

Why the customer journey is important

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Using typical interaction points to delight your customers

Leaving a lasting impression on your customer is not always about getting your processes 100% right, 100% of the time. Delivering a good service and a quality product satisfies your customer, but how these elements combine during their journey is what says the most about your business and your brand.

While a lot of businesses may be familiar with the concept of a customer journey, many do not understand its value around the insight it provides into customer expectations. By defining and assessing your customer journey, you can measure your success in creating the impression you want to, based on how well your business meets these expectations.

Defining the customer journey

To get started, this journey needs to be defined both from the customer's point of view and from the business itself. Using only one of these views results in an incomplete journey. At Ipsos, we use a journey mapping process to define the holistic customer journey, by doing the following things:

- conducting focus groups with customers who have recently interacted with the brand (customer view);
- recording shop-a-longs with customers interacting with the brand (customer view); and
- conducting in-depth interviews with the organisation's management team (business view).

Pain and pleasure points:

With the customer journey defined, the next step is identifying, from the customer's perspective:

- the pain points in their journey (where expectations are not met or where the process fails) and
- opportunities to exceed the customers' expectations (pleasure points).

Pain points, at the very least, need to become less painful. For example, completing forms at the bank for customers wishing to draw money was found to be a pain point in one of Ipsos's recent studies. Technology such as biometric identification can "reduce the pain" - changing the process from filling in forms to entering your pin code and value into the keypad at the teller. The same device scans your fingerprints verifying you and processes your transaction, recreating the process into a quick and painless one.

Creating pleasure points differentiates the service and the brand itself and comes from asking, understanding and trying to give customers what they never thought possible at defined points in their journey. Possible pleasure points in the banking example can be created by some of these simple solutions:

- staff at branch entry directing customers to the correct areas based on their needs (saves time)
- a ticketing system to effectively and fairly manage queues
- a supervised children's interactive play area in the branch

Implementing the journey

Once you have defined the journey and addressed the pain and pleasure points, the daily challenge in a branch environment is ensuring consistent implementation of this journey in all locations, by all staff and with every single

customer.

To do this, Ipsos recommends using a Mystery Customer programme to objectively measure business delivery against the defined customer journey and test the pleasure points while checking effective management of pain points in real interactions.

Using a Mystery Customer programme completes the customer journey solution by providing you with a view on actual delivery across all locations including both process and “soft” interaction elements. Through real-time feedback from such programmes, organisations are able to address inconsistencies in processes, note pain points and highlight missed “delight” opportunities at a location level and in so doing, address these shortfalls to keep building on the ultimate objective of delivering on the ideal customer experience.

Ipsos, Customer Experience measurement specialists, offer a holistic solution which defines maps and then measures organisational delivery against customer expectations in the Customer Journey. Contact Samantha Lloyd – Mystery Shopping Business Unit Director (samantha.lloyd@ipsos.com) or visit the Ipsos website (www.ipsos.co.za) to see more about Ipsos’s ICE and Mystery Customer solutions.

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