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DIGITAL COMPETITION AS A DRIVER OF CLIENT-ORIENTED STRATEGIES

ЦИФРОВА КОНКУРЕНЦІЯ ЯК РУШІЙНА СИЛА КЛІЄНТООРІЄНТОВАНИХ СТРАТЕГІЙ

Kolomiyets Ganna

Doctor of Economics, Professor,
Professor of the Department of Economic
Theory and Economic Management Methods, Faculty of Economics,
V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1835-1023>

Melentsova Olga

Candidate of Economic Sciences, Associate Professor,
Associate Professor of the Department of Economic
Theory and Economic Management Methods, Faculty of Economics,
V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1276-633X>

Ruabovol Dmitry

Postgraduate student of the Department of Economic Theory and Economic
Management Methods, Faculty of Economics,
V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6054-5155>

**Коломієць Ганна Миколаївна, Меленцова Ольга Володимирівна,
Рябовол Дмитро Анатолійович**

Харківський національний університет імені В.Н. Каразіна

The paper examines digital competition as a pivotal factor in shaping client-oriented business strategies. The study underscores the relevance of this topic in the context of rapid digital transformation and heightened global economic challenges. Utilizing a theoretical framework based on classical, neoclassical, and modern theories of competition, the research explores how digital technologies redefine competitive dynamics and drive businesses to prioritize customer-centric approaches. The findings highlight the mechanisms through which digital competition fosters innovation, enhances customer engagement, and enables sustainable business growth. Practical recommendations are provided for leveraging digital tools to develop effective client-oriented strategies, contributing to competitive resilience in contemporary markets.

Keywords: Digital competition, client-oriented strategies, digital economy, digital transformation, market dynamics, competitive models, economic transformation, innovation, business sustainability, digitalization.

У статті проведено глибоке теоретико-прикладне дослідження феномену цифрової конкуренції як ключового детермінанта трансформації сучасних бізнес-стратегій у бік повної клієнтоорієнтованості. Актуальність роботи обґрунтована радикальними змінами в глобальному економічному ландшафті, де стрімка цифровізація та посилення невизначеності змушують суб'єктів господарювання переглядати традиційні моделі конкурентної боротьби. Автори підкреслюють, що в умовах сучасних викликів, таких як геополітична нестабільність та наслідки глобальних криз, цифрова конкуренція стає не лише викликом, а й стратегічним інструментом для забезпечення життєздатності бізнесу через посилення взаємодії зі споживачем. Теоретичний каркас дослідження побудований на системному аналізі еволюції поглядів на конкуренцію: від класичних підходів А. Сміта та неокласичних концепцій А. Маршалла до сучасних теорій М. Портера та Ж. Тіроля. Особливу увагу приділено тому, як цифрові технології редефінують сутність конкурентних переваг, переводячи фокус із володіння фізичними ресурсами на здатність генерувати та обробляти дані про клієнтський досвід. У статті доведено, що цифрова конкуренція діє як потужний каталізатор інновацій, стимулюючи компанії впроваджу-

вати персоналізовані сервіси та адаптивні бізнес-моделі, що базуються на реальних потребах ринку. Наукова новизна роботи полягає в детальному аналізі механізмів залучення клієнтів у цифровому середовищі. Автори досліджують концепцію «Total Experience» (ТХ), яка об'єднує досвід клієнта (СХ), досвід співробітника (ЕХ), користувацький досвід (UX) та мультидосвід (МХ). Такий комплексний підхід дозволяє створювати цілісну екосистему взаємодії, що забезпечує стійку лояльність та конкурентну резистентність. У роботі акцентовано на важливості переходу від транзакційного маркетингу до стратегії створення довгострокової цінності для споживача через цифрові платформи. Висновки статті містять конкретні рекомендації щодо використання цифрових інструментів для аналітики даних та управління клієнтським досвідом. Автори аргументують, що успіх у цифрову епоху прямо залежить від здатності бізнесу інтегрувати цифрові технології в усі ланки створення вартості, роблячи клієнтоорієнтованість не просто гаслом, а основою операційної ефективності та стратегічного зростання.

Ключові слова: цифрова конкуренція, клієнтоорієнтовані стратегії, цифрова економіка, цифрова трансформація, динаміка ринку, конкурентні моделі, економічна трансформація, інновації, стійкість бізнесу, цифровізація.

Statement of the problem. The UN report notes that global economic growth remains low amid ongoing uncertainty: according to forecasts, it's 2.8% in 2025 and 2.9% in 2026, which generally corresponds to the level of 2024 [1]. At the same time, in Ukraine, after a deep economic recession of 29.1% in 2022, growth was recorded at a level of about 4.6% in 2023, which showed a certain resilience of the national economy to the consequences of a full-scale war; according to be 2.5-3% in 2025, and the inflation rate could reach 5.8%, however, under conditions of ongoing military operations, the risks of a decline in economic prospects remain very high [2].

In this context, the search for new opportunities for economic development is of particular relevance, in particular through the use of digital technologies and the formation of effective mechanisms for their implementation in business activities [3].

Digitalization of economic activity transforms the market, its structure and functioning mechanisms, the key element of which is competition. Without understanding its modern essence, generalizing current business practices and using the latest tools to ensure competitiveness, sustainable development of companies is impossible.

Analysis of recent research and publications. The theoretical basis of competition research has been formed for over 200 years, transforming from classical price models to complex ecosystem interactions in the digital environment.

The founders of classical political economy, in particular A. Smith [1], laid the foundation for understanding competition through the prism of the "invisible hand of the market". D. Ricardo developed this idea in the model of perfect competition and the theory of comparative costs,

and J. Mill focused on its role as an instrument of socio-economic balance [8].

Further development of the theory took place within the framework of the Marxist and neoclassical schools. K. Marx studied the impact of competition on the concentration of capital [8], while A. Marshall [1] analyzed the mechanisms of market equilibrium. The complexity of market relations led to the emergence of structural analysis (F. Edgeworth, A. Cournot, J. Robinson, E. Chamberlin), which made it possible to substantiate models of imperfect competition, oligopoly and monopolistic competition [8].

The modern stage is characterized by the transition to strategic management. The fundamental contribution of M. Porter [15] is to determine competitive advantages through differentiation and focus. Subsequently, research was integrated into marketing theory: P. Kotler and G. Armstrong [10] focused on creating consumer value, and J.-J. Lambin and I. Schuyling [11] proved the need to transition to strategic market-oriented management.

In the context of digitalization, J. Tirol [17] justifies the need for adaptive regulation of digital platforms, since traditional approaches do not keep up with technological progress. The methodology of A. Osterwalder and Y. Pinnier [13; 14] deserves attention, where a deep understanding of the customer profile and the design of value propositions become key factors of sustainability in the context of product copying. Despite significant scientific achievements, the issues of convergence of digital strategies with the concept of total customer orientation (Total Experience) remain insufficiently covered, which requires further research in the direction of forming holistic experience management systems.

Formulation of the goals of the article (statement of the task). The transformation of market competition caused by rapid digitalization

determines the relevance of studying the role of digital competition as a key driver of the formation of customer-oriented strategies of enterprises and the functioning of business ecosystems, with an emphasis on clarifying basic concepts, changing interaction with consumers, Total Experience practices, and the importance of a personalized value proposition for ensuring sustainable competitive advantages.

Summary of the main research material.

Specific sciences utilize the developments of economic theory, advancing the structural approach at the micro-level in the interpretation of competition (Table 1).

The evolution of theoretical concepts reflects changes in competitive practices. Gradually, as

market structures developed, companies shifted from price-based means of competition to non-price means (Figure 1).

The foundations of modern competition theory were developed more than two centuries ago, and today the issues of competition remain relevant. The purpose of the study is to study the implementation of a customer-oriented strategy as a competitive advantage of companies in the context of digital competition.

An analysis of 920 articles from Google Scholar for 2023 on the query “competition in the economy” (a total of about 17 000 publications [5]) showed the possibility of structuring topics into separate clusters, the results of which are presented below:

Table 1

Evolution of Approaches to Competition Analysis

Conceptual Principles of Competition Research	Authors	Theoretical Directions
Functional Approach	A. Smith, D. Ricardo K. Marx A. Marshall	Classical Economic Theory Marxist Political Economy Neoclassical Economic Theory
Structural Meso-level Approach	F. Edgeworth, A. Cournot, J. Robinson, E. Chamberlin	Post-Neoclassical Microeconomics
Structural Micro-level Approach	P. Kotler, J. Lambin, M. Porter	Management, Marketing

Source: formed on the basis of [1; 8; 10; 11; 15]

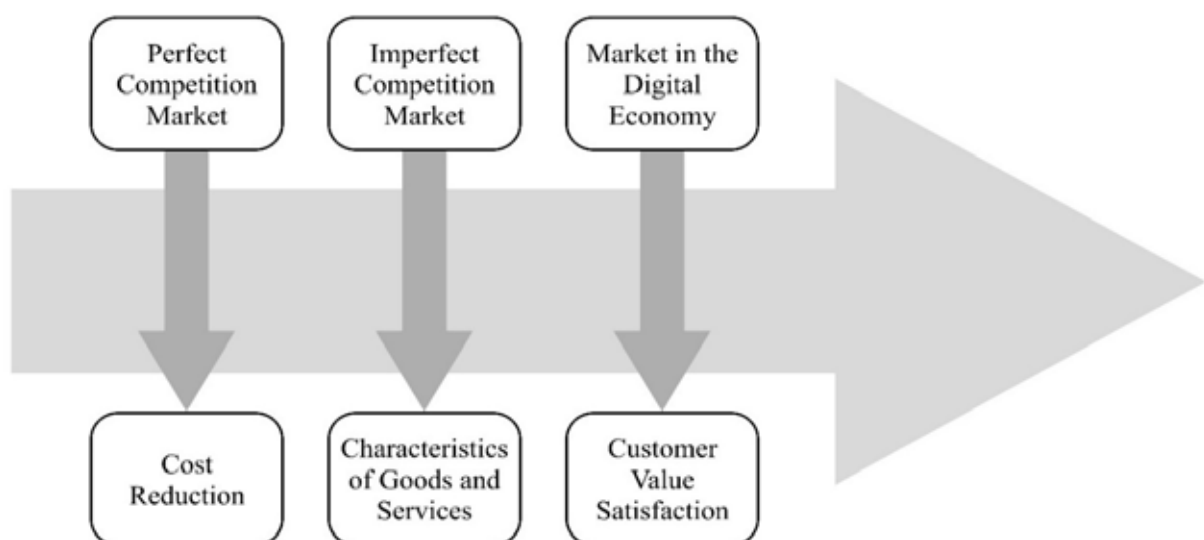


Fig. 1. Changes in Means of Competition in the Process of Market Development

Source: formed by the authors

The analysis of the sample allowed us to identify key areas of research: the dominant segment is digital innovation and market competition (312 articles). Considerable attention is paid to the issues of regulating the digital economy (103), sustainable "green" development (99) and strategic management (74). Less numerous, but dynamic, are the clusters dedicated to digital law (68), the implementation of AI in business (49) and the transformation of world trade (48). A specific segment (23 articles) is made up of works on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This state of research as of January 14, 2024, can be represented in the form of a diagram (Figure 2). The leader in research is the development of the economy under the influence of digital innovations, while the issue of competition is in second place. This topic is also partially represented in fifth place, and keywords from other clusters often overlap with it.

To clarify the results, we divided the sample into two groups: articles devoted to competition in the digital economy and other works.

This is due to the fact that a search query in Google Scholar yields a wide range of studies on digital transformation, which do not always focus on competition. By combining categories 2, 4, 6, 7 and 8 according to thematic relevance, the analysis structure presented in Figure 3 was formed.

Based on analysis of publications in the Google Scholar database (920 article), it was found that 65.7% of the research is directly devoted to the problems of competition in the digital economy, while 34.3% cover related areas, in particular,

issues of ecology, politics, artificial intelligence, development in the context of COVID-19 and general economic development.

Among the key works, it is worth noting the study by J. Tirol "Competition and the Industrial Challenge for the Digital Age" (2023), which substantiates the thesis about the incompatibility of traditional competition policy with modern technological, business and social transformations due to the limited information capabilities of regulation.

Adaptive antitrust legislation is needed, independent of stakeholders, but capable of involving industry and scientific expertise, in order to form flexible regulatory approaches and reduce legal uncertainty [17].

The conducted studies confirm the relevance of analyzing competition in digital markets, while the issue of the development of digital competition and its role in the formation of customer-oriented strategies remain insufficiently researched and require in-depth scientific study.

The research developments provide a foundation for creating sustainable and long-term demand in the competition process for one's own company, i.e., for attracting, retaining customers, and developing relationships with them, by implementing consumer values in the proposition better than competitors. In the digital economy, the client-centricity of companies becomes a necessary and possible essence of competitive advantage.

Modern digital technologies create the necessary conditions for targeting the organization's work towards the client, the

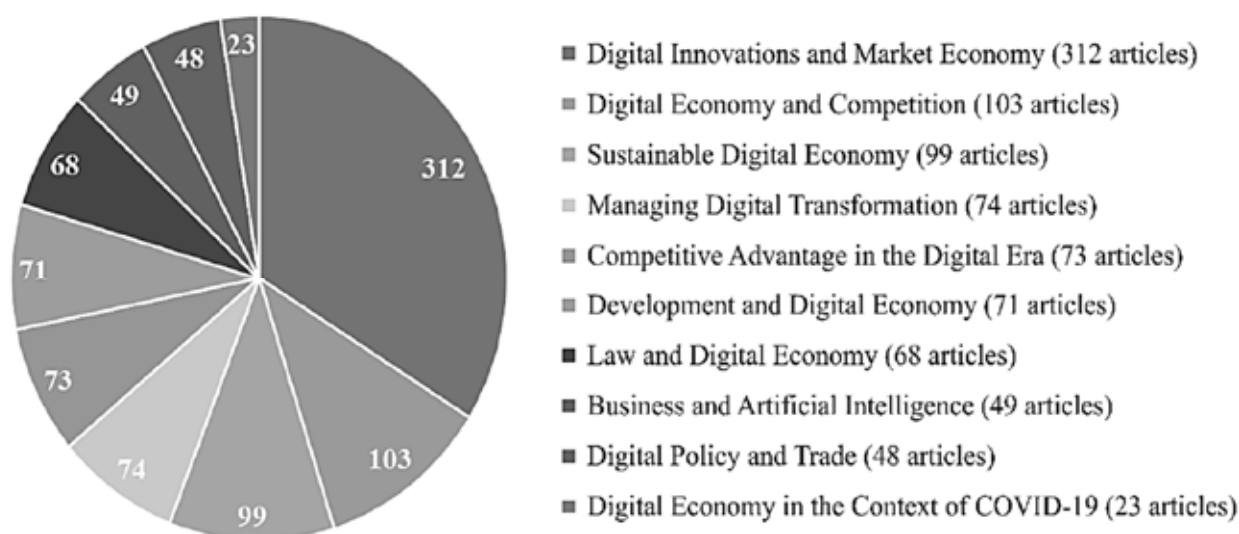


Fig. 2. Distribution of Scientific Articles from the Sample by Thematic Clusters

Source: formed by the authors

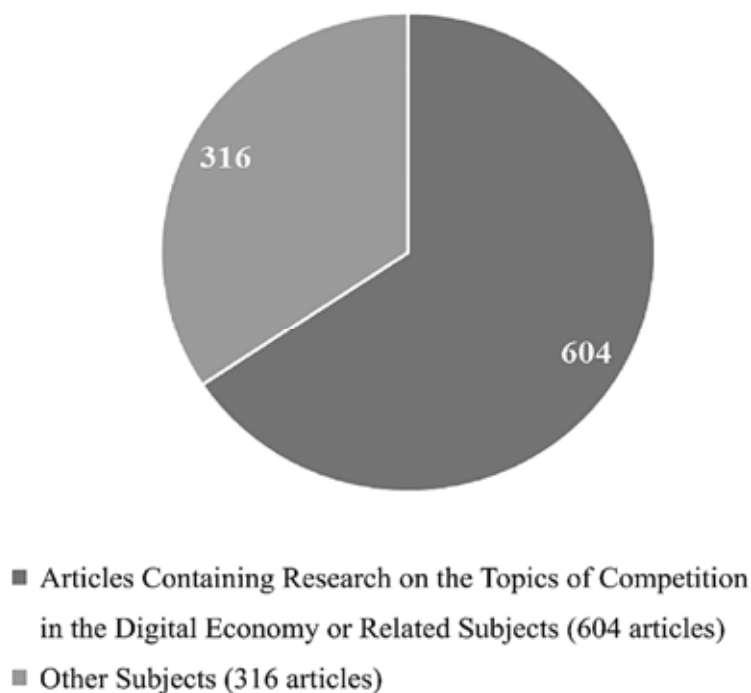


Fig. 3. Distribution of Scientific Articles from the Sample Based on the Criterion of Addressing the Issue of Competition in the Digital Economy

Source: formed by the authors

essence of which is to satisfy consumer values and solve the client's problems.

Achieving the financial performance of successful companies involves aligning the value proposition with the formed client profile, which, according to the methodology of A. Osterwalder and Y. Pinier, is determined by the client's key tasks, problems that prevent their implementation, and expected benefits [13; 14]. A value-oriented proposition is aimed at supporting the client in solving these tasks and forms a qualitative basis for competitive advantage which directly affects the level of competitiveness of the company. According to a study by Deloitte & Touche, client-oriented companies receive 60% more profit [3].

The company's customer focus is based on the understanding of the priority of solving consumer problems over product features. According to the Digital 2024 survey, users spend more than 6 hours online every day. According to GWI, the main motives for online activity are searching for information (60.9%), brand research (43.7%), and "how-to" instructions (49.4%). This confirms that Internet resources are used mainly as a tool for solving applied tasks (Fig. 4).

According to the results of the Ernst & Young "CEO Imperative Survey", the key factor in differentiating between "successful" companies

(with positive revenue dynamics) and those that "survive" is adaptation to the transformation of customer expectations [4].

If previously competitive strategies were based on aggressive cost minimization or M&A activity (mergers and acquisitions), then to ensure sustainable organic growth, priorities have shifted towards customer orientation. In modern market conditions, competitive advantage is transformed from product and price rivalry to the formation of systemic trust and customer loyalty.

Customer focus is a key factor in sustainable revenue growth. Ernst & Young's survey of 500 CEOs confirms the correlation between customer satisfaction and financial performance: 50% of companies with high loyalty demonstrated annual revenue growth of 5–15%. At the same time, 71% of successful companies noted an expansion of market share, while among companies with low satisfaction this figure was only 5% [4].

Implementing a value-oriented offer requires a strategic approach and analytical support in the following areas:

Consumer value forecasting: using digital technologies to identify changes in customer requirements and determine the necessary resources.

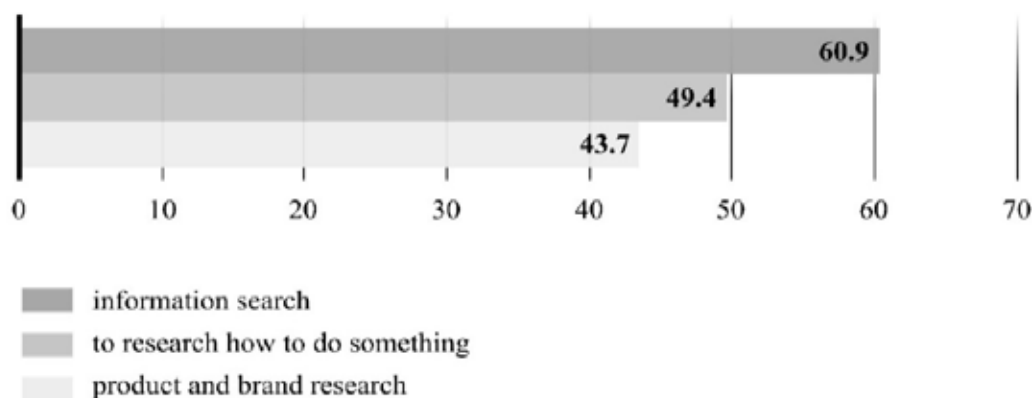


Fig. 4. Motives for Using the Internet

Source: formed on the basis of [2]

Competitive assessment: analyzing the current position relative to competitors in the digital environment and comparing strategic intentions to differentiate value propositions.

Digital transformation allows you to optimize competitive strategy through the variability of value-oriented offers. Figure 5 presents four models of strategy development based on retrospective and prospective analysis of the competitive environment.

Strategies 1 and 3 orient competitors towards a unified vision of consumer value, where cost minimization through the implementation of digital technologies becomes the key factor of advantage. In contrast, strategies 2 and 4 are based on the differentiation of value propositions, which shifts the emphasis to the speed of identification of consumer needs and the effectiveness of personalization of offers.

Digital transformation is radically changing the landscape of market competition. A vivid example of the implementation of strategies 1 and 3 is the domestic food delivery market, where entities with different genesis enter the zone of direct competition: retailers, IT structures and logistics services (taxi services).

For food retail, delivery services have transformed from an additional service into a strategic tool of competitiveness. This has led to the development of digital “twins” of business models: online supermarket applications completely duplicate the offline assortment, scaling the reach of the customer base at the expense of the segment of consumers who prefer remote service.

The development of the Ukrainian IT services market is largely determined by the activities of platform companies (Glovo, Zakaz.ua), for

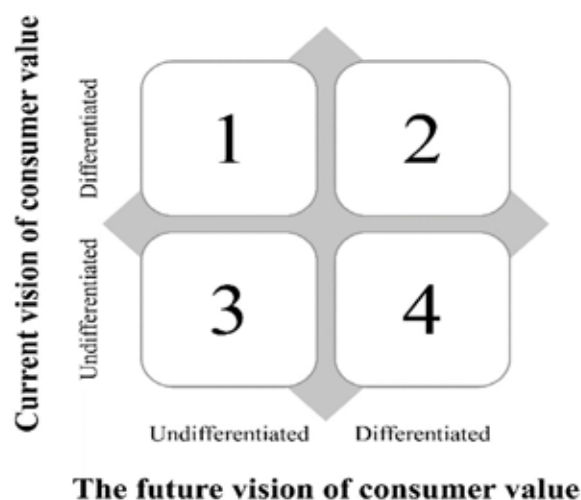


Fig. 5. Factors in Forming Competitive Strategies

Source: formed by the authors

which digital products are the basis of their business model. The constants transformation of market demands encourages both specialized players and companies from related industries (for example, Bolt with its Bolt Food service) to continuously expand the functionality of applications and support infrastructure. In a highly competitive environment, digitalization is a tool for minimizing costs and tactical maneuvering. At the same time, strategic competitiveness is shifting from direct confrontation to the search for cross-industry synergies with indirect competitors to maximize consumer value.

In addition, some companies, expanding the range of services for their target market, also offered delivery as an additional service. For example, the Estonian company Bolt, which provides taxi services, introduced food ordering in the Bolt Food application. The competitive advantage for companies in this market is an already established base of regular customers for whom they introduced web applications. In a perfectly competitive environment, the use of digital technologies is aimed at reducing costs. Companies are forced into daily battle, tactical and current maneuvering. This situation leads to particularly intense competition. It is important to not exceed certain limits and to not lose profit. Increasing competitiveness is associated with searching for and collaborating with economic entities that are not direct competitors but can help better embody consumer value.

Increased competition in the digital environment is prompting companies to move into Spheres 2 or 4 by implementing horizontal reintegration strategies. An example is Glovo's activities in Ukraine, which has invested around €1.4 million in rolling out a network of seven locations (cloud kitchens and dark stores) in Kyiv and Dnipro [12]. Digitalization not only sets the logic of market development, but also transforms methods of competition, requiring businesses to optimize their offerings and develop new approaches to interacting with their audience. According to research by Ernst & Young, the foundation of effective strategies for sustainable growth is the integration of digital tools to ensure customer focus, create consumer value, and ensure its profitability [4].

Implementing a customer-centric strategy involves focusing on two vectors. First, establishing the optimal level of interaction by balancing consumer value and industry dynamics (competition, demand). This requires systematic monitoring of the competitive environment: from analyzing USP and positioning to assessing the

digital presence of opponents. Second, using analytics to optimize marketing investments and personalize the customer experience. The key control tool here is unit economics, in particular the ratio of customer acquisition cost (CAC) to lifetime value (LTV).

Optimizing the ratio of CAC (cost of acquisition) and LTV (customer lifetime value) is a determining factor of sustainable development in hyper-competitive conditions. Maximizing LTV ensures stable profits and indicates high audience loyalty.

To ensure strategic competitiveness, it is necessary to differentiate the customer base along three vectors: value matching: identifying segments focused on the company's unique offer. Brand advocacy: focusing on loyal consumers prone to up-selling and referral activity. Predictive potential: assessing the future capitalization of relationships. Effective interaction is based on personalization and creating additional value through alternative solutions, relevant content and multi-level loyalty programs.

The implementation of these areas is based on the integration of CRM and CDP. Unlike segmented CRMs, CDPs consolidate data from various sources to create a single customer profile. According to forecasts, the CDP market will grow by 27.5% annually, reaching \$5.66 billion in 2025 [6].

The growing demand for CRM solutions is driven by the increasing customer focus of companies: according to Grand View Research, the global CRM market was worth \$65.59 billion in 2023, and is projected to grow at an average annual rate of 13.9% from 2024 to 2030 [7]. Using CRM and CDPs based on hyper-personalization, artificial intelligence, automation, and integration with social networks helps reduce costs, increase customer satisfaction and the quality of user experience, streamline business processes, and prevent operational overload, while supporting the formation of customer loyalty and long-term brand relationships.

The development of competitive advantages in digital competition is associated with the introduction of the Total Experience (TX) management system, which represents an exceptional means of integrating customer experience (CX), user experience (UX), employee experience (EX), and multi-experience (MX) (Figure 6).

A positive customer experience (CX) helps build loyalty, increase customer satisfaction and encourage repeat purchases, while user experience management (UX) focuses on



Fig. 6. Components of the Total Experience (TX)

Source: formed on the basis of [16]

creating intuitive, effective and enjoyable interactions through convenient, functional and adaptive interfaces. Ensuring seamless and consistent user interaction across channels and touchpoints creates a multi-experience (MX), which, together with the employee experience (EX), forms the basis of the Total Experience (TX) concept. Effective TX management involves coordinating teamwork focused on creating consumer value, developing internal communications and optimizing work processes, in particular by applying AGILE and SCRUM methodologies, which ensures flexible project and resource management.

Managing the overall experience as a holistic system, including four interconnected components (Fig. 6), has become possible thanks to modern digital technologies that integrate the

impact of various tools and form a synergistic effect aimed at increasing the company's customer focus and competitiveness. Effective transformation of business to a customer-oriented model involves defining and forecasting consumer value, analyzing competitive offers, forming your own value proposition and comparing it with competitors in current and prospective dynamics, as well as identifying the company's future value segment. The use of digital technologies in this process is aimed at reducing costs, deepening the understanding of changes in consumer values and customer satisfaction levels, or a combination of these areas.

Conclusion. Digital technologies are significantly transforming business relationships and requiring a review of competitive strategies, as digitalization expands the possibilities of customer interaction, increases the efficiency of investments and the flexibility of companies in responding to changing consumer needs. Digital competition stimulates innovation, the development of customer-oriented strategies and the use of data analytics, which contributes to the formation of loyalty, stable demand and long-term competitiveness. An important role in this is played by digital tools for managing customer experience and relationships (TX, CDP, CRM), as well as artificial intelligence technologies that provide personalized user experience. At the same time, digital innovations create sustainable competitive advantages only if they are aimed at creating differentiated consumer values, otherwise digitalization is reduced to price competition due to cost reduction.

This article was written within the framework of the research topic Radical uncertainty as an imperative for institutional transformations of the economic system.

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