CUSTOMER JOURNEY

BEST PRACTICES FOR 2020

Robosoft Technologies®
EMOTION ENGINEERING & DESIGN

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Everything about the customer is changing- their expectations, behaviour patterns, motivations, and purchase triggers. Critical customer interactions today are digital, and they can occur anytime, anyplace. Enterprises that have been successful in adapting to these changes can serve customers better and remain relevant.

To get a real pulse of the customer, it is crucial to understand their requirements as well as their pain points. And this is not something that one can assume or predict based on gut-feel or instincts. Without a customer journey map in place, it can be difficult to ascertain why a customer spends so long on a certain platform or feature, or take several steps to transition from Point X to Y, while it should ideally take one. A customer journey is very specific to the experiences customers have.

Imagine being able to predict the next step of your target customer, that's the 'super-power' of a customer journey map. In fact, this is the very reason why 69% of businesses list the customer journey as a top investment priority this year.

What is a Customer Journey Map?

A customer journey map is a visual representation of the processes a customer goes through with the enterprise to achieve a certain goal. It encompasses all the interactions across all devices, channels, and touchpoints through every stage of the customer lifecycle - right from awareness to brand loyalty. It is one of the most effective ways to assess the needs, motivations, and aspirations of customers and how they really feel about the brand or product.

With an objective overview such as this, brands can confidently devise & structure touchpoints to create a seamless and an efficient process. In addition to identification, it also helps in assessing if customers are able to achieve their goals and identify the ways in which they can if they are unable to.

Customer journey maps, however, cannot be represented in a linear fashion as customers often go back and forth & cyclical across various channels, which makes it difficult to visualize the journey. The reason for this is that there are various steps in between.

From gaining awareness about the brand on social channels to the engagement process, pre-purchase and post-purchase, it is very different and specific to the nature of the offering, brand, and the customer. This is one of the primary reasons why customer-savvy brands and business leaders use a variety of ways to represent the journey.

While brands use a wide range of channels to communicate with their customers, they often miss-out on connecting each activity with the customer journey. They focus on individual interaction touchpoints devoted to onboarding, billing & servicing; in contrast, a customer journey spans a series of touchpoints end-to-end. This requires the right tools and techniques that help in viewing and analyzing the complete journey.

So how does one go about creating a customer journey map that perfectly aligns with their core target audience?

The crucial first step is to gather inputs and insights from customers and prospects with the help of surveys, social media and website analytics, interaction analytics, product and service reviews, one-on-one interviews with buyers and the like. While the process might seem extensive and exhaustive, it's most definitely worth-while.

"You've got to start with the customer experience and work back toward the technology - not the other way around."

- Steve Jobs

The Difference between CX & Customer Journey

Customer journey and customer experience are not the same. For instance, screening through Amazon to find a pair of earphones, comparing the price and reviews with other brands, reading up on the return procedure and confirming the viable payment options, are all part of the customer journey. Feeling elated about the speedy delivery, quality of the product, and a surprise 'thank you' note from the brand, are all instances of customer experience.

While the customer journey is the set of activities and procedures one goes through to achieve the goal, customer experience is how one feels about the entire process. It is the set of conscious & sub-conscious attitudes, feelings, and beliefs regarding the process. To sum it, the customer journey is about **what they do** at each stage and CX is **how they feel** about the entire lifecycle. The idea is to understand the CX in order to refine the Customer Journey for a seamless & integrated experience.

The Approach to Customer Journey Mapping

In its most fundamental form, a customer journey mapping begins with compiling a series of user goals and actions into a specific timeline framework. It's a tool that examines the story of how a customer perceives and relates to the brand or product over time and helps in visualizing the experience of interacting with the brand from the customer's point of view.

The journey map framework is used as a blueprint to create a narrative that is fleshed-out with user thoughts and emotions. Subsequently, the narrative is integrated into a visualization that is used to communicate insights and guide the product's design process. Journey maps should always be created to support a business goal & can be broadly split into 3 distinct stages:

Customer Journey Map Stages

Illustrate the customer journey lifecycle

Identify brand and customer touchpoint

Analyze gap between existing strategies and expectations

"A customer journey map is a very simple idea: a diagram that illustrates the steps your customer(s) go through in engaging with your company, whether it be a product, an online experience, retail experience, or a service, or any combination. The more touchpoints you have, the more complicated but necessary such a map becomes."

- Adam Richardson, Frog Design

Key Elements of Customer Journey Maps

No two journey maps are alike. They comprise well-defined objectives based on research that align with the business goals. Establishing the 'why' & 'what' and beginning with the end in mind will define the path ahead. Here are a few thoughts to begin with.

- What is the business goal the journey map supports?
- Who are the end-users?
- What does it address?

Regardless of how journey maps look, here are 6 key elements they have in common:

1. **Persona** – The motivations, behavior patterns, pain points, needs,aspirations, and other characteristics of the target audience. It is about the end-user who experiences the journey.

2. **Scenario** - It defines the situations the journey map addresses that are associated with the goals. Scenarios are real for existing products and anticipated for the ones in the design stage.

3. **The Timeline or Journey Phases** – A specified time interval from the point of first exposure to the point of achieving the end objective (sale) and all the distinct phases including awareness, consideration, decision, pre-purchase, and post-purchase that exist throughout the journey.

4. **Emotions** – The behaviors, thoughts, and feelings the user experiences throughout the journey alongside the phases. It ascertains the level of delight or frustration the user-persona experiences.
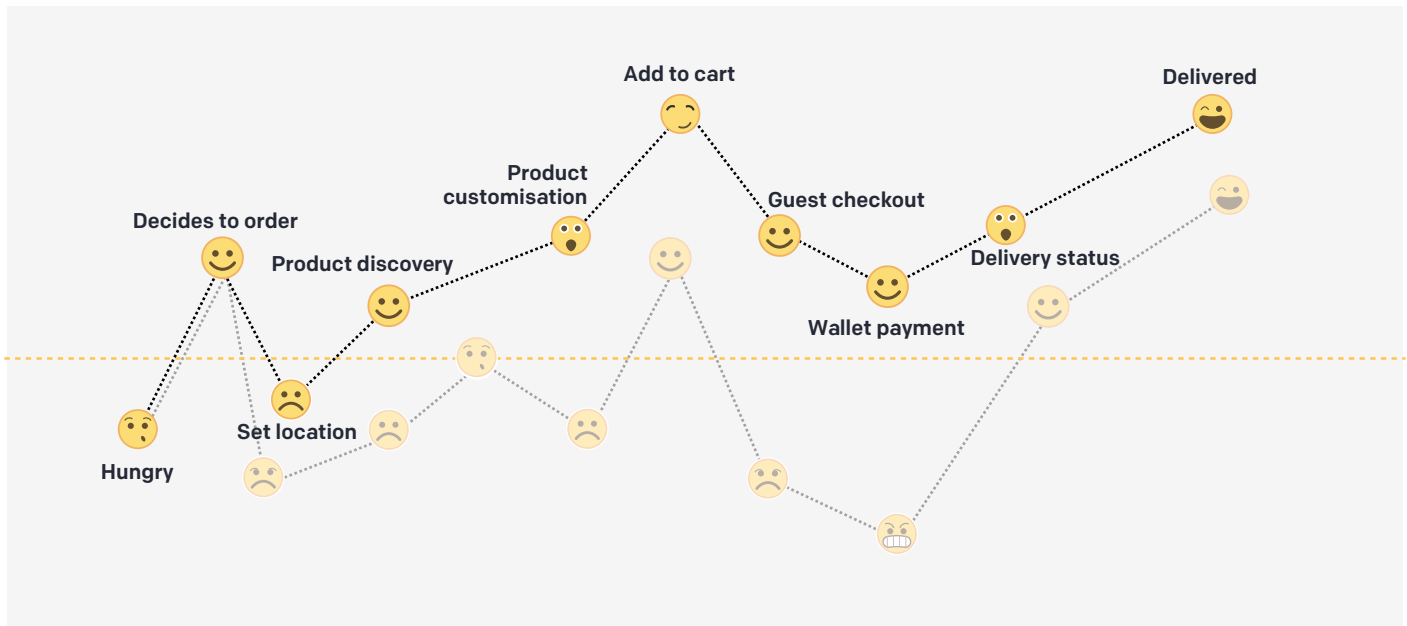

5. **Touchpoints or Channels** – The customer actions while interacting with the brand at different stages and touchpoints in the journey through social media platforms, retail stores, or customer support, mobile app, etc, it's where the interaction is taking place.

6. **Opportunities** - The insights gained from the mapping process and what can be done with these inputs to optimize the customer experience and identify opportunities that can scale brand performance and loyalty.

Customer Journey Best Practices

1. **Set Clear Objectives** - Understand the goals and set clear objectives about why you are creating a map. This will decide the buyer persona, demographics and psychographics of who represents your average target group. Having a clear objective with a well-defined persona acts as a constant reminder to direct every aspect of your customer journey towards them.

2. **Profile Personas & Define their Goals** - Conduct research and gather valuable customer feedback either through questionnaires, user testing, surveys, product and service reviews or one-on-one interviews. The key is to reach out only to customers and prospects & those

who are interested in your offerings. Once you've profiled various personas that interact or wish to interact with your brand, the next step is to narrow down the focus on one or two amongst these, as the journey map assesses the experience of one customer type at a time who has a specific path towards goal completions. If too many personas are clubbed under one category, the map will be unable to accurately reflect the customer experience.

3. **Enlist Crucial Touchpoints** - Touchpoints are the various channels through which customers interact with your brand. Research and enlist all the touchpoints your customers and prospects currently use. This is an important step as it gives you the action points of customers & how many touchpoints they use before accomplishing the final objective. Not just your website, but Social channels, email marketing, paid ads and the like. Run a quick analytics test and gauge where the highest traffic is coming from. According to the Genesys State of Customer Experience report, fewer than 30 percent of companies track their customers' channel preferences. Listing down the most common one will be the one most like associated with action and the one that you need to focus on.
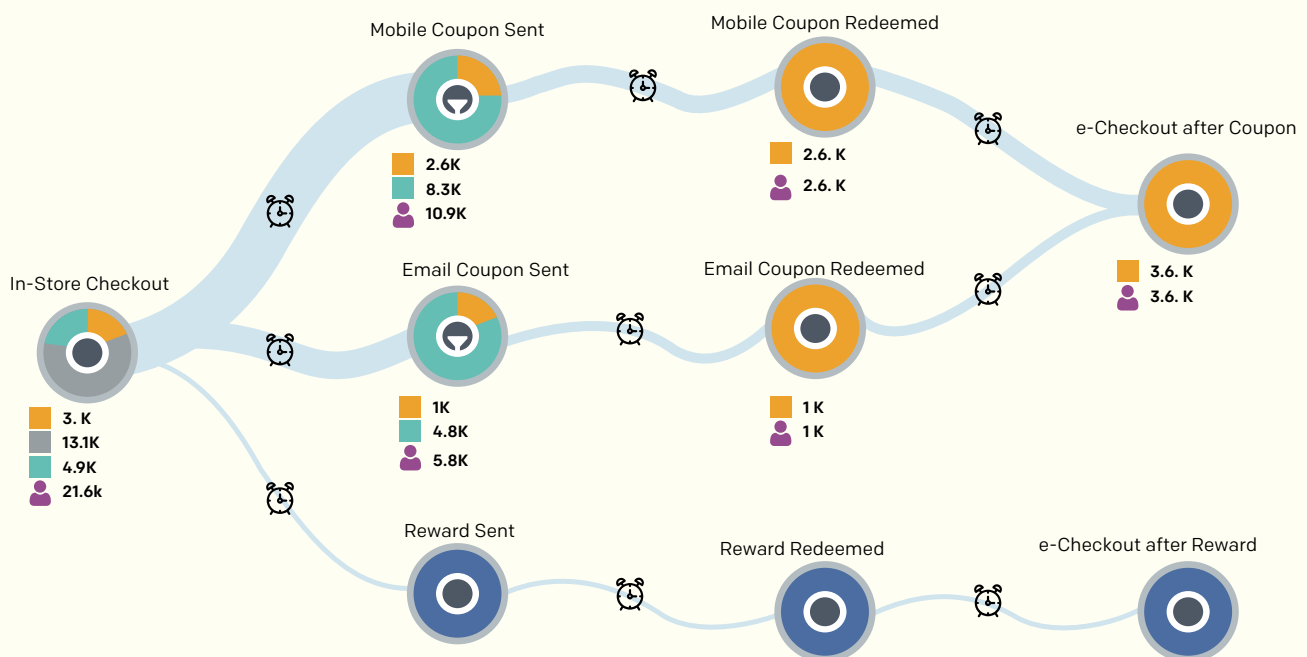
This diagram shows how a company created a single, unified view of a customer journey from viewing of product all the way to checkout, using customer journey analytics

Event Legend
- Participated
- Converted
- Moved Forward
- Present
- Dropped Out

Source: www.pointillist.com

4. **Determine the Resources** - The customer journey map will impact nearly every part of the business and highlight all the resources needed to create the experience. It's thereby important to take into account the inventory of resources you have and the ones that you will need to improve the customer's journey. For instance, a map can highlight gaps in the post-purchase service, this input can be used to influence the internal management team and operational heads to implement the right customer service tools in place and manage customer demands more efficiently.

5. **Review Results Closely** - Analyzing results is extremely crucial. How many visitors leave the site midway? How many touchpoints to they reach before achieving the goal? A journey map will help you find answers to some of these questions and analyze gaps that need to be addressed for seamless customer experience.

6. **Make Requisite Changes** - The analysis through the journey map will indicate the changes you need to incorporate. No matter how big or small, addressing these will make a remarkable difference as these are directly related to customer pain points, and this should be 'constant work-in-progress' activity and not just a one-off. Reviewing and revising it on a constant basis will help in streamlining the customer journey further.

7. **Collaborate with Key Stakeholders** - The activity of creating a journey mapping in itself is a valuable part of the process. Invite key stakeholders and decision-makers as part of the journey mapping process. This helps in incorporating various perspectives and building a map that entails all perspectives integral to the product and business and implementing the requisite changes posts the analysis process.

8. **Cross-touchpoint Activities** - While the aesthetic features and visualization are important, the focus is to create an efficient journey map that includes cross-touch point activities, including support for multimodal interactions, moving from self-service to an assisted service, proactive notifications, and status reminders. All of these increase operational efficiency and shape customer behavior by reducing the effort and stress involved in connecting via individual touchpoints.

9. **Create a Customer Experience Platform** - Routing is instrumental in delivering personalized and omnichannel experiences that customers expect today, yet most contact center systems can't support this functionality. One of the most-efficient ways to address the challenge of fragmented customer journeys is to switch to a stable, open and proven customer experience platform that can support all touch-points and channels with omnichannel routing.

10. **Predictive Routing** - A proactive route to create a smooth and seamless customer experience is to incorporate predictive routing to drive optimal journey maps with AI & Machine Learning. Predictive routing incorporates these technologies to gather data and create the best customer to destination match and helps in identifying the factors that influence customer-to-business interactions while optimizing operations.
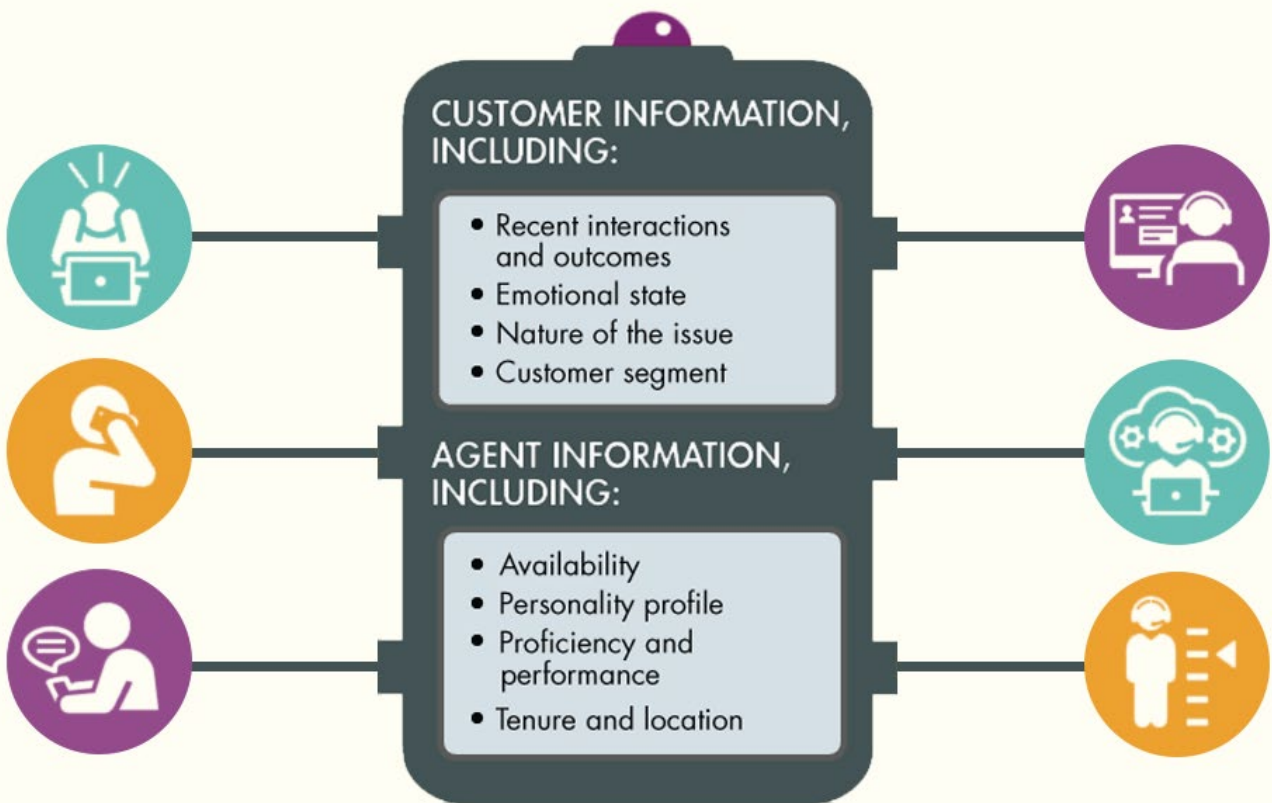
source: www.bain.com

11. **Explore Technologies & Designs That Enhance Experiences** - Emerging technologies and platforms can greatly influence customer perceptions. Explore how real-time journey analytics, wearables, internet-of-things devices, and conversational interfaces can optimize your CX. Anticipate new experiences through exploratory design. Spur innovation with interactive wireframes, online testing, prototypes, and direct observation of journeys.

12. **Reiterate & Benchmark** - Keep in tune with the evolving customer needs, life events, and circumstances that influence their behavior and broaden the view of the journey map. Renovate alongside the evolving customer needs and benchmark against top competitors. Mercedes- Benz Canada conducted primary research with dealers and customers to build an interactive vehicle selector and spare parts configurator. They benchmarked against competitors like Porsche and Audi and sought inspiration from best-in-class online tools used in the airline industry to configure complex travel plans. L.L.Bean, a privately held American retail company analyzed what was working well in digital journeys that appealed to its target audience. To increase the scope of cross-selling in physical stores and appeal to families who enjoy the outdoors experience, they included ratings and reviews popular in online channels next to some items in physical stores.

Why You Need a Journey Map - Business Benefits

In addition to bringing about a greater emotional connection between the brand and customer and facilitating an optimal experience in a proactive manner, a customer journey map also helps employees have a greater understanding of their brand goals and helps them perform their roles with greater efficiency.

As per research from Aberdeen Group companies with a formal customer journey experience year over year growth that includes:

- 18X faster average sales cycles
- 56% more cross-sell and up-sell revenue
- 10X improvement in customer service costs
- 5X greater revenue from customer referrals
- 54% greater return of marketing investment (ROMI)

Customer journey maps are clearly beneficial in facilitating a common business understanding of how customers should be treated across all channels including pre-sales, logistics, distribution, and post-sales. And in breaking down 'organizational silos' for a more open and wider customer-focused communication. Here are a few instances of how brands optimized business and operational efficiency with customer journey maps.

Brands that Differentiated with Customer Journey

Adobe is mirroring its creative design tool prominence into reimagining its office space to inspire a cross-functional working culture that best align with their organizational goals, objectives, and values.

One of the core values of Metro Bank is, to offer impeccable service and convenience in its domain. It brings to life its brand promise by providing employees the means and approvals to identify ways to kill bank rules that don't work with their audience.

The pre-check-in environment for Virgin Atlantic's crew simulates the clubhouse lounge that its passengers experience. This ensures that the crew gets an experience of their core offering, while also ensuring that they are in the right spirit to deliver the brand's promise of offering a human, fun, and uncommon journey.

IKEA's journeys address the friction that arises from navigating a massive parking lot or the extremely challenging path through the store with peak moments of satisfaction. For instance, it gives certain, especially widely desirable items at a huge discount what it calls a "gasp price" at such an affordable price that it takes customers' breath away.

To win over and satisfy the ever-evolving needs of the digital-savvy consumer today requires deep insights, with a passion to design distinct, and personalized customer experiences, and infuse these experiences across the customer lifecycle.

Given the value customer journey maps can drive, it's scope to scale the business performance for enterprises across industries is evident. But having them is not enough, executing them to simplify the lives of your customers is the key.
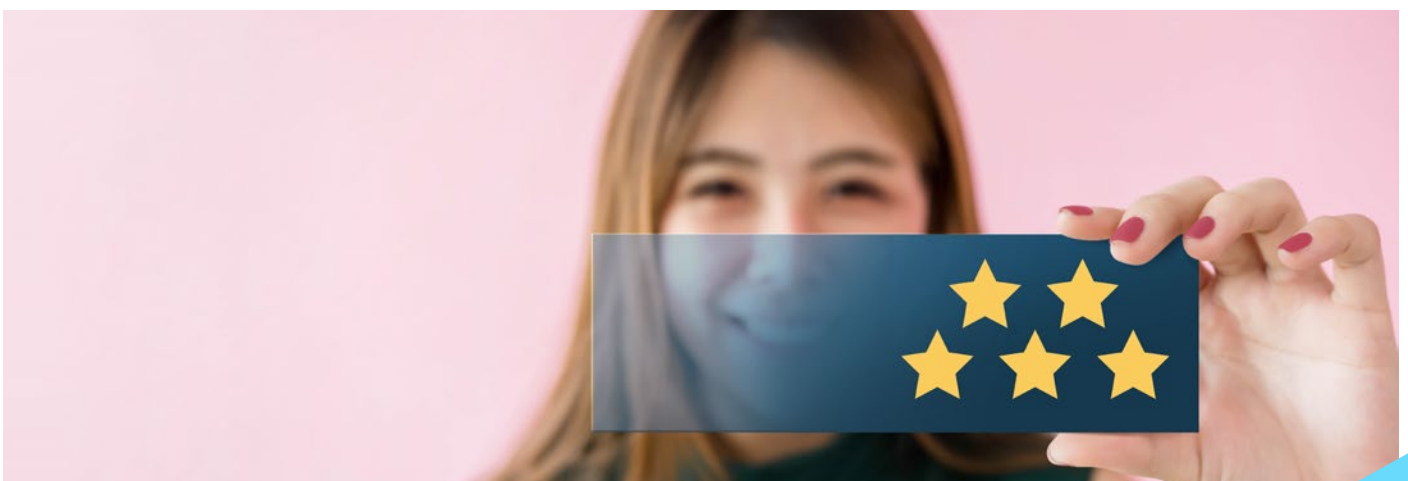
About Robosoft

Robosoft is a full-service digital experiences agency offering digital advisory, design strategy, UX/UI design and engineering services covering end-to-end mobile app development, emerging technologies like wearables, chatbots and more. Apple was our first customer in 1996 and over the last 20+ years we have partnered with several prestigious brands in digital design & development. With over 1800 apps in our portfolio, we have diverse experience across industries, platforms and devices. Our experience spans Retail, News, e-commerce, Banking & Financial Services, Games & Entertainment and Healthcare among others. Voted Mobile App Development Company of the Year at the Amazon Mobility Awards our other prestigious awards include Best of App Store, Apple Design Award, BAFTA, Stevie Gold Winner at American Business Awards and more.

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