

CREATING A CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE THAT WILL DRIVE RESULTS

BY BILL HOGG

Creating a great experience for your customers is more than just providing good customer service -- everyone provides good customer service. It is the companies that create memorable experiences that will differentiate from competitors and drive results.

Successful companies create desirable customer experiences by focusing on emotional connectors. They put themselves in their customer's shoes, understand their needs, anticipate future needs and understand the emotional need and the problems or issues customers are trying to solve.

To accomplish this, companies start by developing a customer experience map.

Developing a customer experience map

A customer experience map helps companies define and organize the interactions they have with their customers in order to understand how you currently interact and what opportunities exist to improve a customer's experience with your company. More importantly it allows you to track the emotional response of the customer as they travel through the customer experience corridor.

Developing a [customer experience](#) map will help you establish a framework for all of your existing and potential interactions (or touch points). The experience you map is based on the combination of policies and process, the service environment and the delivery of customer service. These combine to create an emotional response and relationship with your organization.

Mapping can take many different visual forms such as charts, graphs, drawing or whatever else works for your specific situation. The important part is to properly define all of the touch points that exist between your company and your customers. These touch points is what will define the experience your customer has with your company.

Consider these questions:

- What are the different ways that you interact with your customers (online, in person, mail, etc.)?
- What touch points are controllable and can be influenced? Which are uncontrollable?
- At what point in your emotional relationship with your customer do these touch points exist?
- What is the role of each touch point? Are they to assist with or to complete a sale? To educate or inform? Answer a question? Are they for you -- or the customer?
- How does your interaction with customer differentiate from your competitions?
- Who internally is in control of the defined touch points?
- What is the impact of your current touch points? Are they effective? Can they be improved?

Delivering exceptional customer service

Delivering exceptional customer service is based on three important steps:

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**THE EMOTIONAL
CONNECTION WE
CREATE WITH EACH
CUSTOMER IS THE
FOUNDATION OF
LOYALTY**

1. **Defining:** You need to clearly define the goals and objectives for the experience you want to create for your customers. How do you want to interact with them? When do you want to interact with them? Where do you want to interact? How often? What is the desired outcome?
2. **Designing:** Once your goals are outlined, you need to design a desired customer experience that meets their needs and objectives on both a practical and an emotional level. Know the problem you are solving for your customers through your experience map.
3. **Delivering:** Most importantly, you need to deliver on the experience you have created. This means that you need to create a positive experience for your customer each time they interact with you, no matter what touch point they use. You need to provide consistent service whether they are connecting with your company online, in person, or reading a piece of direct mail advertising. If you promise something in your marketing efforts, you better deliver during your interactions with customers or you risk losing them.

A little tip: You don't have to exceed expectations at every touch point to create an exceptional experience. Ensure you hit minimum satisfactory standard across all touch points and then choose a couple to delight your customers in a way that differentiates you from your competition.

The benefits of creating an effective customer experience map

Creating a customer experience map that will drive results is beneficial to your company for a number of reasons.

1. It will help you identify issues and opportunities for how your customers interact with your company.
2. It will help clarify why customers should do business with you versus the competition.
3. It will increase overall customer satisfaction.
4. It will help build customer loyalty.
5. It will help retain current customers and turn new customers into repeat customers.
6. It will help to increase sales and improve company profit margins.

Everyone remembers great customer service experiences and this is often the reason why you go back to a company or use a specific brand. Investing in creating an ideal customer experience for your customers that meets their needs on an emotional level will help you improve overall satisfaction and drive the results you want to achieve.

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Bill is the "just do it" guy who has walked in your shoes. Senior leaders at organizations like Anheuser-Busch InBev, The Bay, Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan, Pita Pit, RBH, State Farm Insurance, Toronto International Film Festival and ServiceOntario hire Bill to navigate change and influence and inspire higher performing teams that deliver exceptional customer service, higher productivity and improve profits.

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