

Customer journey mapping

A customer journey map is a way to describe all the experiences a customer has with your organisation and the emotional responses they provoke - from their first impression of your building, to speaking to staff or receiving a service.

In government, the process of providing a service or 'product' is often complex, with multiple interactions taking place over long timeframes with little by way of tangible outputs. Customer journey mapping is a particularly useful tool to help identify the customer's interaction with your organisation, their thought processes and reactions to you, which can reveal opportunities for improvement and innovation in the customer's experience.

Customer journey mapping can help to identify how the customer is treated during each contact and how the customer feels towards your organisation at the end of the experience. This information can then be used to aid your management decision-making.

It is a key tool to help understand how the public experiences the delivery of services, especially in terms of identifying 'moments of truth'. These are the critical points when activities or initiatives are most likely to succeed or fail.

In summary, customer journey mapping is a strategic tool to ensure every interaction a customer has with your organisation is as positive as it can be. These sections will help you use this tool effectively.

What are the benefits?

No matter how great your communications have been or how good your frontline staff are, if your administrative systems don't work properly, your most junior staff are rude or apathetic or your building is dirty or messy, then your organisation's relationship with your customers or the general public can suffer.

Customer journey mapping is all about ironing out these inconsistencies. It enables you to consistently and predictably manage customer behaviour.

Customer journey mapping helps you to:

- deal with your customers more effectively
- retain customers
- increase efficiency
- minimise negative customer experiences
- deliver a consistently good service to your customer, in all circumstances

It can be used at different stages in the strategic communications and marketing process, and it is important to decide in advance how you want to use the information generated, as this will help you to decide the scope of the mapping. For example, you can use a journey map to scope the broad behaviours of an audience and make a business case for the role of communications. Or you can focus in on a specific

audience segment and look at a specific interaction, such as navigating a few pages on a website, in much more detail.

Fortune magazine says that 85 per cent of dissatisfied customers tell 10 people about their experience, delighted customers tell eight people, and satisfied ones tell five.

Mapping customer experience

Customer journey mapping may be approached in a number of different ways, but communicators usually focus on the following key areas:

1. Response

This identifies how your customers feel and how they respond to your current service/process or communications offer. This can be mapped against how you want your customers to feel and respond and is the main aim of the customer journey map.

Bringing in the emotional dimension to the mapping process is vital where the objective of your campaign is to change behaviour, as it is often emotional requirements which drive behaviour - as is the case with the customer who seeks reassurance by telephoning to make sure their form has arrived.

2. Touch point

A touch point is any point at which the customer interacts with your organisation. A touch point could cover:

- any communication - such as an advert, website or literature
- any human contact - from your reception staff to your frontline team or call centre operator
- any physical interaction - for example with your building or your car park

Each touch point creates a series of voting points.

3. Voting point

A voting point is a key point at which your customer is likely to pause to evaluate if they are delighted, satisfied or dissatisfied with their experience. It is at this point that the customer could 'vote' whether to stay or leave - it is a key moment of truth.

For instance, having a long wait to be seen by someone may cause the customer to become frustrated and impatient and decide to leave.

The main reason to identify voting points is to avoid them or find ways of removing them from the process. They are the stumbling blocks that could prevent you achieving your objective.

The only time you really want your customers to vote is at the end of their experience - and hopefully it will be a positive vote.

Putting your experiences into practice

Test your understanding of response objectives, touch points and voting points.

Think about response objectives, touch points and voting points in terms of your own experience as a customer: at the bank, visiting your GP or in a shop.

- How do you respond to their offer?
- How do you feel about your experiences? Are you impressed, reassured or turned off by the interaction?
- What are your touch points? Think about your first impression of the building, how the staff behave, how information is presented to you.
- What are your voting points? For each touch point what is the voting point? What would make you choose to stay or leave?
- What do you think is the organisation's response objective? How do they want you to behave? How do they want you to feel? Do they achieve their objective?

How to approach customer journey mapping

There are five main steps:

1. Scope

Define your objectives and why you want to undertake journey mapping. For example:

- Do you want to improve customer experience, plan a new communication programme?
- How will the outputs be applied and by whom?
- Is this for all people or a specific segment of your audience?
- What is the start and end point of the experience we will focus on?
- Are you mapping interactions or transactions?
- Are you focusing on the physical or the emotional factors driving people's behaviour?
- Do you want to map in broad terms or in detail?

2. Map

Having set out the scope and objectives of the mapping exercise, use the [Customer Journey Mapping Tool](#) [pdf 77KB, 1 page] to identify key needs, likes and dislikes of current experience. It can help you to plan the best 'experience' and where communication would be most appropriate for the future.

Plot out the steps in the customer interaction and agree the 'moments of truth', where you can either win over or greatly disappoint people.

Map out the customer's experience at each step: their thoughts, feelings and reactions.

Agree what must be tackled as a priority.

3. Measure experience

Sometimes research is needed to measure customer experience. You can either mentally 'walk through' a process or experience; get frontline staff to do so; accompany and observe real people doing it; or use research or satisfaction tracking.

4. Identify solutions

Having gathered information from the mapping exercise, you can now identify solutions to improve customer experience. These are likely to fall into four areas:

1. people and service issues
2. environment
3. products
4. communications.

Solutions will need to be prioritised by your research findings and cost.

5. Apply

Insights gained from the mapping exercise can then be applied to all relevant elements of the customer experience, including:

- staff training
- communications planning, e.g. media choices
- improved processes or service design

Or you may decide to set a new vision for customer experience, setting out how you would like all future interactions to be managed, setting new standards and aligning your organisation accordingly.