

5 Key Steps to Align Customer Experience with Evolving Customer Expectations

Ruben Moffett and
Rick Davidson

If your organization is like most companies, you're struggling to keep up with the relentless and immediate expectation for service that your customers place on your business. Additionally, every time a new, innovative technology disrupts the marketplace, you're playing catch up – trying to determine how it might impact customer expectations and how you can support yet another new customer channel or capability. The impact is not only the cost of new technology, but also the requirement to change processes and train your people on how to interact effectively with the next great gadget, application or interface.

These expectations and technology-driven innovations cause friction internally and create a constant battle for resources to invest in people, process and technology. But there's a better way to approach your customer experience challenges and it focuses on these five key steps:

- 1 Understand your customer's journey by mapping their touchpoints with your business**
- 2 Measure the performance of people, process and technology at every touchpoint to identify gaps relative to customer expectations**
- 3 Analyze these performance gaps and determine how to fix them**
- 4 Stay on top of what's changing in technology to prepare for what's next**
- 5 Commit to becoming an agile, customer-focused enterprise, capable of continually measuring, analyzing and adjusting your customer experience model to align with customer expectations**

1 UNDERSTAND THE CUSTOMER'S JOURNEY AND MAP TOUCHPOINTS

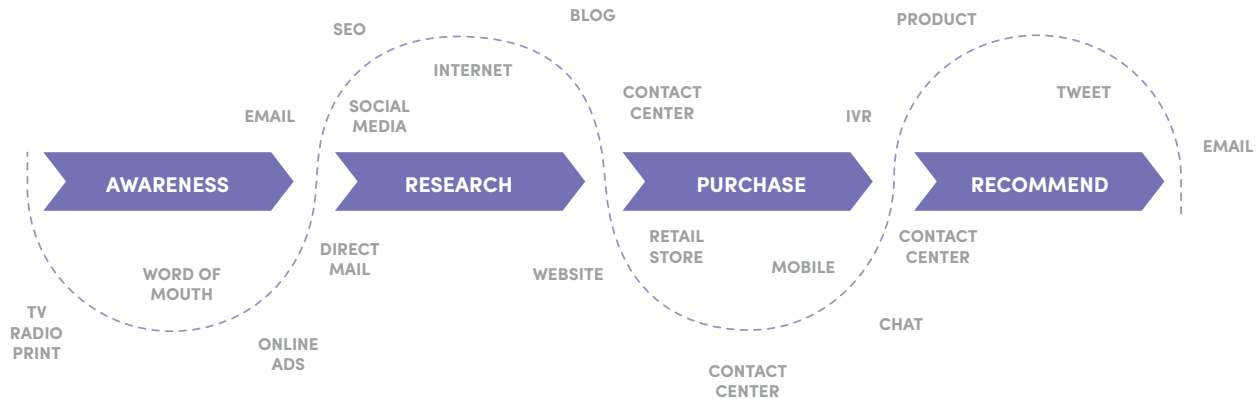


New technologies, particularly those that support digital channels, enable customers to engage with your business in new ways – whether they prefer the web, mobile apps, online chat, in-store service or social media. Customers now expect and demand transparent interactions and information provided on their terms because smart products, mobile apps and intelligent systems powered by Big Data have shown them it is possible to drastically improve the customer experience.

Shoppers can now research, compare, buy and review almost everything online. Customers can even interrupt the shipping process midstream and change the delivery location on the fly, with a simple click of a few buttons on their phone. These capabilities and experiences that transformative organizations offer their customers create a new baseline of expectations. Unless your company is keeping pace, the gap between expectations and the actual experience will continue to grow.

The customer experience can no longer be viewed as a transactional, functionally-independent, single- or multi-channel experience. Customers are interacting with your brand across many stages of the buying process that are usually managed by disparate functional departments. They are also interacting across a wide array of channels and mediums supported by frequently disconnected technologies.

TOUCHPOINTS IN THE CUSTOMER'S JOURNEY



Customers are interacting both anonymously and openly through many touchpoints and channels throughout the Customer Journey.

Your company's people, processes and technology provide the foundation that creates either a positive or negative impact on customer perceptions. Those perceptions are shaped by what they see in the marketplace. As technology capabilities continue to expand and innovative companies continue to enhance the customer experience, the pressure for your organization to provide similar experiences increases.

In order to uncover opportunities to improve, companies must identify each and every potential consumer interaction throughout the entire Customer Journey. The mapping exercise will enable the examination of the efficiency and value of each interaction, as well as across the Customer Journey as a whole. This critical foundation provides visibility to the entire process and delivers detailed insight into actual performance. Additionally, this mapping breaks down functional silos that might exist within your business and ensures that the organization views the Customer Journey from the customer's point of view.

2 MEASURE THE PERFORMANCE OF PEOPLE, PROCESS AND TECHNOLOGY



Customers expect to be able to interact seamlessly with your brand across channels, and in a very customized and individualized manner. Are you meeting these expectations? Chances are that you are performing well in some areas and less so in others. But you'll never know until you dive into the data and start measuring the performance of your people, processes and technologies for every customer touchpoint.

Historically, companies have relied on a few data points, such as metrics from the telephony platform like Average Speed of Answer, Average Handle Time and Average Hold Time. They also have been able to measure First Call Resolution through both the telephony platform and the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) solutions. In addition, human reviews of recorded calls have been used to gauge the overall level of service being provided. However, this process has been time consuming and, at best, it only has provided visibility to an extremely small sample size (<1% of all interactions).

Today, companies supplement those measures with additional data points, providing a more holistic and accurate view of the level of service provided. Speech analytics solutions for automated call reviews can cost-effectively provide an automated service score for each and every interaction. Voice-of-the-Customer (VOC) solutions evaluate the level of service provided from the customer perspective. Additional data points are typically derived from customer surveys, as well as in measuring whether the customer continued to the next stage of the sales process. The aggregation of all of these data points now can be used to provide a broader and more accurate point of view. Additionally, companies can now break down and measure performance results into three main buckets: people, process and technology.



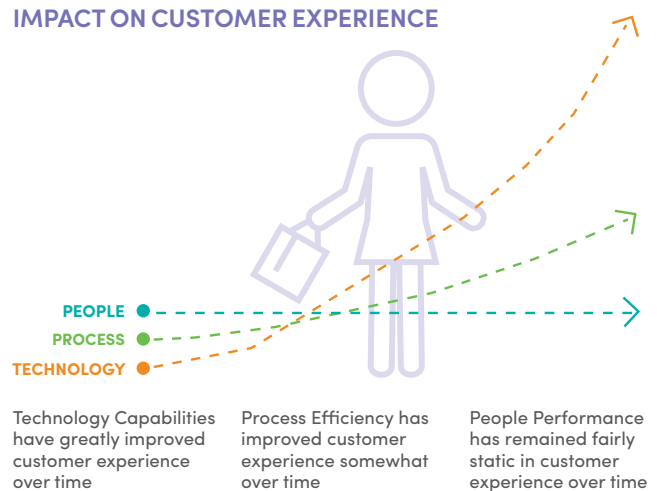
Taking this analysis one step further, companies can refer back to each of the interactions throughout the Customer Journey and measure performance for these sub-categories for each and every interaction. This allows companies to review results through two lenses. The first lens provides horizontal insight into a specific customer's journey – at the aggregate level and for each touchpoint they experienced. This understanding allows companies to review journeys for efficiency and effectiveness so as to enhance and guide future customer journeys. The second lens provides vertical insight to organizations to analyze results across many customers for a specific touchpoint so as to ensure that each is optimally designed. These results become the benchmarks against which the company measures its performance.

3 ANALYZE PERFORMANCE GAPS TO DETERMINE HOW TO FIX THEM



Once organizations have the tools and processes in place to measure performance at the micro level, the next step is establishing the discipline around continuous improvement by identifying and prioritizing performance gaps. Customer expectations have changed drastically over the last decade, driven primarily by technology advancements. Until recently, the degree to which people, process and technology contributed to the customer experience was more equally balanced, but that has changed in recent years. While the ability of humans to provide customer service has remained essentially unchanged over time, processes have consistently evolved to become more efficient and effective. Technology, however, has been the key driver of the dramatic rise in customer expectations, providing the foundation for processes to improve and ensuring that people on both sides of the interaction are equipped with the right information, in the right format and via the right channel. Technology capabilities are the single greatest lever that can influence your customers' experience.

IMPACT ON CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE



By quantifying the ideal people, process and technology performance scores for each touchpoint, companies can establish goals against which actual performance results are measured.



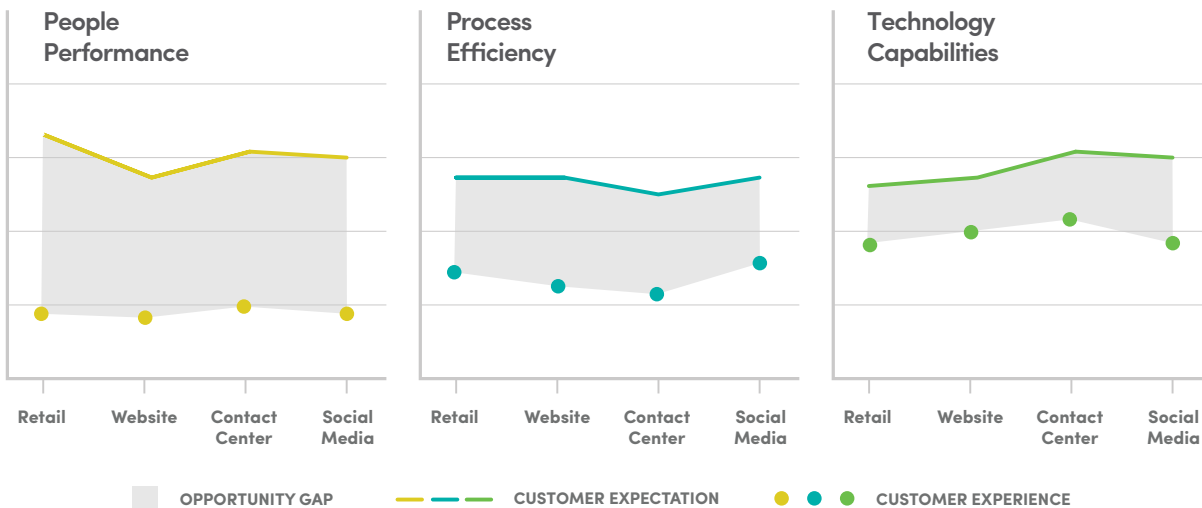
Opportunity scores can be calculated, giving clear insight into areas requiring prioritized attention and organizational focus. These scores can be presented as Dashboards at the Customer Journey level or at the touchpoint level with drill-down capabilities for each. By analyzing these gaps, companies are likely to find myriad potential improvement opportunities such as:

- Adding mobile customer engagement channels and eliminating redundant or less popular touchpoints in order to keep costs under control

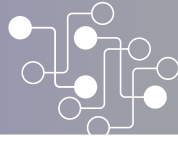
- Integrating systems across channels and business functions to ensure that information is timely, relevant, simple and customized
- Providing more flexibility for customers to switch channels mid-stream during the buying process
- Finding ways to be more proactive in guiding the Customer Journey and buying process
- Integrating suppliers more effectively into your customer experience

These tools combined with a focus on continuous improvement will ensure that customer interactions are managed cohesively and seamlessly from the customers' perspective and that the aggregated experience is positive, resulting in internal efficiencies, customer purchases and loyalty.

CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS VS. CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE BY TOUCHPOINT



4 STAY ON TOP OF CHANGING TECHNOLOGY AND TOUCHPOINTS



In order to avoid being blindsided by disruptive technologies or new products and services that could put you at a competitive disadvantage, it is critically important to stay informed about changes happening well beyond your industry and direct competitors. Technological innovation will keep you on the roller coaster of reactive strategies for customer experience improvement, unless you adopt a broader view of your competitive environment and your customers' worldview.

For example, transformational organizations are extending their capabilities to provide seamless customer experiences in many ways:



Service organizations are managing information across provisioning, billing and CRM systems with the broader objective of making all of this information available directly to customers via their preferred channel, and in a simple and concise manner.



Best-in-class health care organizations are delivering seamless customer experiences that span and aggregate information from both the medical service provider and the health insurance firm.



Many verticals are leveraging evolving technologies such as advanced analytics that are providing automated insight into the levels of service provided by call center representatives, as well as extensive market insight that can be leveraged by Marketing and Sales functions.



Companies are rapidly implementing robotic process automation (RPA) solutions which drive efficiencies in transaction processing, improving both back office and real time customer interactions.

The next big innovation that could threaten customer loyalty is more likely to come from outside of your industry than within it. Consider that nearly 50 percent of the world's population now owns a smartphone, and more than half of internet searches are conducted via a mobile device. Apps, email, chat and social channels are overtaking a more traditional channel – calls into the contact center. So, where should you be planning to invest more in your customer experience in the next few years?

The next big opportunity for your company may lie in Big Data and Analytics – making sense of an ever-growing universe of available data. Already today, predictive analytics allow organizations to understand the frequency of issues, gauge customer sentiment and proactively manage customer expectations, while also avoiding damage to their brand.

The Internet of Things and smart products are also enormous game-changers that could positively or negatively impact your customer experience. As products are becoming smarter, they will eventually serve as a primary channel that customers interact with directly by detecting and proactively initiating their own service and repair requirements.

The next big opportunity for your company may lie in Big Data and Analytics – making sense of an ever-growing universe of available data.

5

COMMIT TO BECOMING AN
AGILE, CUSTOMER-FOCUSED
ENTERPRISE

Customers are aware of these technology advancements and expect that companies they purchase from will utilize these optimized systems and processes, and will continue to find new and better ways to empower them. It is critically important to be ready for these innovations.

Technologies and the market are changing quickly, and companies that can rapidly respond and adapt to these changes will continue to be the pacesetters. Becoming an agile organization requires a solid, highly-functioning technology organization as a foundation.

On top of that technological foundation, corporate leaders must embrace and promote structured measurement systems combined with agile processes in order to sustainably meet the evolving customer expectations associated with increasingly rapid technology advancements.

These systems yield tremendous insight that changes and evolves with the market. When leveraged properly, this information can become a near real-time barometer, providing guidance and direction that can keep your organization aligned with your customer base and ahead of your competition.

Technologies and the market are changing quickly, and companies that can rapidly respond and adapt to these changes will continue to be the pacesetters.

Finally, and most importantly, building a culture and flexible organizational structures that can rapidly assess and respond to changes in a system built for agility and continuous evolution is a tremendous competitive advantage. And it will be a key ingredient in the battle for customer loyalty as technology continues to drive customer expectations ever higher.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Ruben Moffett, Partner

Ruben is a senior leader who combines extensive technology, operational and business expertise to help clients maximize and align technology with their strategic objectives. Ruben's specialties include customer experience, workforce optimization, business intelligence, software development, infrastructure, cloud solutions and professional and technical services management. He is a graduate of Cornell College and holds an MBA from the University of Iowa. Ruben spends his free time playing hockey and attending soccer games, cross country and track meets and dance competitions supporting his children.

Rick Davidson, President and CEO

Rick has 30+ years experience as a senior IT executive, business consultant and entrepreneur. His raison d'être is encouraging individuals and teams to realize goals far beyond what they thought was possible. His business experience spans several industries, including industrial and consumer products, financial and professional services. He has implemented several transformational initiatives in the areas of materials management, supply chain, product lifecycle management and cloud-based software. Rick enjoys aerobatic flying and plays guitar.

About Cimphoni

Cimphoni is built on the premise that technology, when properly applied and led, can deliver innovative solutions that transform businesses, enrich the products we use daily and improve the quality of our lives. The Cimphoni team is comprised of highly experienced technology and business leaders with a thirst for innovation and a passion for solving problems. Founded in 2012, we serve customers throughout the United States from our offices in suburban Milwaukee.

P.O. Box 80
Hartland, WI 53029
t: (888) 470-0448
e: info@cimphoni.com
www.cimphoni.com

Contact Cimphoni

If you would like to enhance your understanding of the customer experience you are delivering at your company, please contact us at (888) 470-0448 or info@cimphoni.com. We can help you improve every step and every touchpoint in your Customer Journey.