

# Women of Influence: The Top 25 Innovative CX Leaders

Written by Amy Wallace on Feb 28, 2022



**WOMEN OF INFLUENCE:**  
**THE TOP 25 INNOVATIVE CX LEADERS**

netomi

## Women of Influence: 25 Innovative Customer Experience Leaders

As the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted many industries worldwide, customer experience proved to be more important than ever. From introducing cryptocurrency to the Latin America market, to offering a free learning online platform for students and playing a key role in the digital transformation of health services, these leaders are making waves in the CX space, and inspiring others along the way. Ahead of International Women's Day, we are shining a spotlight on these female powerhouses – read on for Netomi's list of 25 women in CX to watch out for, in 2022.

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Listen to the amazing all-star panel of women leaders who are shattering the glass ceiling.

## Women CX Leaders Shaping the Future of Customer ...



(no download required)

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#### 1. **Alexandra da Silva Rodrigues – Strategical Advisor for Global Contact Centers, Radisson Hotel Group**



Alexandra has more than 20 years of professional experience in Customer Care, Contact Centers and Customer Experience. As Strategic Advisor for Global Contact Centers at Radisson Hotel Group, her primary objective is to develop and optimize Radisson Hotel Group Contact Centers to be in line with the company's strategy, as well as changing market trends and customer expectations.

Alexandra has had an International career in both Europe and South America, and has worked across different industries with leading brands such as NH Hotel Group, Telefonica, Citibank & BPOs companies. As part of her previous role with NH Hotel Group, she was responsible for the design, implementation and consolidation of a corporate training program for all Call centers (the program has been the top-rated in the company's history). Her primary focus was, and is to empower the Contact Centers models to generate a step forward in the Customer perception of the Contact Centers, and most importantly, to drive Customer satisfaction and revenue generation. She has always wanted, and has worked to professionalize Contact Centers, as this crucial department inside of companies must be seen as a benefit rather than a cost center. One of her [key drivers](#) is employee motivation and empowerment.

[Connect with Alexandra](#)

#### 2. **Amanda Binns – Senior Vice President, Global Customer Success, Pixalate**



As Pixalate's Senior Vice President, Global Customer Success, Amanda oversees the company's growing global customer success team, including the East and West Coasts of the U.S., EMEA, and APAC.

A leader in the programmatic industry, Amanda joined the Pixalate team in September of 2021. "I'm excited to join Pixalate during a phase of rapid growth as the company helps customers address issues that strike at the core of quality and compliance in the digital ad supply chain," she said. "Pixalate has a reputation for being hyper focused on customer success, and I'm eager to build upon that strong foundation as we continue international expansion."

[Connect with Amanda](#)

### 3. Anastasia Zdoroviak – Director Customer Experience, DoorDash



The voice of the customer, customer experience strategy (beyond customer support), business analysis, as well as human-centered design are all among Anastasia's areas of expertise. An operations and business innovation expert, she has more than 10 years of project management experience across industries and geographies.

Describing the structure of the DoorDash Customer Experience (CX) team in an [interview](#) with Forrester, she emphasized the importance of multiple teams working together to combine their knowledge and insights. “We also partner with the user research and support team. Those are the two best sources of information in terms of how consumers feel. [We] combine this qualitative understanding with insights from the analytics team and work with product teams and engineering to design the best solutions, improve processes, and prevent issues,” she said. Listening to customer feedback is also essential, she stressed, “we are constantly increasing the number of channels and ways to get feedback.”

Something that many users today are hungry for (pun intended?) – Speedy delivery. At a time when many are looking for such a service, DoorDash is hopping on the trend by [offering](#) 10 to 15-minute delivery in New York City from [DashMart](#), a type of convenient store that stocks groceries, household goods and restaurant items. The company has also partnered with several stores to provide same-day delivery, including [Dollar General](#) and [J.C. Penney](#).

*One CX trend that will dominate/take the stage in 2022:*

“I think that the trend that will dominate in the next couple of years (not just in 2022) in CX will be ‘personalization’ and learning how to create a personalized experience not only for luxury products/services but for all industries. That includes the need to ‘know your customer’ both from behavioral and feedback capturing & interpretation, and also ‘make customers feel known and valued’ through various levers.”

[Connect with Anastasia](#)

#### **4. Cynthia Del Pozo – Principal, Strategy & Corporate Development, Gemini**



A leader with business development and operational experience with Fortune 500 companies and venture-backed start-ups in the Financial Services, Fintech and Media space, Cynthia has extensive experience scaling companies and growing consumer-facing businesses.

A cryptocurrency exchange, wallet, and custodian, New York-based Gemini helps individuals and institutions buy, sell and store their bitcoin and cryptocurrency. “Crypto is not just a technology, it’s a movement. But it won’t happen

unless we build simple, elegant, and secure ways for individuals and institutions around the world to discover and interact with this new frontier,” the company [states](#) on its website.

Speaking of simple and secure access for all, in December of 2021, Cynthia and her team [announced](#) a yearlong pilot project – a partnership with Colombia’s largest bank, Bancolombia, to provide an initial cohort of customers with a seamless on- and off-ramp to trade bitcoin and other currencies through the Gemini exchange. “We look forward to working closely with the Colombian crypto ecosystem and to supporting crypto products that empower Colombians to take control of their financial lives,” Cynthia wrote in an article on the company’s blog. “Crypto is borderless by nature, and we are committed to expanding crypto access to individuals across the globe. We believe that crypto can play an important role in the development of Latin America as interest in blockchain and innovative technologies proliferates throughout the region.”

[Connect with Cynthia](#)

## 5. Dione Hedgpeth – Chief Customer Officer, Sumo Logic



Dione has more than 25 years of [experience](#) in enterprise IT, ranging from start-ups to high growth public companies. As Sumo Logic’s chief customer officer, she is responsible for the company’s customer operations and renewals, including customer success, professional services, global support, and education (which is no small role, as the company serves more than 2,000 customers)! In recognition of its efforts in helping customers to extract the most value from their data, Sumo Logic was [awarded](#) the Best Business Intelligence/Analytics Solution of 2021 by *Computing’s* Technology Product Awards.

An example of a recent [offering](#) from the company is free Cloud SIEM and Observability certifications. Encouraging Sumo Logic’s customers to learn how to use real-time data analytics across the two solutions, this empowers them to “do more with their data,” Dione said.

[Connect with Dione](#)

## 6. Emilie Chell – Head of Marketing, Growth and Experience, Circles.Life



“Digital innovation, rapidly growing startup teams, and designing memorable customer experiences that encourage 2-way relationships” are among some of the things that Emilie most enjoys. She has previously held marketing and CX roles across various industries, including life insurance, banking and hospitality.

Asia’s first fully digital telco, [Circles.Life](#) is focused on giving power back to the consumer, and is “revolutionizing the digital services industry through a customer-centric user journey.” A highly personalized digital service, the company has been [dubbed](#) the “Netflix of telco.”

Since joining the team in May of 2021, Emilie has played a key role in the brand’s development in Australia, taking ownership for all aspects of marketing across the company’s channels, including team, strategy, insights, and CX. “It is an amazing opportunity to be able to deliver a brand from scratch, to be able to really look at an audience and say it is incumbent on me to understand exactly who you are and what you want,” she [said](#). “There are people at the other end that want to feel engaged...we want to be a part of what is meaningful to them, and we want to hear from them and come back to them to show them that we are part of their world.”

[Connect with Emilie](#)

## 7. Erin Wallace – VP, Integrated Marketing, thredUP



“With a few notable detours—hustling at an agency for clients including Michelin & Target, and being named “Emerging Designer of the Year” by SF Magazine—I’ve spent the last 15+ years of my career bringing secondhand clothing from a stigmatized industry to a mainstream shopping institution,” Erin wrote in her LinkedIn bio.

As thredUP’s VP, Integrated Marketing, she serves as a spokesperson for the company’s sustainability work as well as the growing popularity of secondhand shopping (by 2025, the fashion resale market in the U.S. is expected to [reach](#) \$76 billion annually).

“Not only are consumers searching for value due to price pressures caused by inflation and supply-chain disruptions, but they are increasingly aware of environmental waste and are prioritizing more sustainable options,” Erin said. “While economic factors may shift, we believe consumers will continue to choose secondhand first.”

The company [teamed up with](#) costume designers from the new *Sex and the City* reboot series *And Just Like That...* to introduce a themed shopping experience, enabling fans to shop the iconic looks of their favorite characters at a much more affordable price point. “Our mission is to inspire a new generation to think secondhand first, and we admire Molly and Danny’s [the show’s costume designers] commitment to more sustainable styling through thrift,” Erin said. “Television is increasingly driving shopping trends, and this collaboration makes it possible for consumers to thrift the look in a responsible, wallet-friendly way.”

[Connect with Erin](#)

## 8. Gemma Cipriani-Espineira – Chief Customer Officer, Chili Piper



Gemma is reimagining the traditional practice of customer support. In fact, when promoted from VP Customer Success to Chief Customer Officer, she re-branded her support team as the department of Customer Love. “It’s about defining your purpose as a business,” she [said](#), “something that makes people want to work with you beyond just the product and services side of things. It’s not the entirety of my team that’s now Customer Love, it’s the people who are the technical support agents.”

The initiative stemmed from a Center of Excellence program that Gemma setup within the CS Group at Chili Piper, and she has since transformed the team toward proactively helping customers achieve value during times of

expansion (including quickly scaling the team by 460%, to meet customer growth!)

“Our mission is to create and retain happy active users. We’re designing teams around this mission and challenging the status quo on typical CS and Support structures,” Gemma [said](#). “We’ve rebranded our Customer Support team for what they really are, which is a Customer Love team, who show patience, kindness and love during our customers’ times of need.”

*One CX trend that will dominate/take the stage in 2022:*

“2022 will be the year of the blazing first (human) response times. It’s a simple yet effective way to retain customers in a busy world.”

[Connect with Gemma](#)

## 9. Irit Eizips – Chief Customer Officer & CEO, CSM Practice



A world-renowned [expert](#) in customer retention, upsells, cross-sells, and customer value strategies and methodologies, Irit is the Chief Customer Officer and CEO of CSM Practice, the world’s first consulting firm [dedicated](#) to Customer Success Management (CSM) strategy. Helping CS teams around the globe, the firm offers high-quality CS strategy design services for executives looking to scale their operations, while producing quick and tangible business results.

A frequent speaker at conferences and featured in various CS publications, Irit regularly shares her words of wisdom with other CS professionals, through thought leadership articles on CSM Practice blog, as well as on the company’s YouTube channel.

*One CX trend that will dominate/take the stage in 2022:*

“In recent years, the lifetime value of customers has taken center stage, especially for subscription-based B2B businesses. In 2022, we will see an increasing investment in developing a scalable customer engagement model that is designed to improve the customer experience...we also expect to see an increase

in the number of companies making the commitment to using technology to develop a customer experience that builds trust with their customers at scale.”

[Connect with Irit](#)

#### 10. Jennifer Dearman – Chief Customer Officer, Udacity



Jennifer previously served as Pendo.io’s first Chief Customer Officer, where she was responsible for scaling a world-class success organization in a high-growth startup environment, in areas including customer success, global technical support, and digital engagement. She joined global online learning platform Udacity at the beginning of 2021, as Senior Vice President of Global Success & Operations. “Udacity is committed to delivering training that equips its customers with proven job-ready skills and best practices needed to take advantage of the latest technologies,” she [said](#). “This is a mission I am passionate about and I’m looking forward to helping Udacity’s customers progress along their digital transformation journeys.”

“Customer experience is often touted as the key to customer retention, but customers don’t stick around simply because they’ve had a great experience with a company,” she [noted](#) in a recent interview. “Retention is anchored in the value customers receive from the products they purchase and value is a two-sided coin. Value comes in the form of desired outcomes like increased revenue, decreased cost and mitigated risk on the customer side. Flip the coin over and company value, like retention and growth, is the result of customer value.”

On a “mission to train the world’s workforce in the careers of the future,” Udacity offers courses that equip learners with the latest skills in programming, data science, digital marketing and more. And its customers (students) have certainly found value in this online learning community – one student who now works at Facebook [said that](#) Udacity helped them “land a new technical role at my dream company.”

[Connect with Jennifer](#)

[Twitter](#)

#### 11. Julie Hansen – CRO & US CEO, Babbel



Business Insider's Former President and COO, Julie joined the Babbel team in 2017. She has since been focused on "accelerating Babbel's global growth – transforming our success story as the world's top-grossing language learning app into an ecosystem for many language learning experiences for both consumers and businesses."

The "No.1 destination for language learners globally," Babbel is in tune with what customers today are seeking, and is coming up with new and innovative ways of expanding its platform, including Babbel Live's virtual classes and B2B offerings for corporate clients. According to a recent survey from travel search engine KAYAK, travel ranks among the top reasons Americans want to learn another language. So, the company recently [announced](#) plans to team up with Babbel to launch linGO – a one-stop-shop for travel planning and mastering new languages.

"When traveling wasn't an option, we still saw that one of the biggest reasons for Americans to learn a new language was preparing to travel," Julie said. "This shows that being able to communicate when visiting another country plays a big role in planning a trip. This is why we're partnering up with KAYAK to give travelers the best experience possible, from the time they decide on a destination to the adventures they have in their new language while away."

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Babbel also focused on making its platform easily accessible to students, so they could maintain their cognitive activity. The company [offered](#) U.S. K-12 and college students affected by school closures three months of free access to its app and platform, in any and all of its 14 languages. "As students are being forced to stay at home, Babbel is in a position to help right now and that is exactly what we want to do...we believe that language connects us all, and we are proud to share this philosophy with American students and provide support to them at this difficult time," Julie explained.

[Connect with Julie](#)

## **12. Kellie Capote – Chief Customer Officer, Gainsight**



Not long after she [joined](#) Gainsight's CSM team in 2017, the team "hit a rapid clip of growth" (at this time, Kellie also had two young daughters). She progressed from building out multiple Enterprise CSM teams, to leading all of Enterprise CS, and, in April of 2021, became Gainsight's Chief Customer Officer (CCO). Prior to Gainsight, Kellie led account management and partner management teams at ADP, yet always had a passion for Customer Success. "I knew Customer Success was the right fit because of how energized I felt by the idea of it; my strengths are in working with customers and consistently challenging them to achieve their next level of desired outcomes," she said.

Operating with a "bulldog mentality" (taking responsibility for problems, even though they may not be your fault), some of Kellie's initiatives include crafting Gainsight's first true onboarding process doc for CSMs, re-imagining EBR templates, and restructuring several KPIs for her team.

"As the CCO, you are the responsible party for being the learning engine of the business, and it's your job to make sure everyone at your company has a well-rounded view of what's truly happening to the customer," she [said](#). "In CS, we are so close to our customers that we must be capable of injecting customer-centricity within the executive team, the board, and across the entire company."

[Connect with Kellie](#)

### **13. Kristen Hayer – Founder & CEO, The Success League**



Holding the firm belief that “customer success should be at the heart of any business,” Kristen brings this motto to her role as Founder and CEO of The Success League, a consulting and training firm that helps organizations plan, build and scale their customer success teams. With 20 years of experience as a customer success, sales, and marketing executive, she has primarily worked with growth-stage tech companies, and has led several award-winning customer success teams.

Kristen has authored more than 100 articles on customer success, and regularly shares her insights with others in the field as the host of two podcasts: *Innovations in Leadership* and *Reading for Success*, both available on the Success League Radio channel.

*One CX trend that will dominate/take the stage in 2022:*

“I think that one of the biggest challenges in 2022 is that a lot of companies have moved to fully remote work...while companies are mostly focused on how this impacts their employees, a lot of customers are also now fully remote.

How does a CX professional work with customers in a way that is: engaging, scalable, digital, and personal, when the customer isn’t “at work”? There will be a lot of changes that need to be made to how we engage with customers to create amazing and human experiences that accommodate remote work. I think we’re still at the tip of the iceberg in exploring how to do this both effectively and efficiently, but I see CX taking some cues from B2C organizations who have done this really well.”

[Connect with Kristen](#)

[Twitter](#)

**14. Kristi Faltorusso – VP of Customer Success, ClientSuccess**



As ClientSuccess' VP of Customer Success, Kristi oversees the entire post-sales customer journey and customer experience, including leading the customer success, consulting, and support teams. Previously, she built, scaled and transformed Customer Success teams at companies including IntelliShift, BetterCloud, and Sisense. Kristi has been recognized as a Top 50 Customer Success Influencer in 2022 by SmartKarrot, and as a 2021 Engagement Expert by HigherLogic. In 2021 she founded Keeping CS Simple, a content experience portal where she shares insights to help leaders and other individuals improve their approach to Customer Success.

Kristi was introduced to the world of customer success after using a company's technology for several years, and the career move seemed like a natural fit. "I was a huge fan of the value I was getting from the product, and I was obviously a customer of theirs, so I very much connected to the community that they were serving," she said. "So for me, it was like, I get your product, I get your customer, hire me. And so, they did, and I went along on this journey and for the past decade, I've been thriving."

*One CX trend that will dominate/take the stage in 2022:*

"Voice of Customer (VOC) programs will extend far beyond surveys and will take center stage, as companies will rally around listening and taking action in an effort to enhance the customer experience."

[Connect with Kristi](#)

[Twitter](#)

**15. Laura Lakhwara – Senior Manager, Customer Success, UiPath**



A technology adoption and Customer Success leader, Laura “loves building and coaching teams to empathetically listen and advise enterprise clients on how to get the most value from technology and services.”

Laura is currently a Sr. Manager of Customer Success at UiPath, partnering with technology companies on the rollout and adoption of UiPath’s robotic process automation platform. This software is redefining the future of work through the automation of repetitive, manual tasks and centered around creating a better employee experience.

A rich client management background helped Laura transition into customer success – she co-led IBM’s client sales relationship to Apple. Marrying account management, sales, and customer success, Laura has brought tremendous value to companies, including UiPath, SoftBank Robotics, IBM, and Colgate-Palmolive.

Laura was recognized by NYC Fintech Women in the Inspiring FinTech Females 2020 list, in the ‘Product Builders’ Category for her work with HSBC and SoftBank’s humanoid robot, Pepper. She has an M.B.A from The Zicklin School of Business at Baruch College in New York City.

*One CX trend that will dominate/take the stage in 2022:*

“Have you seen the latest Customer Success tool landscape? It’s exponentially grown with software to help your customers meet their goals, but it needs a massive cleanup.

With numerous communication channels and automation driving interactions alongside your CS Managers, companies will need to review the happy path at each spoke. This is an opportunity to redefine the integrated customer journey, to prevent redundant, frustrating experiences, and to keep customers renewing and growing for years to come.”

[Connect with Laura](#)

[Twitter](#)

**16. Manjula Talreja – SVP and Chief Customer Officer, PagerDuty**



Manjula is a results-driven Senior Executive and Board Director with over 25 years of experience in successfully transforming, building, and scaling publicly traded companies across multiple industries, with both B2B and SaaS businesses. As an inclusive leader and intrapreneur, she has a history of driving digital transformation to create world-class customer experiences and growth. Manjula is currently SVP and Chief Customer Officer of PagerDuty, leading the company's post-sales business encompassing six key areas: Customer Success, Support, Renewals, Professional services, PagerDuty University and Data Science.

Manjula has gained a reputation in the industry as a Customer Experience thought leader. She has been at the forefront of launching the largest and most influential platforms in the world, Cisco, Salesforce, and now PagerDuty, ensuring customer adoption and value. Manjula has been recognized as an industry leader, including being named one of the "2020 Top 50 Women in Technology." Key tenants of her success are grounded on the principle that "Companies must look at everything through a customer's journey and the business value the customer is achieving from their platform."

Manjula is on the board of directors of Sunrun (Nasdaq:RUN) the nation's leading home solar, battery storage and energy services company. In addition, she continues to give back in both the United States and India, with a focus on children's education. She is a Board Member of City Year, a non-profit focused on underserved schools and providing young people with a chance at a better future.

[Connect with Manjula](#)

[Twitter](#)

**17. Maranda Dziekonski – Chief Customer Officer, Swiftly, Inc.**



"I am a ground-up builder with a passion for setting up the right teams, systems, processes, and overall infrastructure to take both the team and the company to the next level," Maranda states in her LinkedIn bio. As Swiftly's Chief Customer Officer, Maranda oversees customer success, implementations, technical support, renewals management and CS ops. She has been [working](#) in the "customer-facing world," for more than 20 years, holding roles in customer service, call centers and account management. Maranda has been honored as a Top 50 Customer Success Influencer for 2021, and a Top 100 Customer Success Strategist in 2017 & 2018.

Like many leaders today, she understands the importance of customer experience in today's world. "Customer experience is more important now than ever," she [said](#). "Customers have so many options. The reality is you need them more than they need you."

She also recognizes the increased importance of both personalization and customer-centricity. "Companies know that customers have many options available for them so they can no longer treat a customer relationship as one and done, they have to be thinking through the overall experience from start to finish and to repeat," she said. Customers hold the power in the relationship and as long as this is true, companies will have to be laser-focused on the experience, in other words, very customer-centric!"

*One CX trend that will dominate/take the stage in 2022:*

"I believe in 2022, we are going to continue to be taxed to do more with less, which will cause us all to have to utilize our resources more innovatively. This will manifest itself in a more significant focus on leveraging tools such as AI to free up our teams to focus on work that requires critical thinking and manual intervention."

[Connect with Maranda](#)

[Twitter](#)

**18. Melinda Gonzalez – VP of Customer Success, Pendo.io**



"I have so often seen customer success used as a band aid for poor product design and usability," Melinda wrote on her LinkedIn profile. "Pendo on the other hand is on a mission to improve the world's experiences with software. Product led customer success is at our core, and I couldn't think of a better product to work with."

As Pendo.io's VP of Customer Success since August of 2020, Melinda [leads](#) a team of Customer Success Managers who support the company's more than 2,000 customers, at a time of immense company growth and scale (Pendo.io recently [held](#) Pendomonium, the company's first virtual user conference, which saw attendance from more than 3,000 people across product management, customer success, user experience and marketing, and recently ranked #54 on Forbes' Cloud 100 list).

As an early member of the Customer Success team at Salesforce, Melinda helped to define and establish customer success management as it exists now, including designing salesforce.com's first-ever Customer Release Readiness program, and ensuring the website's continued innovation & growth by driving a rigorous focus on the customer experience.

[Connect with Melinda](#)

## **19. Michelle Peluso – Chief Customer Officer, CVS Health & Co-President, CVS Pharmacy**



Michelle's 25 years of experience spans retail, travel, banking and technology, and now, she can add healthcare to the list. "I'm always refreshing my skills. I'm still spending hours each day diving into a learning agenda around healthcare," she [said](#). "I'm right there with my kids studying at the table."

As CVS Health's [first-ever](#) Chief Customer Officer and Co-President of CVS Pharmacy, Michelle leads the teams responsible for leading the front store retail business, and transforming the consumer experience across all touchpoints, with the ultimate goal of helping individuals on their path to better health by delivering experiences that are personalized, connected and seamless. She is also responsible for advancing CVS Health's marketing and brand strategy, as well as accelerating the company's digital transformation.

"For me, I love being at the center of the transformation of consumer experiences by technology," Michelle said. "I love being in the middle of that transition and the opportunities it can create."

[Connect with Michelle](#)

[Twitter](#)

**20. Peggy Fang Roe – Global Officer, Customer Experience, Loyalty & New Ventures, Marriott International**



As the Chief Sales and Marketing Officer for Marriott International Asia Pacific, Peggy provided strategic leadership over numerous countries, brands and hotels across the region, with a focus on [adapting](#) the company's brands and loyalty program to the local market. Now, in her new role as Glo

At a time when few are traveling due to the COVID-19 pandemic, hotel groups are being forced to [get creative](#), when it comes to keeping their loyalty programs relevant. How can guests be allured to loyalty programs such as Bonvoy, when travel might not be an option? Marriott has come up with a variety of creative ways for customers to still collect points other than through hotel stays, and in 2021, the company introduced two new loyalty partners. An example is the company's recent [partnership](#) with Uber for loyalty points, so all Marriott Bonvoy members who link their card to Uber can earn points on rides and food deliveries.

Previously, Peggy provided the business leadership that resulted in Marriott's 2017 joint [venture](#) with China e-commerce giant Alibaba, which manages Marriott's storefront on Fliggy, Alibaba's travel service platform, and also links the loyalty programs of both companies. "We tested this with Alibaba because it was an ecosystem partner, we could find a win-win with them. They're in many different businesses, travel being just one of them. We were able to bring something to them that they were looking to expand on, and they have a built-in member base," she said.

[Connect with Peggy](#)

[Twitter](#)

## **21. Rosie Roca – Chief Customer Officer, Hopin**



Rosie Roca is the Chief Customer Officer at Hopin, one of the world's leading shared experiences platforms. At Hopin, Rosie and her team prioritize timely customer success and work hard to truly understand the visions of customers. "As CSMs, we're often looked to as problem-solvers, and we often work with customers that have very unique needs and goals," she [said](#). "What we've learned, especially in an industry where urgency is really important, is to do all the prep work ahead of each of those engagements. You have to be incredibly prescriptive about the frameworks by which you're going to evaluate success, the key goals you want to accomplish, and most importantly, the fallbacks."

Prior to joining Hopin in 2020, Rosie worked at SalesforceQ and Salesforce, most recently, as SVP, Salesforce Essentials Customer Experience.

[Connect with Rosie](#)

[Twitter](#)

## **22. Samantha McCandless – Senior Vice President, Merchandising, The RealReal**



Samantha has years of experience in retail – holding senior eCommerce and Digital Merchandising roles at Gymboree, Guess and Old Navy. Since 2019, she has served as Senior Vice President, Merchandising at The RealReal, the world’s largest online marketplace for authenticated, resale luxury goods.

Samantha and The RealReal team are in tune with what customers are looking for, and **discovered** that shoppers today are becoming more cost-conscious and interested in eco-friendly options. “Shoppers are realizing that they can find rare and unique items that they can no longer find on the primary market which makes the perfect, standout holiday gift for that special someone,” Samantha said. “When you couple that with the current supply strains on the primary market, gifting secondhand has not only become accepted, but is almost preferred...more than ten years ago, the sustainability aspect of resale didn’t resonate with consumers, but now it’s a key motivator.”

In November of 2021, The RealReal **released** ReCollection 02, featuring one-of-a-kind pieces upcycled from luxury items, giving these damaged items “new life”. When designing the collection, the company used insights from its members (more than 24 million of them!), incorporating seasonal styles, colors and silhouettes that are in high demand among shoppers today. “With ReCollection 02, we wanted to celebrate the return to having fun with fashion again by creating a collection that felt modern and optimistic,” Samantha noted.

[Connect with Samantha](#)

### 23. Shan-Lyn Ma – CEO & Co-Founder, Zola



With its **combination** of compassionate customer service, along with modern tools and technology, eCommerce company Zola is “reinventing the wedding planning and registry experience.” Shan-Lyn worked at Yahoo! for several years, and also served as Chief Product Officer at eCommerce brand Chloe + Isabel, before founding Zola, an online wedding registry, wedding planner and retailer, in 2013.

The company is well-known for its **emphasis on** providing an excellent customer experience. Customer service is available at the tap of a finger with Zola Advisor, a chat program where couples can access one-on-one help through the Zola iPhone and Android apps. When it comes to setting up a registry, Zola makes this process extremely simple, as personalized recommendations are offered, based on a couple’s interests, preferred price point and guest count.

“We live and breathe registry. We’ve spent years listening to our couples, solving for their pain points, curating the best brands, and building benefits that only we can offer,” said Shan-Lyn.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the wedding industry took a big hit, as many events were canceled, or shifted to the virtual realm. Zola rose to the occasion, [expanding](#) their offerings to include Virtual Events, enabling couples to livestream their weddings by connecting their Zoom accounts to their wedding website schedule. The company also introduced a collection of change the date cards, reception-only invitations, and non-medical-grade (fashionable) face masks.

“Zola’s mission to take the stress out of planning has become more important than ever...we’ve dedicated the past few months to supporting our community in every way. Our heart goes out to all of our couples who have had to postpone their plans and navigate this time,” Shan-Lyn said.

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#### **24. Teresa Anania – SVP of Global Customer Success, Renewals and Customer Experience, Zendesk**



“I am most passionate about building our vision, strategy and execution plan for helping companies deliver great experiences at scale,” said Teresa. As Zendesk’s SVP of Global Customer Success, Renewals and Customer Experience, she is responsible for the management and development of the company’s global client base, including all customer segments from SMB to enterprise. In her role, she ensures that Zendesk’s customers are realizing maximum business value across the customer lifecycle, which ultimately results in their renewal, growth of lifetime value, and customer satisfaction.

Prior to Zendesk, Teresa spent more than 10 years at Autodesk, working in various roles including Senior Director, Customer Success, where she led a customer success mindset throughout the company as it transformed from a perpetual software company to a subscription business model, building out its scaled customer success practice globally, with a digital-first approach.

*One CX trend that will dominate/take the stage in 2022:*

“Using CS/renewals as a growth engine.”

[Connect with Teresa](#)

## 25. Toyon Espeut – Chief Customer Officer, Apptio



Passionate about the customer experience and value management tied to customer outcomes, as Apptio’s Chief Customer Officer, Toyon [leads](#) Account Management, Customer Success, Professional Services, Customer Operations and Customer Enablement.

For Apptio, a software company that provides customers with cloud-based business solutions, customer-first values are firmly embedded into the way in which it works as an organization. “Apptio is a customer-centric organization, and similarly, I take a very customer-first approach when leading my team,” Toyon said.

Like many leaders today, Toyon [recognizes](#) that COVID-19 has accelerated the need for organizations to implement digital-first strategies, and such strategies are necessary in order to thrive in today’s business environment. “Our focus has been and continues to be on understanding the challenges our customers are facing and providing them with solutions to meaningfully address those challenges — whether it’s supporting them through their cloud migration journeys, optimizing existing cloud strategies, integrating measures to manage the influx of SaaS applications and even managing the labor that goes into implementing cloud,” she said. “We have had to become extremely agile in expanding our offering to match the growth of our customers.”

[Connect with Toyon](#)



# Amy Wallace

## Content Marketing Editor

Amy Wallace is a community builder and digital storyteller based in Toronto, Canada. Marrying her background in print journalism and digital marketing, she enjoys writing and researching all things related to tech, innovation, and AI.

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