



Customer Experience Management



EMAKINA

*"It is not a single offer,
it's an invitation for the long-term"*

Alfred Hitchcock's two scripts

Alfred Hitchcock, master of suspense, one of history's giant storytellers, and control-freak, used not one but two scripts when filming. The so-called Blue script was the traditional one, with the actions, the lines for the actors and directions for things such as lighting, props and camera viewpoints. In a second script, the Green script, Hitchcock meticulously described the emotional outcome of each scene, how he wanted the audience to feel when watching a particular scene.



Martin Lindstrom uses the anecdote in his book 'Small Data: The Tiny Clues That Uncover Huge Trends'.

We believe, though, that Lindstrom only captures half of the story when he pushes us to 'go from a Blue script to a Green script mindset'. The more interesting challenge (and one that Lindstrom is of course aware of) is: How do we combine the two mindsets?

1

Building on Key CXD ideas

To manage customer experiences in an intelligent way, it is important to align your efforts with the key ideas guiding Customer Experience Design. We see this field as a framework for a New Marketing Discipline.

- “In a world saturated with largely undifferentiated goods and services the greatest opportunity for value creation resides in staging experiences ... Experiences are as distinct from services as services are from goods as goods are from commodities” (read more in Pine and Gilmore’s The Experience Economy 1999).
- Designing and managing experiences becomes more relevant, more urgent and more difficult in a multichannel world, where technology and digitization represent a challenge to as well as an enabler for crafting better experiences for customers.
- The leverage, positive or negative, a company can gain from investing in experiences for even a once in a lifetime customer is such that an ROI-case can be made for investing in experiences as opposed to, say, investing in classic advertising to lure the once in a lifetime customer.
- Products and services can be designed. Experiences can only be designed **for**.
- The link between brand and experience needs to be clearly articulated and incorporated into the design process.
- Ultimately, you want people to pay for the experience.



In this paper, we take our thinking about customer experience one step further: we want to go from Customer Experience Design (CXD) to Customer Experience Management (CXM). That is: we elevate customer experience from the focus of marketing efforts to the level of a firm-wide marketing and strategic management exercise. Also, in our discussions and work with clients, we always find a great deal of fascination for the concepts of CXD, but one question always returns: How do we start to implement this? This paper is the first step in an answer to that question.

Over the last years, interest in Customer Experience has only grown. In an April 2017 survey with 600 leaders from the world's biggest brands, Harvard Business Review Analytic Services found that 86 percent of business leaders agree that customer experience is vital for success. But only 34 percent of companies say they have the tools and skills to deliver superior customer experiences.

A 2018 PwC report found that 82 percent of the top-performing companies report paying close attention to the human experience around digital and tech, while 73% of all people point to customer experience as an important factor in their purchasing decisions.

In our own survey of the Marketing landscape, 77 percent of respondents agree with the statement that 'In a world saturated with largely undifferentiated goods and services the greatest opportunity for value creation resides in customer experience design' and nearly half of the respondents said they were considering a CXD implementation. When asked about the biggest obstacles to implementing CXD, 21 percent answered 'lack of well-defined customer experience strategy', 16 percent 'lack of CXM processes', 13 percent 'lack of understanding about customers', and 12 percent 'lack of a methodology for CXD'.

Likewise, a Temkin Group survey found that 93 percent of more than 200 consulted firms engaging in CXM are hesitant about how to deploy it effectively.

2

Redefining the Marketing Operating System. ERP is the New CRM

In a world where digital immediacy, seamless cross-channel shopping, transparency and networked collaboration are the new normal, practitioners, academics and customers are increasingly dissatisfied with current marketing practices. The discontent has led prominent thinkers to call for a paradigm shift in marketing. Under the banner of "Marketing is dead! Long live marketing!" some cry for the elevation of marketing to a level addressing long-term, large problems beyond individual customer satisfaction and short-term financial performance to encompass the total value creation system.

It is time we rethink central marketing practices and the current self-concept of marketing (Homburg et al. 2017).

The CXD and CXM framework should capture what is broken in marketing and offer a way to repair it.

Why should CXM open the path to repairing things?

- Experience is a more **fundamental**, broader and less firm-centric construct than marketing management constructs (such as customer satisfaction)

- (2) the CXM framework – if implemented adequately – is a more **integrative** marketing management approach than enduring marketing management frameworks such as CRM or Service Dominant Logic, because it encompasses and involves a firm’s cultural mindsets, strategic directions, and capabilities. Specifically, we believe that CXM is uniquely able to link customer experience, as the focal point of marketing efforts, to enduring and solid firm-wide operational improvements.
- Experience is **foundational** because it is the one construct that you would rather start from and then work backwards from to direct your marketing and other firm-wide efforts. To see why, consider that customers will always get experiences, good, bad or indifferent and no matter what interaction they have with your firm. Experiences are also much more persistent in the memory of the customer than most services and goods. They are owned by the customer, but co-created by the customer and the firm. From the customer’s point of view, experiences contain the complete range of cognitive, sensorial, affective, relational, and behavioral responses to a firm or a brand. From the point of view of both the customer and the firm, experiences are about the complete customer journey, not specific touchpoints or phases in a funnel.

Experiences are always there, persistent in customers’ memories, owned by the customer and co-created by customer and firm. They go from psychological to behavioral, and span the complete customer journey. As a result, they are more critical marketing concepts, less firm-centric or exploitative, and more long-term focused. Other constructs such as loyalty or the operational concepts of the CRM framework tend to reduce the customer to a wallet, or a purchase, repeated or not. (Chen et al. 2016).

Service Dominant Logic, while an advance on Product Dominant Logic, is a firm-centric concept. It focuses on a series of single transactions in short time spans, not on the complete journey and the lasting memories and stories that may result from it.


As the marketing director of a sports apparel manufacturer says about the invitation to join the experiential world of its brand: “It is an invitation for the long-term, not a single offer.” (quoted in Homburg et al 2017). Remember when you were at

the attraction park and cried 'Again!'. This indicated an intention to live again through the experience of a complete journey. This is what loyalty should be about, not about a series of single transactions.

The CXM framework is a more integrative marketing management approach than extant marketing management frameworks because it combines and links the functionality of firm processes with customers' psychological and behavioral factors as the two main dimensions of customer experience.

To fully grasp the implications of this linking, let us explain our slogan "ERP is the new CRM". In the world before digital, there was a clear distinction between front-end systems and operations and back-end systems and operations (see graph 1). Customers only saw and experienced the front-end. Back-end systems and operations were heavily shielded from customers, and operated by different departments, who mostly focused on operational efficiency and cost-cutting opportunities.

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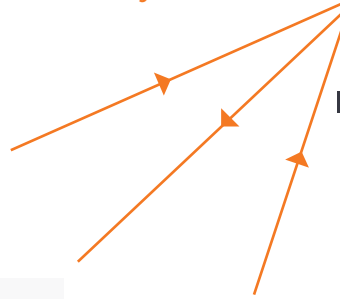


Remember when
you were at the
attraction park
and cried “Again!”

”

Before the Internet

Front-end systems & operations -
focus of **customer intimacy (CRM)**



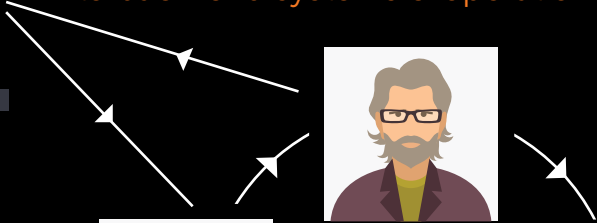
Back-end systems & operations -
focus of **operational excellence**



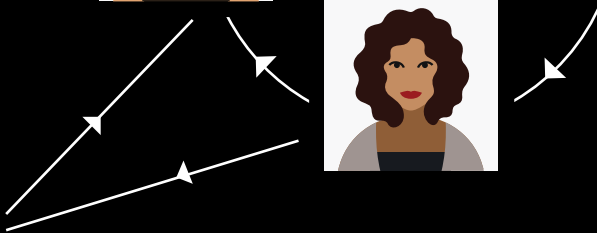
After the Internet



Customers often get **direct access** to back-end systems & operations



Customer interactions are much more measurable



Customers interact with each other before and after they interact with your company

In the digital world, at least three things changed in this situation.

- Customers can and therefore will expect to have direct access to back-end systems & operations (such as in a stock check).
- Customers' interactions with a firm, and therefore their impact on back-end systems, become measurable in real time.
- Customers interact with each other before, during and after they interact with your company much more intensely than before.

The result: ERP is the new CRM. We have to gradually adapt our thinking about the clear division between front-end and back-end. This means not merely tinkering with some heavy ERP systems but nothing less than a Copernican shift in how we think about customer interactions and organize our operations accordingly. We are looking at a bi-directional movement: experiences will dictate our process-design; and processes will be instrumental in designing for experiences.

In terms of CRM versus CXM: we go from process driven experiences to experience driven processes. This means that excuses will no longer be valid. Amazon's Jeff Bezos captures this nicely in a letter to his shareholders: 'As companies get larger and more complex, there's a tendency to manage to proxies. This comes in many shapes and sizes, and it's dangerous, subtle, and very Day Two.

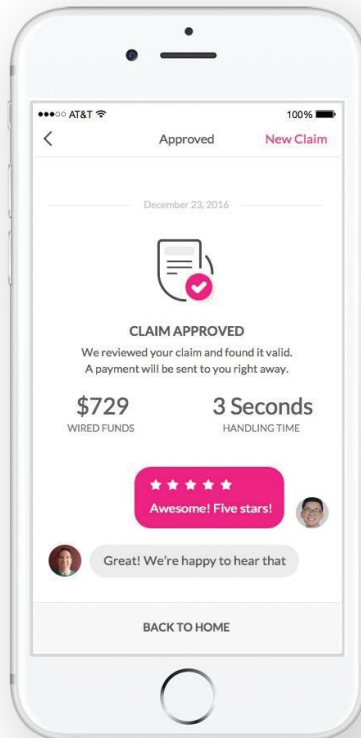
A common example is process as proxy. Good process serves you so you can serve customers. But if you're not watchful, the process can become the thing. This can happen very easily in large organizations. The process becomes the proxy for the result you want. You stop looking at outcomes and just make sure you're doing the process right.'

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We go from process driven
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A spectacular example of what we mean by experience driven processes is the case of insurance start-up Lemonade. In December 2016, the insurance company powered by artificial intelligence and behavioral economics, announced it had broken the (non-existent) world record for the speed and ease of paying a claim.

A New York customer had his \$979 fur coat stolen on the subway. A few days later he decided to file a claim with Lemonade. Exactly three seconds and zero paperwork later, Lemonade had reviewed the claim, cross referenced it with the policy, ran eighteen anti-fraud algorithms on it, approved the claim, sent wiring instructions to the bank, and informed the customer the claim was closed. (When we first told this story to a group of insurance brokers, their reactions ranged from sheer disbelief to frustration). Customer experience, anyone?



If experience is **the** outcome of what a firm does, and therefore the most foundational construct in marketing management, then we face at least five enormous challenges. This is what we call redefining the operating system of marketing:

1. How do we find out **what really matters** to customers?
2. How do we **work backwards** from there?
In other words: How do we go from random experiences to branded experiences?
Or: How do we link customer experience to operational improvements?
3. How do we attain a **journey focus**, instead of dispersed focuses on touchpoints, as our current organization seems to dictate?
4. How do we **create value** for customer while at the same time creating value for the company?
5. How do we attain the **organizational ambidexterity** that is needed to develop and to operate in a CXM framework?

Organizational ambidexterity is the flexibility that is deeply inscribed into our organizational processes and structure. It allows us to go for radical and incremental innovation, for top down and bottom up. It allows us to focus on the process (blue script) and also the desired outcome (green script), to take on holistic and atomistic (Maklan and Whitty 2017) viewpoints and directions, for culture, strategy and operations.

It's the Hitchcock-challenge: trying to write two scripts at the same time and combining them in one overall effort in a difficult balancing act. We have to "put customer experience at the heart of next generation operating models" (McKinsey 2017) and for that, we have to converge the consumer and organizational perspectives of the customer journey.

We now propose the foundation for a CXM framework that is able to achieve this feat.

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3

A CXM framework

Although we call CXM a marketing management framework, it is anything but an isolated effort to be undertaken by the marketing “department”. Instead, operationalizing a customer experience strategy is a firm-wide business architecture exercise to build a platform detailing not only business functions, processes, people and data, but also a firm-wide mindset, a strategy and directions for capabilities development.

The framework we propose is an adapted and extended version of the framework in Homburg et al. (2017). They based their research on 52 in-depth interviews with senior and top managers working in marketing or strategy and extensive theory research. CXM is defined as a higher-order resource of **cultural mindsets** toward customer experiences (CEs), **strategic directions** for designing CEs, and **firm capabilities** for continually renewing CEs.

There are two main and related reasons why we think this framework is appropriate to guide a CXM program that is at the same time pragmatic and ambitious.

First, the framework is, to our knowledge, the first that really addresses CXM as the comprehensive firm-wide business architecture effort that it should be. It correctly describes and positions CXM as a higher-order resource, i.e. a competence that is a distinct and often complex combination of more basic resources, tangible and non-tangible (Hunt and Lambe 2000). The ability to combine lower-order resources that constitute a higher-order resource is most often firm-specific and, therefore, the source of competitive advantage.

Think for example Sony's miniaturization competence, or vehicle glass repair and reokacement company Velron/Carglass customer-centricity. Both show a combination of a deep understanding of customer needs, a strong outside-in process focus with excellent understanding of the potential of digital, and very consistent communications.

Second, the framework is, we believe, the first one that comprehensively and systematically addresses the organizational challenge of the implementation of a CX strategy. It is able to tackle all five challenges that we outlined above and pays specific attention to the fifth challenge of organizational ambidexterity.

Table 1 represents a condensed version of the CXM framework we propose.

- The first column lists the three core resources that, combined, constitute CXM as a higher-order resource: cultural mindset, strategic directions, and firm capabilities.
- For each core resource, the second column lists specific orientations, skills and expertises that a firm should have or develop to be able to deploy and own the core resource.
- The third column is a non-exhaustive list of examples of concrete operational actions or implementations of the corresponding skills and expertises in the second column.

One useful way to read the table is to assign the first column to top-management, the second one to middle-management and the third one to operations.

Clearly, CXM as a higher-order resource will only emerge if organizational dynamics are allowed to work in an ambidextrous way, top-down (from left to right in the table) and bottom-up (from right to left in the table).

Most firms will already occasionally or systematically operate some or even a lot of the specific skills and expertises that are listed in the third column. It is then top- and middle-management's task to let those skills and expertises further develop, and to initiate and prioritize the development of missing skills and expertises, clustering them into focused orientations (second column), firmly guided by the vision of the three core resources (first column).

- Experiential response orientation
- Journey orientation
- Alliance orientation
- **Continuous improvement & high velocity decision making**
- **Customer obsession**

- Thematic cohesion of touchpoints (MOTIFS)
- Consistency (COHERENCE) of touchpoints
- Context sensitivity of touchpoints
- Connectivity of touchpoints

- Touchpoint journey design [CXD]
- Touchpoint prioritization
- Touchpoint journey monitoring
- Touchpoint adaptation (CLUES)
- **Immersive storytelling**

Tangible examples

- Focus on & measurement of CE as a co-created outcome (cognitive, sensorial, affective, relational (e.g., gratitude, intimacy), and behavioral)
- Journey logic for cross-functional collaboration, Thinking in sequential customer processes
- Thinking in market ecosystems, Alignment of person's related environment
- Design Thinking & rapid prototyping, IMUNA-cycles (*)
- Heart & intuition (Bezos), Ethnography & cultural anthropology

- Brand extension aligned with brand story, Lifestyle-based storytelling
- Corporate design, Brand image alignment
- Fitted offerings for specific life contexts, Segment-specific use cases, Use of personalization technologies & processes
- Multichannel & customer data integration, Cross-channel customer history availability

- Touchpoint mapping & journey design, Extensive use cases modeling
- Weighting of touchpoint-specific indicators, Continuous improvement & change management
- Journey-based data visualization & assessment, Real-time data collection at touchpoints, Channel & journey attribution
- Customer voices and advisory boards, Ulabs, Rapid prototyping
- Lifestyle-based storytelling, Immersive technologies (use of metaphors, VR, 360°, IoT, ...)

Let us zoom in on the three core resources and on some of the corresponding skills and expertises.

Cultural mindset toward customer experiences

A cultural mindset is a set of beliefs and orientations that influences the behavioral traits of employees on an organization-wide level. If you ask top-managers what makes the competitive advantage of their firm, they will often answer with a statement about their cultural mindset. We believe it is the necessary driver for any CXM program, otherwise it is doomed to fail. In our experience, many organizations underestimate how strongly customer experience orientation requires a new mindset and a new logic to which the organization has to adapt. In the words of one of the managers that was interviewed by Homburg et al: "We are neither product nor customer-oriented; we are customer-experience oriented."

An additional reason why we like this CXM framework is that, in contrast with most authors commenting on the topic, this approach does not only talk about CXM methods or processes. If corporate culture is mentioned in other writing, it is only in passing, not as one of the core resources. Moreover, as Homburg et al. convincingly show, the cultural component is precisely what CXM differentiates from other marketing management frameworks such as CRM.

Within the core resource cultural mindset, Homburg et al. specify three more specific orientations: **experiential response orientation**, **journey orientation**, and **alliance orientation**. Based on our experience with CXM-projects, we would like to add two orientations that we regard as foundational: **Continuous improvement & high velocity decision making**; and **Customer obsession**. These extra orientations are necessary in a world where customers' expectations are more and more conditioned by digital. Additionally, we believe CXM requires an experimental mindset that treats specific experience designs as hypotheses to be tested in short-time cycles.

Customer obsession should be obvious, but is all too often an empty slogan. What we mean is the kind of obsession expressed by Jeff Bezos in his letter to Amazon shareholders, an obsession that is essentially cultural because it is primarily driven by heart and intuition and for which there are no procedural proxies, as Bezos calls them:

“Good inventors and designers deeply understand their customer. They spend tremendous energy developing that intuition. They study and understand many anecdotes rather than only the averages you’ll find on surveys. They live with the design. I’m not against beta testing or surveys. But you, the product or service owner, must understand the customer, have a vision, and love the offering. Then, beta testing and research can help you find your blind spots. A remarkable customer experience starts with heart, intuition, curiosity, play, guts, taste. You won’t find any of it in a survey.”

Bezos’ appeal for “anecdotes rather than averages” might sound awkward for more analytically inclined among marketeers. We strongly believe in it (if it is used to inform and correct the findings from analytics), and it is the reason we included ethnography and cultural anthropology as one of the operational capabilities to be developed in our framework.

Strategic directions for designing customer experiences

If the cultural mindset mainly influences the behavioral traits of employees on an organization-wide level, strategic directions have a more direct effect on different marketing tasks and the customer front-end (Homburg et al.). The four more specific orientations that Homburg et al. link to strategic directions – thematic cohesion of touchpoints; consistency of touchpoints; context sensitivity of touchpoints; and

connectivity of touchpoints – translate the journey orientation of the cultural mindset into a strategic asset and make it the prime object of strategic decision making.

One of the main challenges here is to avoid that focus on touchpoints will lead to journey blindness. Kranzbühler et al. (2017) distinguish static CXM, which analyzes touchpoint experiences at one point in time, from dynamic CXM, which studies how experiences evolve over time. Another strategic challenge is to prioritize which journeys to tackle first. With each potential journey being a permutation of hundreds of touchpoints, the numbers can be daunting. Cisco research shows that the average product purchased has over 800 distinct customer journeys that lead to it (Martech, 2015).

Deep customer knowledge and research and a pragmatic attitude will have to guide priorities. Yet journey-complexity is often created by the company itself.

McKinsey gives the example of a moving house process at an energy supplier. This journey had 18 touchpoints, with over 60 people involved in different departments. Operational improvements will have to take an outside-in view to eliminate or diminish company-created complexity. That is: applying service-design principles **within** a CXM framework. In a recent digital transformation project we managed for an energy provider, we replaced 80,000 connections processes per year with an online portal to connect clients' home with the utility networks. The portal gives customers real-time access to all data systems for administration, planning and fulfillment by contractors, transforming a process that took weeks and lots of paperwork to a 20 minutes' online process.

Firm capabilities for continually renewing customer experiences

The third core resource, firm capabilities for continually renewing customer experiences, can be understood as the process-oriented manifestation of the other two CXM categories (Homburg et al). The organizational ambidexterity that was called for in the

list of challenges above will primarily be attained through the interplay of the different capabilities in this core resource, driven by the cultural mindset orientation of continuous improvement and high velocity decision making.

Homburg et al. propose four orientations and skills for the core resource of firm capabilities: **journey design, touchpoint prioritization, touchpoint journey monitoring, and touchpoint adaptation**. All four orientations and skills should interplay and combine to the continuous effort of designing and redesigning for experiences to achieve and sustain customer loyalty in dynamic market environments (“It is an invitation for the long-term, not a single offer”).

To the four orientations and skills that Homburg et al. propose, we added a fifth: **immersive storytelling**. We believe the development of storytelling skills should be central in the build-up of a CXM framework because the ultimate hope, when we manage and design for experiences, is that experience fragments will become remembered experiences which, in turn, will begin to form stories.

The Great but Dangerous Art of Storytelling

Stories and the great art of storytelling have been sorely devalued lately in the hype around content marketing (witness titles like “The art of storytelling in 7 content marketing context questions” or “Effective Storytelling in 7 Steps”, which a simple Google search turns up).

The reality, as any writer and storyteller since Homer, the Greek, not Simpson, will tell you, is that storytelling is a difficult craft. Marketeers, moreover, are not in the business of storytelling; they are in the business of selling. But that need not be a problem. Yes, we might use some of the techniques of storytelling, and hope that stories will emerge out of the fragmented experiences of a journey.

For instance, designers of online experiences who want to go beyond usability (McLellan, 2000), have lately begun to make profitable use of fundamental narrative techniques such as flow, “a state of consciousness that is sometimes experienced by individuals who are deeply involved in an enjoyable activity” (Kawaf and Tagg, 2017), “in the middle between boredom and anxiety” (Roth en Koenitz, 2016).

The availability of cheap virtual reality devices is already driving interest of marketers and advertising professionals in the neuroscience of storytelling, “emotional artificial intelligence” and other techniques of narrative immersion (Kumar and Gupta, 2016; Rose, 2012).

But when Rose (2015) calls for marketers to become “conspiratorial whisperers”, frankly, we cringe. After all, we should not forget that “given the implications of stories for the narrative persuasion of consumers, nothing is less innocent than a story.” (Van Laer et al, 2014)

Again, although marketers might profit from studying techniques of immersive storytelling, they are not in the business of storytelling; they are in the business of selling.

You don't design the story no more than you design the experience. You design (and manage) **for** experiences that will, hopefully, become stories. Experiences and stories will **emerge**. And they will be remembered, told and owned by the customers.

4

Using the CXM

We put forward that “it is time we rethink central marketing practices and the current self-concept of marketing”. We believe that the proposed CXM framework is a good base to start that endeavor. Although it can and has been useful in small-scale efforts at the department level, experience at clients has convinced us that a real CXM effort should start with and be driven by top-management buy-in.

In work with clients we use the framework as:

Scorecard

After top-management buy-in, a productive next step is to use the framework to score the ‘AS IS’ situation of a firm as regards to its current CXM practices, to have the first discussions about the ‘TO BE’ situation and to define and describe the gaps between the two. Clearly, customer experience is not a master key concept for each and every industry. Therefore, we have developed industry-specific scorecards for, among other industries, insurance and retail, and we are in the process of developing other industry-specific scorecards. Please contact us if you want to organize an introductory workshop around one of these scorecards.

Roadmap

After having defined and described the ‘AS IS’ situation (detailed) and the ‘TO BE’ situation (high level), the framework can be used as a roadmap to outline and prioritize the firm-wide efforts to be undertaken in a CXM journey. The roadmaps will not only be industry-specific but of course also firm-specific.

Ready?

Then come and chat
with one of our specialists

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Emakina Europe HQ

Rue Middelbourg 64a
1170 Watermael-Boitsfort
Belgium

+32 2 400 40 00
think@emakina.com

Emakina Middle East HQ

Aurora Tower office
2202-2207,
Dubai Media City,
PO Box: 478891, Dubai,
United Arab Emirates

+971 4 589 57 22
info@emakina.ae

Emakina North America HQ

79 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10016
USA

+1 866 499 9591
info@emakina.com