

From customer journey mapping to journey management

 By [Antony Adelaar](#)

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Any parent is familiar with the approach a young child has to sharing their experiences. Ask them how their day was and they'll respond with something like: "We went to the beach, we had ice cream, the waves were scary, we went home." The details are all there, but they only hint at the kinds of life-changing events that form part of that child's formative years.



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In a similar way, there's a story to each customer interaction your company has - a beginning, middle and an end. Some of these interactions can be incredibly influential in governing customer satisfaction and retention, while others are simply an essential means to an end; all are relevant to business success.



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A superficial approach to customer journey mapping only skims the surface, excluding the rich details that, once revealed, allow for customer journey optimisation and, ultimately, better customer experience (CX).

By digging deeper than the superficially apparent details of a customer journey, organisations get an opportunity to analyse how their customers are engaging with their customer touchpoints, where they are making progress, where they are getting stuck, and what the company can do to change this to make it easier for the customer to achieve their goals.

We went to the beach

Your customer is there for a reason; to either open an account, or access a product, product knowledge or other business-related information. How they get there is as important as ensuring that they obtain what they need, according to their preferences, while they're there.

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By the time they're at your website, call centre or app, they've already completed a sizeable proportion of their journey: they had to be directed there, but the trip, while convoluted, can be as tightly organised as a planned journey, ensuring that customers won't get lost along the way or directed to a competitor.

We had ice cream

There are added benefits (or, at least, the opportunity to add benefits) to the customer journey – unexpected enhancements that can differentiate your offering. What can you do to ensure your customer is enticed to stay with you and extend their interaction?

More than the ice cream example offered, you can mine a wealth of data to provide a personalised service: not limited to one “flavour”, you can impress them with your knowledge about them by offering things that add value to their lives. The data obtained around their journey allows you to anticipate obstacles and reach out to them according to their needs and preferences.

The waves were scary

In a child's story, one moment can define the entire narrative. The scary wave can become the story - that's why the parents, or, in this case, your company, needs to analyse the factors that influence the environment where 'waves' are produced to be able to work with the bigger picture.

At some point, your customer may experience difficulties that can obstruct their journey. These may even cause more than an interruption – they could drive your customer away permanently. These 'waves' can be anticipated, through predictive analytics and machine learning - triggering interventions that can aid customers even before they're stuck.

Analytics and reporting tools can reveal when, where and how these moments occur for your customer and within your own processes. For instance, data can reveal quality control metrics such as where it took too long to resolve an interaction compared with standard times or if interactions hit consistent dead ends due to the lack of accessible information - in the case of the latter, siloed information in channels can cause the customer journey to come to a grinding halt. Your platforms must represent a stable, consistent environment.

We went home...

So the interaction has been concluded, but what happens next? The data you amass in one interaction can direct your next

move. According to marketing and social media customer service consultant [Jay Baer](#), 92% of consumers trust recommendations from people they know directly, and anonymous reviewers have a 70% trust rate when they post online about a brand.

Aftersales and ongoing business opportunities after your customer has left your website, contact centre or app contribute to that potential growth and the nurturing of a customer relationship.

Personalisation is what transforms the customer journey into consistent, quality customer experience based on data-driven insights. Every interaction allows us to learn more about the customer and informs all future interactions.

This single view of the customer allows businesses to scale empathy, systematically. Imagine knowing when, where, why and how your customer is going to get stuck on any given journey before they do, and being able to act in advance to prevent it? That's the power of data in developing your relationship with your customers.

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