



# Welcome to CX!

JOBS AND TITLES OF THE FUTURE. NOW.

By Nancy Egan, FSMPS

For years, *Fast Company* magazine has had a “Job Titles of the Future<sup>1</sup>” column. It features improbable titles such as Curator of the Enlightened Orchard and Project Meanie, as well as ones that speak to changing organizational life and make a lot of sense like Chief Privacy Officer and Visual Executive Officer. The individuals holding these positions are thriving in small, high-tech start-ups and large market leaders like Nike® (with a job title Catalyst).

**W**e haven’t seen a lot of unusual titles or the positions that accompany them in A/E/C marketing departments. Until now.

Consider the titles of the five client experience (CX) professionals that we profile in this article. While each of these professionals has distinct responsibilities within their organizations, the concepts

that connect their different roles are experience and engagement.

Three of them carry nontraditional titles: Karen Robichaud, director of creative engagement at Payette; Nicole La, principal, executive vice president, and experience director at TEECOM; or Tana Hall, director of client experience for Gensler’s Northwest Region. Others with





The Westin Denver International Airport, Denver, CO. HNTB.  
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**STORY BEHIND THE PICTURE** | This project, due to its magnitude, presented a great deal of challenge in having to get far enough away to capture. This photograph represents a dynamic angle that doesn't exactly show the whole expanse of the project, but the important aspects of the design of not only the hotel, but the transit center as well.

more traditional titles include marketing emerging services or they're rethinking both services and markets. For example, there's Caroline Hinrichs, director of business development for HOK's Experience Design Group, and Allison Scott, head of construction integrated marketing for Autodesk.

Client satisfaction isn't a new concern for the A/E/C industries. Firms have long focused on its importance, improving quality control and fine-tuning processes, believing that if you deliver better services and better buildings, the client will be happy. Not necessarily.

It's been 20 years since Joseph Pine and James Gilmore welcomed us to the Experience Economy with their seminal 1998 article in *Harvard Business Review*.<sup>2</sup> They showed us that "experiences are a distinct economic offering, as different from services as services are from goods." Their argument—customers unquestionably desire experiences and that unless companies wanted to be in a commoditized business, they would have to design engaging experiences—

had everyone buzzing. In the aftermath, A/E/C firms took the message to heart, conducting client roundtables and evaluating how to improve interactions with clients in pursuit of a more rewarding experience.

Certainly, many firms became more client-centric and began to develop an experience mindset, but in the boomtimes of the early 2000s when everyone was booked to capacity, production often took precedence over experience. Then came the 2008 financial crisis and its impact on the economy, which left many firms scrambling to find their footing. The competitive advantage of client experience re-emerged.

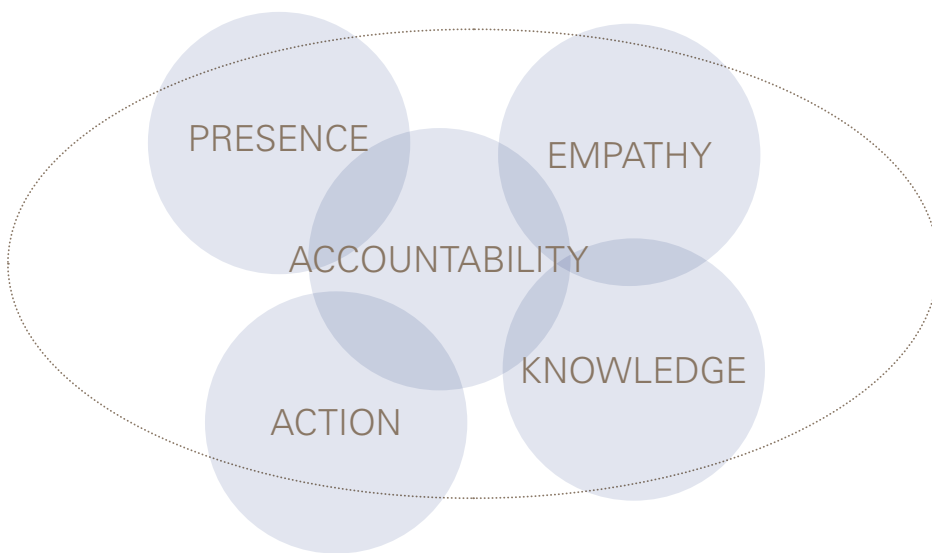
As Tana Hall notes, "In 2009, while everyone was talking about the downturn, tech companies were heavily promoting UX (user experience), and it was the first time that the X was elevated to the C-suite with the role of CXO." Nicole La points out, "Tech firms get it!"

A/E/C isn't there, yet. However, Caroline Hinrichs observes that "the model is changing." She and each of the marketers

profiled below are leveraging the X factor to create more robust programs, both internal and client-facing, to strengthen culture and engagement among employees and to reach out to clients, collaborators, and communities. Their efforts are generative, as they build brand recognition, relationships, understanding, and value. This deep engagement and advocacy with clients is, in Allison Scott's view, "the next frontier for the built environment."

It's hardly surprising that the emerging X roles are finding homes in marketing departments or that marketers are increasingly involved in other departments like HR, where employee engagement is crucial. Marketers work across the entire firm, talking to everyone from the CEO to junior staff about everything from projects to policy. They need to have good communications skills to succeed. They depend on their emotional intelligence. They tend to think holistically about issues and organization. They know that marketing is everybody's job, and they work hard to train and mentor. As Karen Robichaud says, "Everyone is a brand ambassador."

Figure 1. Gensler Client Experience Principles. © Gensler.



Below we take a deep dive to see what CX looks like in five very different firms.

### Tana Hall

DIRECTOR OF CLIENT EXPERIENCE  
GENSLER/NORTHWEST REGION

I work directly with our regional managing principals on client experience initiatives, helping our 600+ staff members deliver an exceptional experience across all touchpoints of the client journey.

My typical day is meeting with clients to introduce them to our research or touring them through our projects, working with an internal team on a quarterly business review, then delivering emotional intelligence and client relationship workshops to our staff in the Northwest region.

I believe that CX can be transformational only when everyone in the organization owns it and knows how to participate. CX requires an experience-focused culture, advocacy at all leadership levels, and systematic training throughout the organization. At Gensler, everyone is trained in how to deliver their part of the client experience (See Figure 1.). That means everything from how we interact with clients in a weekly project meeting to how they are greeted when they enter one of our offices.

### Nicole La

PRINCIPAL, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT  
& EXPERIENCE DIRECTOR  
TEECOM

It's my job to set the standard for the firm's unified culture, brand, and communications, from recruitment through the user experience of TEECOM buildings. This means developing an understanding of how clients, staff, and potential hires interact with TEECOM's services and products so that the firm can provide continuous improvement.

I approach our firm's hiring, marketing, and internal continuing education efforts strategically. We have created guidelines for every stage of a project from business development to project closeout. We set expectations and help employees meet them. At TEECOM, we believe that to improve client relationships, you must begin on the inside. Maintaining culture and engagement, especially during periods of high growth, is critical and we have developed a suite of tools and techniques to help us keep focus.

### Caroline Hinrichs

DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT  
HOK/EXPERIENCE DESIGN GROUP

I am the newest member of HOK's Experience Design, a dynamic,

interdisciplinary team of graphic designers, brand strategists, visualization specialists, recovering architects, and interior designers. We are all trained to engage the client in deeply understanding the user journey and the messaging opportunities as they pass through and interact with their environment. By designing authentic, branded experiences seamlessly integrated into architecture, our group helps companies, brands, and institutions tell powerful stories, celebrate culture, and strategically communicate within the build environment.

My role is to connect and educate about experiential design, from within the HOK network to the marketplace at large. I have a title of director of business development, and beyond BD/sales/prospecting, I promote the vertical integration of HOK's Experience Design group within HOK, build executive-level relationships, support value creation for our new business unit, connect with strategic design and fabrication partners, and support the ideation for unique and differentiating opportunities for the HOK architecture, interiors, and consulting practices that promote experience design services.

### Allison Scott

HEAD OF CONSTRUCTION INTEGRATED  
MARKETING  
AUTODESK

My role is to ensure that Autodesk takes a customer-centric approach to our construction marketing strategy and deploy that consistently across all touchpoints for a rich and meaningful customer experience. One of my first tasks is to develop a holistic marketing strategy that attracts, retains, and engages customers, and that increases awareness and credibility of our value across the construction sector. More specifically, I am driving the development of industry and product content that feeds our digital experiences, as well as overseeing our global event strategy. This also means I interface with diverse parts of our business—from sales, customer success, and product—to synthesize and foster a holistic customer journey.

As the A/E/C industries continue to bolster collaboration to improve outcomes for



the entire project, Autodesk is building deeper ties with the construction industry to connect people, processes, and technology throughout the project lifecycle, start to finish. Our goal is to be a stronger partner for the industry and my job is to turn insights—from my years of experience in construction innovation and from what we are learning from our customers—into action.

## Karen Robichaud

DIRECTOR OF CREATIVE ENGAGEMENT  
PAYETTE

I am responsible for the firm's internal and external communications, the firm's brand identity and voice, and the direction of the firm's photography. I'm responsible for what the firm sounds like and looks like in public and for tying that back to our internal messages so everyone in the firm is aware of the direction and on board. I take a holistic approach to my work, viewing all these aspects as interrelated. I've worked to build a culture of communication, connection, and engagement in the six-plus years I've been at the firm.

I work to engage the firm at many levels—internally and externally. I draw ideas out of people not used to articulating their expertise, while shaping strategy and working across teams and hierarchies to showcase our 150-person firm. I answer to the firm's 10 principals as I craft strategy, special events, and exhibitions to showcase our work. I've also had the opportunity to help lead pro bono projects, working closely with clients to understand their needs and craft the story.

The best marketers, with or without the title, are creating positive experiences for their colleagues, clients and, often, their communities every day. Welcome to CX! ■



The Yard, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ. Elkus Manfredi Architects. ©Feinknopf Photography, feinknopf.com.

## ENDNOTES AND RELATED READING

1. "Job Titles of the Future," *Fast Company*, <https://www.fastcompany.com/section/job-titles-of-the-future>

2. "Welcome to the Experience Economy," B. Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore, *Harvard Business Review*, July–August 1998

"The New Science of Customer Emotions," Scott Magids, Alan Zorfas and Daniel Leemon, *Harvard Business Review*, November 2015

"What are you organizing?" Seth Godin's Blog, <https://seths.blog/2018/09/what-are-you-organizing/>

Gensler Research: EXI  
<https://www.gensler.com/research-insight/gensler-research-institute/experience-index>

Payette Blog (new post everyday!)  
<https://www.payette.com/blog/>

"Maintaining Culture and Engagement at a High-Growth Company," Nicole La/ TEECOM Articles  
<http://teecom.com/maintaining-culture-engagement-high-growth-company/>

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