

UNDERSTANDING
THE CUSTOMER
JOURNEY
—
EACH STEP OF THE WAY

Using Customer Journey Maps as a Strategic Customer Experience Tool

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5 KEY STEPS

to understand the current state of customer experience

1. Learn what drives customer engagement.....	2
2. Understand the current customer journey.....	3
3. Generate new ideas to improve the journey.....	6
4. Make the right investments.....	7
5. Develop customer-focused capabilities.....	10
6. The bottom line.....	11



Customer centricity is an elusive goal. Most companies want to be more customer centric, but enacting the vision is a challenge.

There are a number of things a business can do to become truly customer centric. First and foremost, it needs to decide to become a Customer Experience Brand - to see the customer experience as central to differentiation and creating competitive advantage.

But what happens next? What steps should a business follow to realise that vision? We recommend five key steps to understand the current state of customer experience and create an ideal future state, using customer journey maps as tools to guide you.



DISCOVERING THE NEEDS

**OF YOUR
TARGET
MARKET**



If you learn more about your target market than your competitors, then you put yourself in a strong position to win.



Step 1

Learn what drives customer engagement

The first step is to develop a comprehensive understanding of not only the conscious needs of your current and future customers, but also the sub-conscious needs and drivers that dictate human behaviour. Simply put, if you learn more about your target market than your competitors, then you put yourself in a strong position to win.

As mentioned in previous “More With Less” blog series posts, data analytics (both qualitative and quantitative) can play a big part in helping to establish this depth of understanding. This, however, is a process that never stops – drivers change and you need to ensure that you are well positioned to “see” when this happens.

To ensure sufficient diversity of thought, it is important to assemble a cross-functional team to drive this project. This allows for a range of perspectives to be considered.

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Step 2

Understand the current customer journey

Establishing a highly detailed view of the end-to-end customer experience can be an incredibly powerful tool, as it provides a holistic visual perspective of the emotional journey the customer is on, allowing you to consider where new value could be created.

But be careful, because this is where mistakes are often made. There are three tell-tale signs of a weak customer journey map:

It focuses on the business touchpoints with the customer, rather than tracking the actual customer journey and the points where they choose to interact with the business.

It assumes that the customer's experience is linear. In reality, we as customers tend to bounce around as we see fit.

Maps tend to be produced by the marketing department and are almost never used to trigger strategic or tactical business-wide action.

Customer journey maps should be used to track the unique emotional journey of target customer groups across the enterprise, not just in one department or for specific tasks. In turn it should be used as a visual tool to identify opportunities for new value creation and new deliberately designed experiences in sales, marketing, service, and other customer interactions.

Again, analytics can be used to help construct a view of the current journey. It should be supplemented with ethnographic research and target observations. Surveys are ok, but are very superficial tools and rarely get to the level of insight required to develop high quality customer journey maps.

A good journey map should track the emotional state of the customer, including how they may typically feel at any particular point. This provides an opportunity to identify the negative emotional states that you may wish to avoid, or positive emotional states you wish to create in the future.

Maps should also include key steps that do not involve the business, but are key steps for the customer, including wait times. This, in itself, can often reveal new opportunities.

Lastly, where different customer segments diverge at key points, one map can seek to capture this as a fork or if there is sufficient divergence, a second parallel map should be considered.





CREATING A
PERSONALISED
EXPERIENCE

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Step 3

Generate new ideas to improve the journey

Once a high quality and detailed customer journey map has been developed, there needs to be a structured process put in place to develop new ideas to create unique experiences across key stages. This can be done is a series of creative workshops involving multiple stakeholders (or even customers, if appropriate) with an emphasis on creating a number of choices to select from at a later stage.

Ideas can be targeted at eliminating or mitigating causes of negative experiences -- where unnecessary effort is required on behalf of the customer, or where causes of stress, confusion, anxiety and frustration emerge.

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Only once this is achieved can we turn our attention to developing positive experiences that trigger an emotional connection. This is important because enduring memories are only established when an emotional feeling is triggered. This may include surprise (positive), delight, amazement, or simply contentment if this was not expected.

The ideation stage will include prototyping, testing, evaluating and refining until a range of viable choices are developed.

Step 4

Make the right investments

Establishing a highly detailed view of the end-to-end customer experience can be an incredibly powerful tool, as it provides a holistic visual perspective of the emotional journey the customer is on, allowing you to consider where new value could be created.

To help with the decision of making choices you should ask yourself two questions:

What must be true for this choice to be successful?

Once you've identified what needs to be true, resolve to test those assumptions.

What will be the explicit benefit for the customer?

If this is not clear, drop the choice.



IMPROVING THE JOURNEY

WITH NEW IDEAS

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Step 5

Develop customer-focused capabilities

The last stage is arguably the most important. In this step, you must methodically and sustainably develop and embed the required capabilities and mindset across the organisation.

Your people really are the heart of any customer experience strategy. How else do you trigger human emotions that become the basis of memories? Technology cannot do this alone.

When investment is not channelled toward taking your people on the journey and empowering them to deliver the desired new experience, you run the risk of leaving the execution of your CX strategy to chance.

Effort needs to be put into developing an understanding of the current capability strengths and weaknesses of your team.

Effort needs to be put into developing an understanding of the current capability strengths and weaknesses of your team. This should include assessing depth of knowledge, quality of skill set, adherence to process, and their prevailing mindset.

Once a clear picture of your team's current capabilities has been established and gaps identified, a plan can be developed to bridge those gaps through targeted training, mentoring and coaching.

Final step

The bottom line

When done well, customer journey mapping is an incredibly powerful tool enabling new value creation that can lead to sustained competitive advantage. This can take the form of tactical or strategic actions as defined by your strategy.

You will know when you have achieved success when your customer journey map becomes an **inspired customer experience map.**



DISCOVER THE HEART
OF YOUR
EXPERIENCE

Your people really are the heart of any customer experience strategy.

About TTEC

TTEC (NASDAQ: TTEC) is a global end-to-end customer engagement services company that provides consulting, analytics, technology and turnkey operations to help brands acquire, serve, retain, grow and protect profitable customer relationships within and across all customer touchpoints. The Company delivers outcome-based customer engagement solutions through TTEC Digital, its digital consultancy that designs and builds human centric, tech-enabled, insight-driven customer experience solutions for clients and TTEC Engage, its delivery centre of excellence, that operates customer acquisition, care, growth and digital trust and safety services. Founded in 1982, the Company's 56,000 employees operate on six continents across the globe and live by a set of customer-focused values that guide relationships with clients, their customers, and each other. To learn more about how TTEC is bringing humanity to the customer experience, visit [ttec.com](https://www.ttec.com).



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