

THE
CXO
CODEX

UNLOCK
YOUR
EDGE

**How do you make CX a
business-wide leadership
system, not a service function?**

A practical chapter from **The CXO Codex**

ABOUT THE EXPERT

Lara Khouri is an award-winning organizational integrity strategist, keynote speaker, and transformation advisor.

With two decades across customer experience, employee experience, and transformation work under her belt, Lara guides multinational corporations, government-linked entities, startups, and PE-backed businesses to navigate transformation, rebuild stakeholder trust, and align behavior with results.

WHAT YOU'LL HEAR ON CXO LOADING...

In the conversation, Lara returns to an apparently modest intervention: a two-column Word document that gave customers the information they needed before they had to ask for it.

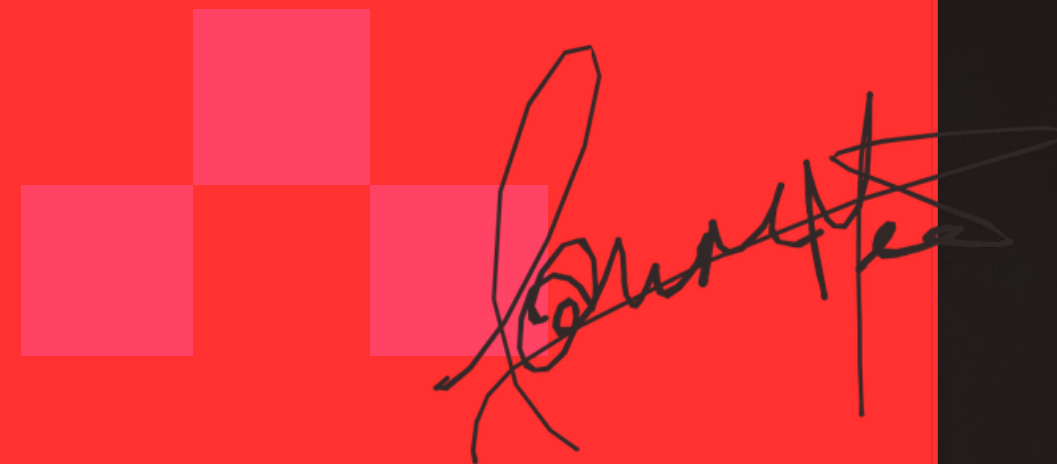
The result was not a shinier CX programme. It was less uncertainty, fewer avoidable calls, and a **route toward zero churn**. The episode keeps this chapter honest: the answer is not always a new platform, a large transformation, or a bigger team. Often it is a better decision about what customers need to know, who owns the answer, and what happens when the promise cannot be kept.

LISTEN IN



Lara Khouri

Executive Advisor on
Organizational Trust,
Human-Centered Growth &
Commercial Transformation



Lauren Miles

Host, CXO Loading...



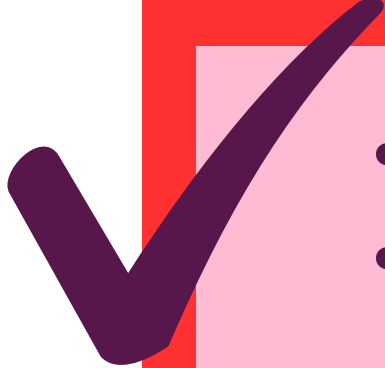
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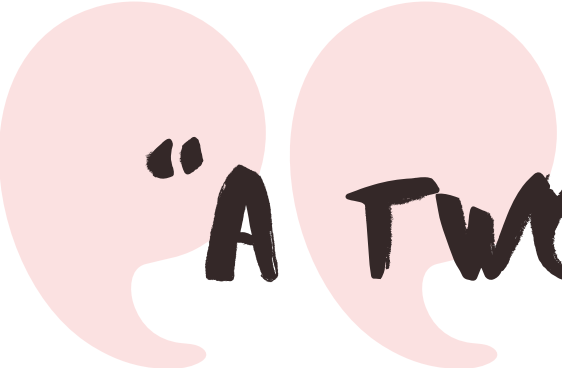
Trust is not a feeling. It is a system people can trust.

Trust is easy to speak about and difficult to run. It is often treated as a brand value, a culture statement, or something that sits with the people team. Customers experience it much more practically: they see whether the promise they were sold is still true when a process gets complicated, when a hand-off changes department, or when something goes wrong.

Lara Khouri's work starts in that gap. Her stories show that customer, employee, and commercial experience cannot be separated at the moment a promise needs to be kept. This chapter is not about making trust warmer or more aspirational. It is about turning trust into a system a leadership team can see, own, and improve.

THE LEARNING

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- The future belongs to the most trusted organisations.
 - Map the promise your organisation makes, then compare it with the process and behaviour customers actually experience.
 - Ask the teams closest to the customer what people need to know before they have to ask for it.
 - Look for duplicated effort between departments before reaching for new tools or new headcount.



“A TWO-COLUMN WORD DOCUMENT CAN BE MORE TRANSFORMATIVE THAN A STRATEGY DECK — IF IT GIVES CUSTOMERS WHAT THEY ACTUALLY NEED.”

Lara Khouri, Executive Advisor on Organizational Trust, Human-Centered Growth & Commercial Transformation

WHAT RESEARCH ADDS

Trust becomes operational when the organisation can connect a customer promise to the cross-functional decisions, ownership, and evidence required to keep it.

FURTHER READING

Deloitte's 2025 CXO research identifies demonstrating experience value, early collaboration, trust, and a human-centred technology outlook as core priorities for the evolving role.

[Deloitte Digital - The Evolving Roles of the Chief Experience Officer](#)

McKinsey argues that customer-centric operating models depend more on cross-functional ways of working and decision criteria than on redrawing organisational boxes and lines.

[Mckinsey - How the Operating Model Can Unlock The Full Power of Customer Experience](#)

The Codex reading of Lara's story alongside this evidence is that trust becomes a leadership system when a customer promise has a visible owner, a decision route, and a way to show what changed. The customer does not experience an operating model as a diagram; they experience whether the organisation can keep its word when the hand-off gets difficult.

That does not mean every trust problem needs a new transformation programme. Start where Lara starts: with one promise customers can already see, then make the friction and the trade-off discussable across the people who create it. The useful leadership move is not to own every detail; it is to make the shared decision unavoidable, although one intervention won't fit every organisation.

THE ACTIONABLE BIT

You won't find this on a dashboard

The problem is rarely one dramatic failure. A sales message says one thing, an operational process does another, and the person helping the customer has to bridge the gap in real time. Each individual moment may look reasonable inside its own team. The customer experiences the whole contradiction.

That is why trust is a CXO-level question. It asks who can make a decision when a promise cannot be kept, what information the customer should receive before they need to chase, and whether the organisation can recognise a friction point as a shared system problem rather than a local departmental issue.

THE TRUST FRICTION AUDIT

Choose one customer promise and inspect the gaps between what is said, what the process does, and what people experience.

Use the Trust Friction Audit with one promise customers can already see: a response time, service standard, renewal commitment, delivery window, or claim made during the sales process. Do not audit the whole organisation.

Start with a promise that crosses more than one team, because that is where trust can become everyone's concern and no one's decision.

Step 1: Write the promise in the customer's own language, not internal shorthand.

Step 2: Follow that promise across Sales, Product, Operations, and Support, noting where the customer has to ask twice or explain themselves again.

Step 3: Name one accountable decision-maker for the moment the promise cannot be kept, then agree the decision or trade-off they can actually make.

YOUR NEXT MOVE

Ask yourself: What promise are we asking customers to trust, and who can make the decision when reality gets in the way?

Day 1

Take one visible customer promise into a 20-minute conversation with two people closest to the customer. Ask: where do expectation and reality currently split?

Build it in 30 Days

Choose one high-impact promise, convene the functions that create it, and run one monthly decision circle that reviews friction, trade-offs, and what changed for customers.

Measure the shift

Track the share of priority promises with a named decision owner, a current friction log, and a documented customer-facing outcome.

FROM DIRECTOR TO CXO

You are building more than a good idea.

The move from Director to CXO in Lara's chapter is from improving individual journeys to becoming the leader who makes customer promises govern cross-functional decisions.

The Trust Friction Audit helps you show where a promise breaks, name who can resolve the trade-off, and turn trust from a brand value into an operating responsibility.

Build a cross-functional promise map that turns trust from a brand statement into an owned operating decision.

CXO LOADING... PODCAST

Hear from leading CX consultants, strategists, and practitioners.

Customer Experience is the most commercially powerful function in any organisation. Companies that lead in CX grow revenue 80% faster and keep their customers loyal up to six times longer.

Yet the CXO is still the newest, least-defined, and hardest-fought seat at the top table. Deloitte's 2023 and 2024 cohorts found that around half of CX leaders were first-in-role in their company. No established codex. No clear path. No predecessor to learn from.

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