the heart of the customer experience, and explains why the brand continues to stand out amongst its competitors for the pillars of Empathy and Integrity. With employees, known as 'partners', all having a say in company decisions and all entitled to bonuses based on the company's financial performance, they have a vested interest in delivering an outstanding customer experience. As Waitrose's advertising highlights: "when you own something,

you care a little more", and it's clear that Waitrose partners have a work ethic that means they will happily go the extra mile for their customers, from making the effort to locate an item that's unavailable to offering nibbles while customers wait when queues are long.

As is evident for the number one brand in the Experience Excellence rankings, First Direct, a company that focuses on its employees, and keeps them engaged and motivated, tends to deliver an outstanding customer experience. As such, Waitrose is well placed to avoid the emerging fight among other grocery retailers.

Resources:

08. What accelerates CX improvement?

The Six Pillars pinpoint the kinds of experiences brilliant brands consistently create for their customers. Analysing how leaders of these brands manage their organisations allows us to understand the critical internal capabilities and management investments needed to ignite success.









The Six Pillars®: Customer Experience Excellence









Enhanced loyalty, advocacy & product consideration



Accelerated growth: retention enhances base stability, more effective acquisition, greater lifetime value

Customer experience management is a fine balance between aspiration and pragmatism.

For most brands, trying to improve performance simply by emulating John Lewis or First Direct can be counterproductive. Trying to move too quickly, or claiming to be something at odds with reality, can cause credibility and cultural issues. The rapid and sustainable progress of the top brands is the result of long-term, diligent investment.

Frequently though, the temptation for many chief executives grappling with a legacy of weak customer relationships is to set an expectation internally that the organisation will soon resemble a top 10 brand. Whilst a laudable ultimate goal, city pressures often result in unrealistic timescales. Transformational change is seldom less than a five year project. In fact, a considerable number of brands ranked 100th to 263rd in this study have publically held similar goals since 2010 and climbed no more than a few places over this time. Rallying cries must be credible, as well as loud.

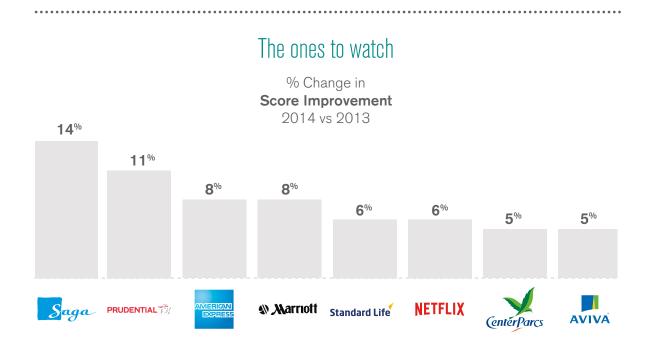
Equally dangerous is the risk of myopically focusing just on immediate sector competitors, who are often only marginally different in consumers' eyes. This year's analysis shows that even the leading brands in certain sectors are comparatively weak in customers' eyes when viewed in a cross-sector context, with all the resultant advocacy and loyalty issues this can entail.

So, the question for many brands is not how to get into the top 10 within 12 months, nor is it simply how to be the best of their immediate competitors. Rather, the best dividends come from understanding how to accelerate the rate of customer experience change.

This question, coupled with a healthy self-awareness about current capabilities and performance, can yield both a burning platform for change and a plan that is both pragmatic and inspiring.

Rapidly improving customer experiences

Across this year's top 100 brands, we see examples of organisations that have managed to achieve this kind of dramatic change between 2013 and 2014.



To do this, all of these brands have achieved significant progress against The Six Pillars, improving their emotional engagement and basis for commercial performance. But what kind of internal investments do fast moving brands tend to make?

Maturity analysis and case studying of all UK brands, coupled with recent insights from the USA and Australia, suggest there are a number of critical dimensions these businesses master. These are:

- The business is mobilised behind a common vision
- Customer journeys are mapped and prioritised for change
- Measurement is owned by the frontline and linked to actions
- Customer experience motivates the employee experience

Resources:

Does your organisation fulfil these requirements? As a tool for customer experience directors, executive leaders and strategists, Nunwood's Excellence Centre has developed a detailed organisational health check, allowing direct comparisons of any organisations' capabilities to the world's best.

A summary version can be seen on the following page.

Please get in touch to learn more.

High-level CX health check

The business is mobilised around a common vision

- Disparate cross-functional customer experience plans are tied into a single, coherent strategy.
- This is owned by everyone, but led at the top table. Customer experience is a strategic principle, not a department.
- Human resources functions focus intensely on this, at least as equal partners to marketing and operations.
- Detailed tools have been created, allowing the business to apply common design principles to any experience.
- The brand lives at the heart of the vision. This is more than just 'good service' but a compelling, distinctive strategy.

Measurement is owned by the frontline and linked to actions

- Measurement systems (NPS or suchlike) are realtime, linked to feedback technology and connect to every business unit.
- A culture of action planning and response exists: critical alerts are addressed within a day, whilst every business unit plans to improve every quarter.
- The link between channels and overall customer relationship is understood and used to priorize investments: silos are not tolerated.
- Measurement is used to understand and propagate best practice: celebrating success, not as a stick.

Customer journeys are mapped and prioritised for change

- A clear model shows how each customer journey affects the overall relationship.
- All views are multi-channel views: digital, mobile, telephony and retail channels act in concert.
- Focus is exhaustively encouraged by the executive: a low number of compelling changes, rather than a culture of incrementalism.
- Journeys are redesigned in accordance with the vision drawing on a toolbox of design principles and success criteria.
- Managers challenge themselves to create the best experiences in the world, not just better than their competitors.

Customer experience is part of the employee experience

- Customer closeness activity is used to ensure the customer is in the room, for every meeting.
- Training activity is driven by customer principles, as well as process requirements.
- HR use customer requirements to determine recruitment profiles, competency specifications.
- Culture and values are developed in conjunction with customer experience, not as isolated concepts.

Spotlight on Customer Champions:







Rank in 2014 of 263 brands

Places from 2013 Excellence Results



Lovely company to deal with. I have bought two appliances from them so far and would buy from them again. They keep you informed every step of the way. I like their videos on most of the products they sell, I find it very useful and it does help when you cannot visit them in store. I would recommend them to anyone

ao.com customer, UK CEE 2014

55

"At ao.com our philosophy is to "redefine retailing through a devotion to happiness and amazing customer service." We have always started with what the customer wants and needs, reengineering the business and the supply chain to provide the best service possible for customers in the most efficient, intelligent and economic way.

In the white goods retail market this is great prices, unbiased product reviews, mobile ordering, flexible delivery options, including free next day delivery, the democratisation of information and unparalleled customer service throughout the purchase cycle. Therefore we aim to be the shortest link between the customer and the manufacturer.

We are unreasonable in the level of service we expect our customers to receive and we treat them with the respect they deserve. As a collective we understand that customers are the reason we come into work every day and that they deserve to be central to our strategy.

We're big on resolving any problems that our customers might encounter and aim to respond to all negative feedback as fast as we can. We have a dedicated quality team whose job it is to personally respond to all written and email customer comments and to monitor social media and review sites (such as TrustPilot) seven days a week, from 8am until 10pm.

I also personally respond to any 'thank you' or negative comments posted by customers via the brand's Facebook site or contact centre, ensuring that on average 650 customers receive a bespoke



2014 PILLAR SCORES VS INDUSTRY AVERAGE



+7%

PERSONALISATION



+6%

TIME & EFFORT



+14%



+7%



+5%

RESOLUTION



+9%

letter of thanks or apology each week. Showing that we care right from the top, makes a massive difference to our customers.

We also empower our people to make the right decision for the customer. This could be making a call to get pizzas delivered to a customer's family because we are late delivering an oven, or simply sending out a baby grow to a mum whose washing machine is broken and who has mentioned that the washing has been piling up while she has been making a decision on her next purchase. These things cost money in the short term but the lifetime value of these customers is worth so much more."

John Roberts, CEO & Founder

Resources:

09. Further resources for CX Professionals

Nunwood's Excellence Centre has been setup to provide analyses and resources for customer experience professionals around the world. We use these to integrate best practice into everything we do – whether the management of a new NPS programme, through to the creation of customer experience strategy.

.....



Access the Excellence Centre online



Learn more about The Six Pillars and how they can be applied to your business.













Personalisation

Integrity

Time & Effort

Expectations

Resolution

Empathy

additional white papers from the UK, USA & Australia View /filter results from recent studies, including full profiles of all top 20 brands forthcoming publications, events and webinars Request an organisational health check - evaluate your ousiness vs the rest of the world

Or get in touch with an expert

Tim Knight
Senior Partner (UK)
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David Conway Senior Partner (UK) davidconway@nunwood.com

Michael Crow CX Director michaelcrow@nunwood.com

10. The top 100 UK brands in full

EXCELLENCE CENTRE 2014 RESULTS	Customer Experience excellence Customer Experience Excellence Centre SECTOR KEY: Travel & Hotels Financial Services Non-Food Retail Grocery Retail Flecommunications Entertainment & Leisure	01 E	first direct 2014 UK Customer Experience Excellence Centre Winner	O2 John Lewis
04 LUSH	05 amazon 06 ₩ ₩ ₩ ₩ ₩ ₩ ₩ ₩ ₩ ₩ ₩ ₩ ₩ ₩ ₩ ₩ ₩ ₩	07 Waitrose ⊕ UP	O8 Nationwide O9 Specsavers O UP O UP	10 M&S SHOWN → DOWN
10 \$M&S	12	14 Premier Inn © UP	15 Sainsbury's NOTE: THE PROPERTY OF THE PROP	17 W.Marriott
18 Waterstones © UP	19 M&S Bank 20 Emirates	21 virgin atlantic	22 richersounds Solution State of the Stat	23 CSOS
25 R∂C ⊙ UP	25 Bod 25 ASDA part of the WALHART family → DOWN	28 Saga ⊗UP	28 CenterParcs 28 Next	31 Iceland ⊕ DOWN
32 € Apple Store	33 giffgaff 33 Linc	33 ∩S &I	36 STESCO mobile 36 Morrisons © DDWN	38 SCREVFIX
38 Dunelm	38 (HE BODY) 38 PYORKSHIRE SOCIETY ○ UP	38 BRITISH AIRWAYS → ODWN	43 Cebuyer.com O DOWN O DOWN	DEBENHAMS MINISTRUCTURE CONSTRUCTION DOWN
43 Clarks ⊘ DOWN	47 wilkinson 48 PRUDENTIAL™ O DOWN O DOWN O UP	49 CROWNE PLAZA HOTELS A RESORTS DDWN	49	51 € EUROSTAR* © UP
53 Argos ⊘ DOWN	53 Sainsbury's Bank O UP 55 Millie's NIES √ UP T/\ O DOWN	55 Thorntons → DOWN	57 Lufthansa	59 Superchup ^{tr} © IP
60 TESCO ™ © DOWN	60 KLIM ✓ UP 62 EVANS ✓ No change	63 HALIFAX	64 Green Flag	65 COSTA ↑// ©UP
67 ::: GREGGS **\	67 Standard Life 67 mothercare	70 vision express	71 MATALAN 71 TESCO Bank O DOWN 0 UP	71 AA ⊕ ∪P
71 FRIDAYS √\ ⊙ DOWN	71 TED BAKER 76 MONSOON ∴ NEW	76 SELFRIDGES&GO	78 SBUNKIN 78 NETFLIX 11 OUP OUP	78 € UP
81 Account Express O DOWN	81 Fringy freme 83 Poundland © UP	83 Littlewoods DOWN	85	87 PLAYCOM Movits Music CAMES DDWN
87 NEW LOOK © DOWN	87 AVIVA ST Hilton → DOWN	87 Schuh	87 Dobbies 93	94 TravelRepublic → DOWN
94 PHIT	96	96 POST OFFICE	99 PRIMARK 99 Butlins → DOWN → DOWN	



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