

A photograph of a man and a young boy sitting together on a stone ledge. The man, with a beard and wearing a striped t-shirt and jeans, is smiling and looking at a tablet computer held by the boy. The boy, wearing a blue t-shirt, is looking intently at the tablet. The background is a simple, light-colored wall with a dark doorway or window frame.

Activate Customer-Centric Digital Transformation Through Channel-less Journeys

How to create a connected, cohesive customer-centric experience faster than you may think is possible.

We are in the midst of a digital transformation.

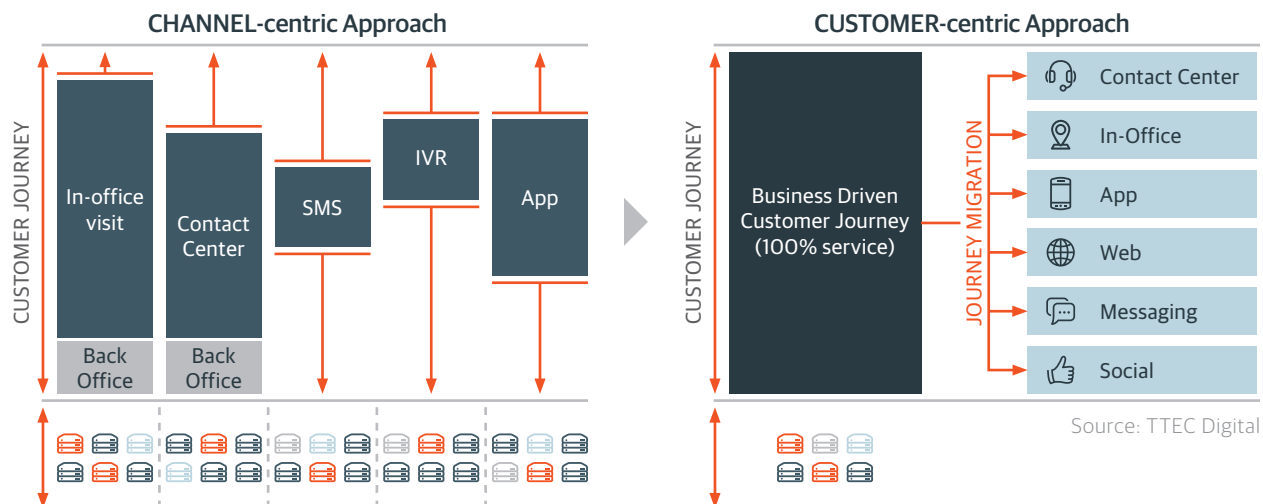
Following today's evolving expectations, organizations are challenged with delivering frictionless experiences for various customer groups. Almost all struggle to deploy these experiences at scale in ways that differentiate, drive down costs, and improve customer satisfaction.

Most organizations have fragmented business units that operate as siloes, serving customers separately or as part of a collection of services from a brand. Industries are also full of growth by acquisition, leading to different policies, processes, and technology platforms across different facets of the business. This all causes friction for customers and wasted time, money, and resources for them.

Each customer interaction, digital or otherwise, involves separate, disconnected systems and processes. This leads to redundant and repeated tasks, scattered interactions, incomplete service, and difficulty integrating and orchestrating complete customer journeys.

A typical approach is to enable transformation by introducing digital contact channels. For many it is the path of least resistance—tack on added features and channels to existing systems to enable service interactions via web, mobile, video, and other digital means. This creates a “channel-centric” operating model but does little to effectively transform the customer experience.

Organizations need to move from a channel-centric to a customer-centric approach



Source: TTEC Digital

A better approach is to define the best journey and then expose that journey to each channel through workflow and automation technologies. This capability is relatively new in the market and allows organizations to respect the distinct value of each business unit along with the challenge of deploying enterprise-wide infrastructure by adding a journey activation layer above the enterprise.

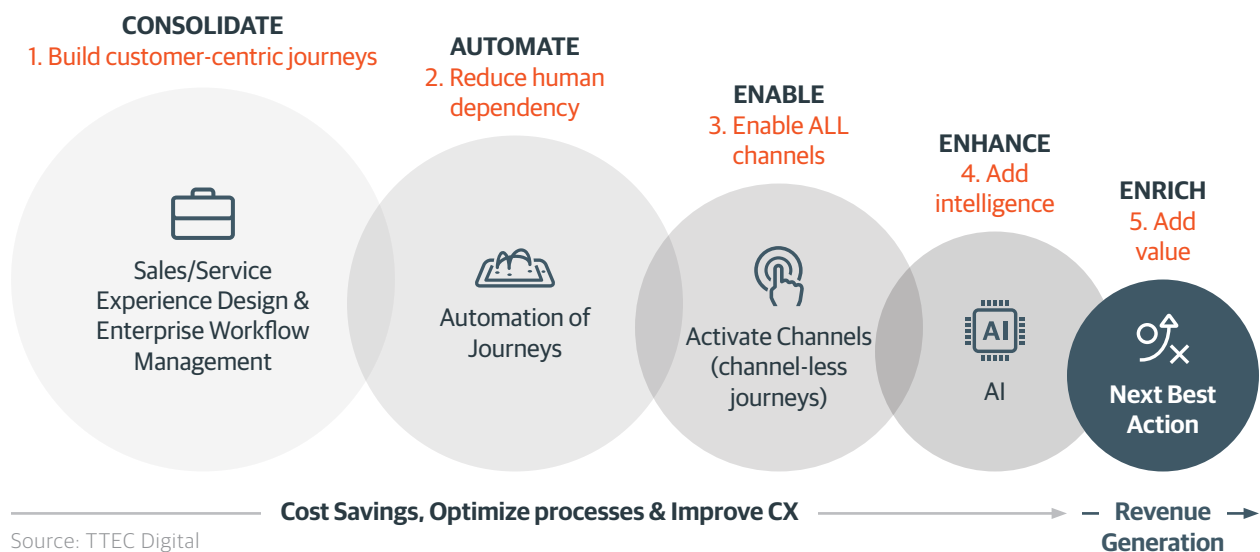
The goal of any digital transformation should be to create a connected, cohesive customer-centric experience across business units. Historically this has been nearly impossible because of the numerous technologies, processes, and systems in place from M&A and other large-scale growth initiatives. APIs and other static levers to connect systems quickly become outdated and re-plumbing the organization with an entire enterprise-wide technology implementation simply isn't feasible.

Using automation and workflow management at its core, businesses can apply customer journey strategy with a real-time technology layer placed on top of existing systems. This layer creates a virtual glue that enables real-time connectivity across the enterprise that's customer-centric, not channel-centric.

5 steps to customer-centric digital transformation

Moving from a channel-centric to customer-centric operating model is a mammoth undertaking and many organizations become overwhelmed by the enormity of the task. For established complex legacy businesses, we recommend starting in the contact center, often the epicenter of all that is causing friction in the customer experience (and likely is costing the most to the business). In most cases, there are five steps to enable end-to-end digital transformation that improves customer satisfaction, reduces cost, and increases revenue.

Our approach covers end-to-end digital transformation



1. Build customer-centric journeys for continuous improvement

In most cases, businesses don't control the customer journey. They control touchpoints. The key to successful digital transformation is to step back and define the optimal future-state, end-to-end customer journey across business units and channels, then deploy the right strategy and technology to bring it to life.

Start by understanding which are the most critical journeys or touchpoint experiences that need improving. Rather than trying to make blanket improvements, a narrow focus can illuminate which areas will drive the most CX improvement and ROI. What specific interactions cause the most dissatisfaction among customers and agents? What are the most common contact types, and what are the root causes of those contacts? Next, create sales and service personas that represent the types of customers experiencing those suboptimal operations. Personas are built from deep analytical models based on needs, behavior, and value of different customer segments for a particular interaction or experience.

With a narrow focus and personas defined, it's then possible to design journeys to create ideal future states for those personas. Legacy systems like CRMs and tools like journey maps and touchpoint analysis are important, but they show historical information and artifacts at a singular point in time. Customer journeys are fluid and ever changing. A snapshot isn't enough to create continuous and significant results. Business owners—those closest to the customer—should use technology that can change journeys on the fly without requiring slow and expensive IT dependency.

2. Reduce human dependency

Automate journeys as much as possible and create an automation center of excellence to manage the transformation from human dependent interactions to digital/customer-driven interactions. Automation is not invasive as it does not require APIs, web services, or any kind of integration or coding. All that's needed are user credentials to access integrated and automated systems. The automation can be done over any underlying legacy systems, web applications, commercial applications, virtual desktops, etc. All of this allows very fast deployments (days and hours instead of weeks or months), easy maintenance, and quick changes.

Reducing human dependency not only decreases cost, but also increases process compliance, reduces errors and rework, and increases CX.

Automation can, in certain processes, fully replace humans (what usually is known as RPA or unattended automation). This is frequent for back-office processes where the level of automation can reach 100%. But in most of the cases, automation will not replace humans. Rather, it will assist and guide them through the process. This is the case for RDA (Desktop Automation or attended automation) where humans are still needed. Instead of having them focused on dealing with systems and processes, thanks to the automation they can focus just on customers to listen to them, create empathy, better serve them, and increase customer satisfaction.

Customer service depends a lot on back-office processes that are sent from the front office due to many reasons (lack of empowerment, lack of training, organizational reasons, systems limitations, length of the process, expertise required, etc.). Mixing both attended and unattended automations, back office can be "brought back to the front office" by fully automating it. So, it can be performed instantly with no delays or additional resources required to customers.

3. Enable all channels for a channel-less journey

As journeys are defined, use the enterprise workflow platform to expose the same journey to each channel of interest. Activate channel-less journeys through a workflow platform that sits above the business units and legacy platforms. Triggers and actions can be automated or semi-automated to enable a more cohesive experience that doesn't take years to build. Being able to expose the journey to any channel doesn't only enrich each channel's capabilities, but it also allows customers to move from one to another seamlessly with the same experience.

Organizations can now monitor real customer behavior and map individual journeys for each interaction. Enterprise workflow platforms orchestrate these journeys across any channel on a client basis.

4. Add intelligence with AI

Journey automations are available for any channel, and thanks to these automations, human dependency is reduced to a level where the human is just the interface between the client and the service required on the automated processes. At this stage, virtual assistants using AI and natural language processing (NLP) can replace even more need for humans. This increases significantly the self-service and digital channel capacity to serve customers. Email assistants, chatbots, and advanced IVR technology can now perform any task required to fully serve them.



5. Continuously add value

Enable the experience to be one-to-one through journey monitoring and analytics along with AI-enabled journey orchestration. Using AI over all the data coming from the automated journeys and all the channels they are exposed to allows organizations to make decisions in real time, based on what's best for customers on a one-to-one basis. The technology acts as a central brain that determines the best action for that specific customer with every interaction and touchpoint.

At this stage, journeys don't need to be only reactive. They must also be proactive and take initiatives to achieve business targets and increase CX, reducing effort from the customer. At all steps in the process, it's important to measure success from both operational and customer perspectives.

Key metrics include:

- Cost to serve
- Back-office reduction
- Backlog reduction
- Productivity
- CSAT
- NPS
- Customer effort score

Getting started

Before implementing any strategy or technology, it's critical to put together a team of relevant stakeholders from multiple business units to represent integrated workstreams. Digital transformation requires participation from representatives across the organization.

Typical workstreams include:

- Customer experience design
- Agent experience and operations
- Agent UI
- Workflow and automation
- Channels
- Knowledge management and training
- Customer portal
- Reporting and impact



With a team in place, it's time to get to work. We recommend an agile operations learning lab and pilot approach that integrates business units to serve a subsection of customers in an integrated manner (e.g. one employer group). Focusing on the end-to-end needs or a targeted group of personas allows the team to really focus versus trying to activate a new sales/service experience for all customers. Using technology that the team already has available across the enterprise, the new operating model should be running in months rather than years. The workflow and automation can then be layered to activate the desired experience. As that journey is developed, the decision can be made as to which channels it should be activated through—regardless, the journey flow is consistent across channels, and if needed, as a customer moves across channels. The scope can expand as analytics, journey monitoring, and AI/NBA enable personalized interactions.

Summary

Creating a customer-centric, digital-first organization is possible, feasible, and easily manageable with the help of integrated technology and advanced journey design. Gone are the days of years-long IT initiatives or rip and replace tactics. A mix of strategy and technology with the right focus connects systems, processes, and people to make customer-centric digital transformation a reality.

ABOUT TTEC

TTEC Holdings, Inc. (NASDAQ: TTEC) is a leading global customer experience technology and services company focused on the design, implementation and delivery of transformative customer experience for many of the world's most iconic and disruptive brands. 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 center of excellence, that operates customer acquisition, care, fraud prevention and detection, and content moderation services. Founded in 1982, the Company's 48,500 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)

