

# The Customer Journey in the ~~Age of Distraction~~





# INTRODUCTION THE AGE OF DISTRACTION

**The average person will become distracted around the time they finish reading this paragraph. Two sentences - or around 8 seconds according to studies by Microsoft - and the human mind will begin to wander.**

This has reduced from 12 seconds – a remarkable 50% – since the turn of the century. However, further evidence suggests this isn't the whole story. Studies carried out by Prezi (a presentation software company) on how people's attention spans cope during a presentation suggest that our attention spans haven't become worse, but are rather evolving to focus on different things based on the stimuli offered.

Those companies that capture, and hold, the customer's attention at the right moments will be the ones that succeed in this age of distraction. For some, the solution is to simply dial up the volume of their messaging, but smart companies will need to bring the customer experience into the heart of how they operate in order to rise above the noise.

## INTRODUCTION

### INTRODUCTION THE AGE OF DISTRACTION

For CEOs and senior leaders, acknowledging the current state of play and working within its reality is vital. Customers won't give all their attention to your product, and even if they will do so for a short period of time. Negative interactions will also have larger effects than positive interactions.

In these Insights, we will look at how to capture the attention of your customers through the prism of the customer journey, and how forward-looking companies are reimagining this journey and reshaping their organisations around what they find.

By using the customer journey as the pivot for an organisation, CEOs and senior leaders can begin to ascertain when they will have their customers attention, how they should keep and use that attention, and how to acquire it more easily in the future.

{ MAKE THE CUSTOMER THE HERO OF YOUR STORY }

— ANN HANDLEY, DIGITAL MARKETING PIONEER





# CHAPTER 1

## CUSTOMER JOURNEY THE BUSINESS IMPLICATIONS

# THE CEO ROLE

THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE IS A LONG-HELD BUSINESS CONCEPT, BUT IT IS CURRENTLY BEING RETHOUGHT AND REIMAGINED BY THE MOST FORWARD-LOOKING COMPANIES AND CEOS IN THE WORLD.

Traditionally, the customer journey is seen as a series of independent touchpoints where customers interact. Typically, these touchpoints are the responsibility of different departments. Looking around our own organisations, this is evident even at a surface level – marketing teams manage the communication channels; support teams manage daily interactions with customers and so on.

Rarely does anyone look at the whole picture.

To capture a customer's attention in a crowded marketplace, our organisations need to zoom back out and begin to look at the customer journey as an interconnected whole. One of the few people that can get this broad view is the CEO themselves, and it is their responsibility to decide how the organisation re-orientates itself to be more consumer-focussed, particularly using new technologies.

The 'manager' of the customer experience, then, is the CEO themselves.



# THE INVISIBLE GAPS

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A CUSTOMER JOURNEY IS ONLY LOOKED AT WITHIN INDIVIDUAL TOUCHPOINTS? WHEN THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY IS VIEWED THROUGH THIS LENS, A HIDDEN DANGER QUICKLY DEVELOPS. WHILE ANALYSES OF EACH POINT MAY SEEM LIKE THEY ARE PERFORMING WELL, THIS MAY CONCEAL THE OVERALL TRUTH.

The danger is that there is a cumulative dissatisfaction effect during a customer's journey, even when each individual touchpoint is seemingly of a high enough standard. Research has shown that, for example, a customer that rates four touchpoints with a 85 – 90% satisfaction level each will generate a cumulative satisfaction rate of 60%.



(Source: McKinsey Digital Labs)

This leads to the people managing each different touchpoint believing they are performing well, even if the whole experience isn't delivering. It is therefore up to the CEO to consider this full picture and seek a coherent, holistic solution.

# BENEFITS OF A FOCUSSED CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE STRATEGY

FOR THOSE ORGANISATIONS  
THAT DO LOOK AT THE  
CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AS AN  
OVERALL HOLISTIC JOURNEY,  
THE BENEFITS ARE CLEAR.

A report by McKinsey found that leading customer experience companies will build greater customer loyalty, make employees happier, achieve revenue gains of 5 – 10%, and reduce costs by 15 – 25% within two or three years.

Further research indicates that consumers are willing to pay a 16% price premium for superior customer service, are 5 times as likely to repurchase a product or forgive a bad experience, 7 times more likely to purchase a brand-new offering, and 3 times more likely to refer to a family or friend.

For a CEO seeking to bring customer experience into the heart of how they do things, what guidelines are absolutely key.



A MODERATE  
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OVER THREE  
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COMPANY WITH \$1  
BILLION IN ANNUAL  
REVENUES.**

# CHAPTER 2

## CAPTURING ATTENTION THE LEVERS TO PULL

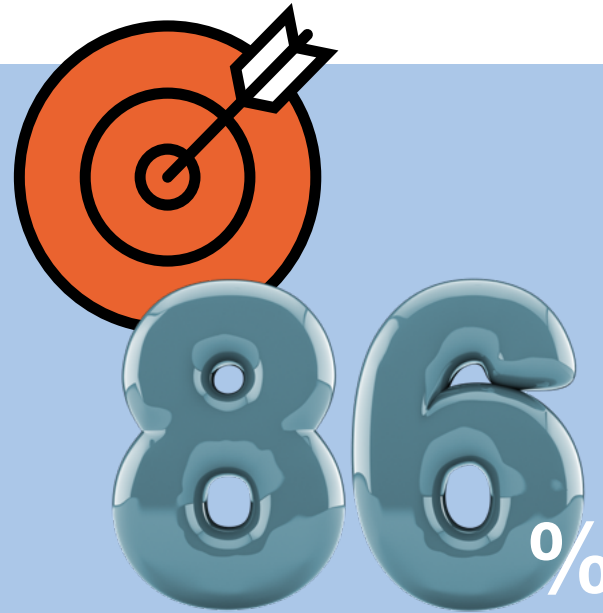
# HAVING A PURPOSE

MOVING THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE FROM A SERIES OF TOUCHPOINTS INTO A FULLY DEVELOPED JOURNEY REQUIRES A THROUGH-LINE CONNECTING ALL THE DIFFERENT CONNECTIONS – IT REQUIRES A PURPOSE.

From PayPal's 'to build the Web's most convenient, secure, cost-effective payment solution', to Kickstarter's 'to help bring creative projects to life', an organisation with a clear purpose is one where the employees have a clear direction in which to travel. These provide guardrails for thousands of decisions to be made with a final outcome in mind.

This is particularly true in large, multinational operations where customers will interact (knowingly or unknowingly) with a broad range of people and organisational processes. Without a clearly communicated purpose, there will be no guidelines for people to follow across demographics and departments.

Another 'narrative' the CEO must follow when designing their customer experience is understanding the customers themselves. And not just their desires, but also their fundamental natures.



**of buyers will pay more for a better brand experience, but only 1% feel that vendors consistently meet expectations.**

– Customer Think report, 2016

# THE LAZY CONSUMER

ONE OF THOSE FUNDAMENTALS THAT SHOULD BE CONSTANTLY REMEMBERED IS THAT HUMAN BEINGS ARE LAZY CREATURES, AND CONSUMERS ARE EVEN LAZIER.

When asked what is most important to them in a customer experience, people say efficiency ranks first, followed by convenience, and then easy payment.

Studies have shown that the best indicator of a customer buying your product again is not how satisfied they were with it, or whether they would recommend it to a friend, but rather how much effort they had to put in to buy it.

Technology is exacerbating this trend. 40% of visitors will leave a website if the loading process takes more than 3 seconds, and this same impatience extends itself to chat boxes, delays in confirmation emails and other technological touchpoints.

Customer satisfaction ratings for live chat are often higher than all other support channels, likely because of the speed and conversational nature, with chat being the preferred support channel by Millennials.

– Customer Think report, 2016

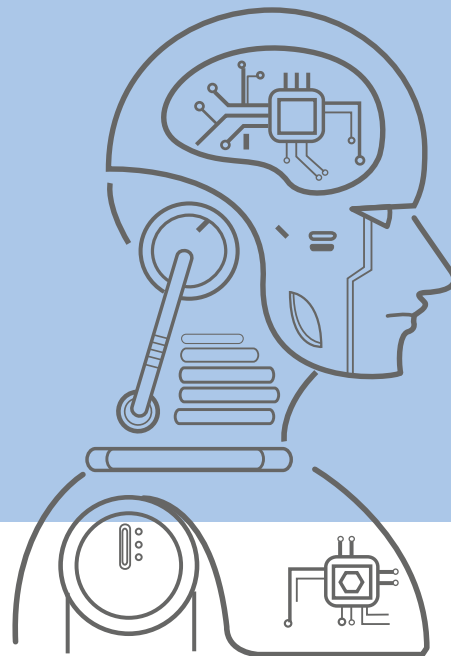


# TECHNOLOGY IS A MAJOR DRIVER

IT IS SELF-EVIDENT THAT DIGITISATION IS DRIVING MUCH OF THE CHANGES IN HOW WE LOOK AT CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE, PRIMARILY BECAUSE DIGITAL TOOLS HAVE GIVEN US THE CAPABILITIES TO CHANGE THE EXPERIENCE. HOWEVER, IT IS SO FUNDAMENTAL THAT IT MUST BE ADDRESSED AS A SUBJECT IN ITS OWN RIGHT.

By observing the various touchpoints within a unified experience, a CEO can begin to see where digital technologies can be applied, although it is rare to have a simple silver bullet solution. Taking the now-common CRM (customer relationship management) systems many organisations now have as example, we can begin to see how a digital solution can reshape an entire customer journey and how an organisation itself operates.

Implementing these was not a case of buying a product and then retraining staff, it meant a new philosophy of personal data collection that could be applied to improve the service a customer receives, from sales right through to delivery.



**Artificial intelligence will be a mainstream customer experience investment in the next couple of years. 47% of organisations will use chatbots for customer care and 40% will deploy virtual assistants.**

Gartner, 2018



# CHAPTER 3

## CUSTOMER JOURNEY IMPLEMENTATION

# OBSERVE SHAPE PERFORM

BEYOND HAVING AN OVERALL PURPOSE AND UNDERSTANDING THE FUNDAMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS AND NEEDS OF THEIR CUSTOMERS, HOW ELSE CAN A LEADER BEGIN RESHAPING THEIR CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE? WHAT ACTUAL PROCESS CAN THEY FOLLOW?

### Observe

Observe the world through your customers' eyes and experience your organisation as they would. Seeing the world as their customers do helps companies better organise and mobilise their employees around customer needs.

### Shape

Designing the customer experience requires re-shaping interactions into different sequences and, though the effort may start small, it soon entails digitising processes, reorienting company cultures, and nimbly refining new approaches in the marketplace.

### Perform

Rewiring a company to provide leading customer experiences is a journey in itself, often taking two to four years and requiring high engagement from company leaders and frontline workers alike.

(Source: 'Customer experience: new capabilities, new audiences and new opportunities', McKinsey and Company, 2017)

Although each organisation's redesign of their customer experience will be unique, this three-stage approach gives guiding principles for leaders to follow. Within each stage, what should leaders look out for?

# FROM TOUCHPOINTS TO JOURNEY **OBSERVE**

THE OLD ADAGE 'THE CUSTOMER IS ALWAYS RIGHT' IS, IN A VERY REAL SENSE, ENTIRELY CORRECT. THIS IS SIMPLY BECAUSE THEIR PERCEIVED EXPERIENCE IS THE BUSINESS REALITY – EVEN IF A COMPANY DOES LITTLE OR NOTHING WRONG, THE PERCEPTION THEY DID IS ALL THAT MATTERS.

A simple truth that all CEOs must face is that, regardless of whether if they are running an SME or a multi-national, customers will expect the same level of experience from both. For example, if you don't offer the same level of personalisation as Amazon, the customer will not consider your differing level of resources in delivering that personalisation.

Observing the customer experience through their eyes is an essential way to remove biases, excuses and hidden realities from your organisation. The CEO with limited resources must then allocate those resources to the areas with highest economic impacts through gathering quality data on their customer experience.

### Observe to Report

Sometimes observing the experience through a customer's eyes can lead to surprising results. For example, in one airport case study, customer satisfaction had more to do with the behaviour of the security personnel than with time spent in line.



# FROM TOUCHPOINTS TO JOURNEY SHAPE

THE LEADING CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE ORGANISATIONS START WITH A DIFFERENTIATING PURPOSE (PAGE 10) AND FOCUS ON IMPROVING THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECTS FIRST - WHETHER THAT IS BUYING AN ELECTRIC DRILL, COMPARING LAPTOPS ONLINE, OR INSTALLING NEW LIGHT FIXTURES IN A CUSTOMER'S HOME.

Applying behavioural psychology thinking throughout your customer experience can make significant improvements to that experience. For example, organisations can reshape the sequence of customer interactions so that they end on a positive note or merge different stages together to reduce the perception of slowness and stimulate a feeling of progress.

Digital tools have made customer experience elements such as the personalisation of products the norm, and these tools are likely to become a key component of almost every stage of a customer journey and how they are reshaped.

With customer psychology in mind, and digital tools supporting the reshaping, pain points along the customer journey are removed and a culture of continuous improvement is imbedded within the organisation.



**“Your most  
unhappy customers  
are your greatest  
source of learning.”**

– Bill Gates

# FROM TOUCHPOINTS TO JOURNEY **PERFORM**

**EXECUTING A REDESIGNED CUSTOMER JOURNEY AND MAKING CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENTS AS PART OF THE PROCESS REQUIRES ONGOING ENGAGEMENT WITH ALL STAKEHOLDERS AND VIRTUOUS FEEDBACK LOOPS.**

Implementation begins with the front-line employees, engaging with them so they can embody the brand promise in all their interactions with customers. Many companies ensure their executives regularly 'get their hands dirty' and work on the frontlines with customers, allowing for direct feedback from those customers and to discover how the company's promise matches the reality.

It is now the time to make note of any early wins, helping to energise execution and demonstrate value at all levels, and encouraging department heads and employees at all levels to innovate and make improvements in their areas.

These early wins should be wrapped in a defined measurement of the process, using metrics defined based on an organisation's unique needs. Employee feedback should be used in conjunction with this measurement process to identify areas of further improvement.



**By 2020,  
more than  
40% of all  
data analytics  
projects will  
relate to an  
aspect of  
customer  
experience.**

Gartner, 2018



# FROM TOUCHPOINTS TO JOURNEY PERFORM COLLABORATION ACROSS DEPARTMENTS

ONE OF THE CEO'S ROLES DURING THIS PROCESS IS ENSURING THAT THE DIFFERENT DEPARTMENT HEADS AND LEADERS ARE COLLABORATING AND NOT RETREATING INTO SILOS.

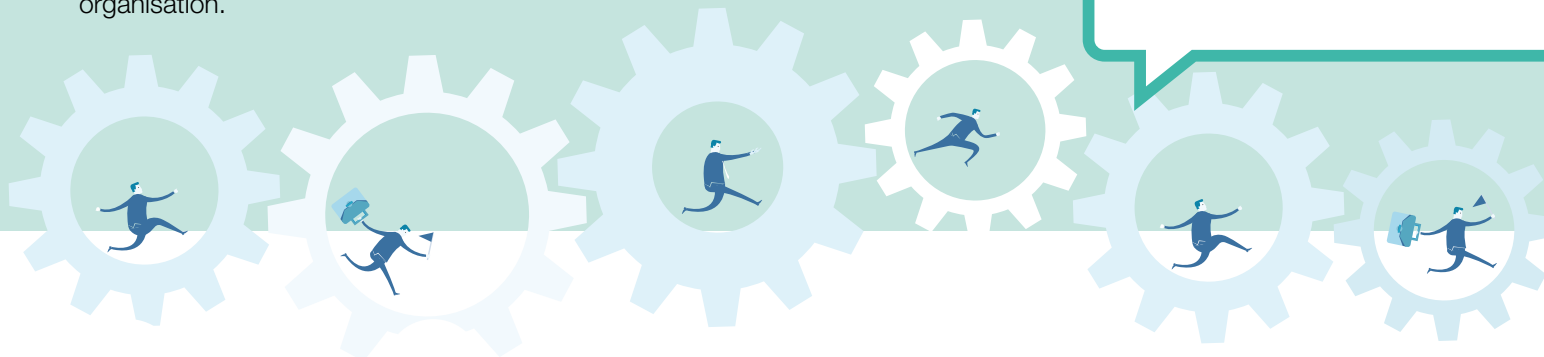
In a true redesign of the customer journey there will be occasions where long-held processes are disrupted and overturned. This requires leadership to manage the disruption while ensuring day-to-day business continues to run smoothly.

Some organisations may hire an external chief customer officer alongside an executive champion and implement a series of reinforcement activities and skill-building activities for the organisation. Regardless of whether it is a uniquely created position or a role taken by the CEO themselves, these 'journey champions' must be role-models for the types of behaviours and values they would like to see within the organisation.

### 5 Best Practices for Sustained Customer Journey Success

1. Strong Executive Ownership
2. Central Measurement Architecture
3. Lean-Management Practices
4. Proactive Change Management
5. Regular Employee Training

(Source, McKinsey and Company, 2017)



## CHAPTER 3: CUSTOMER JOURNEY - IMPLEMENTATION

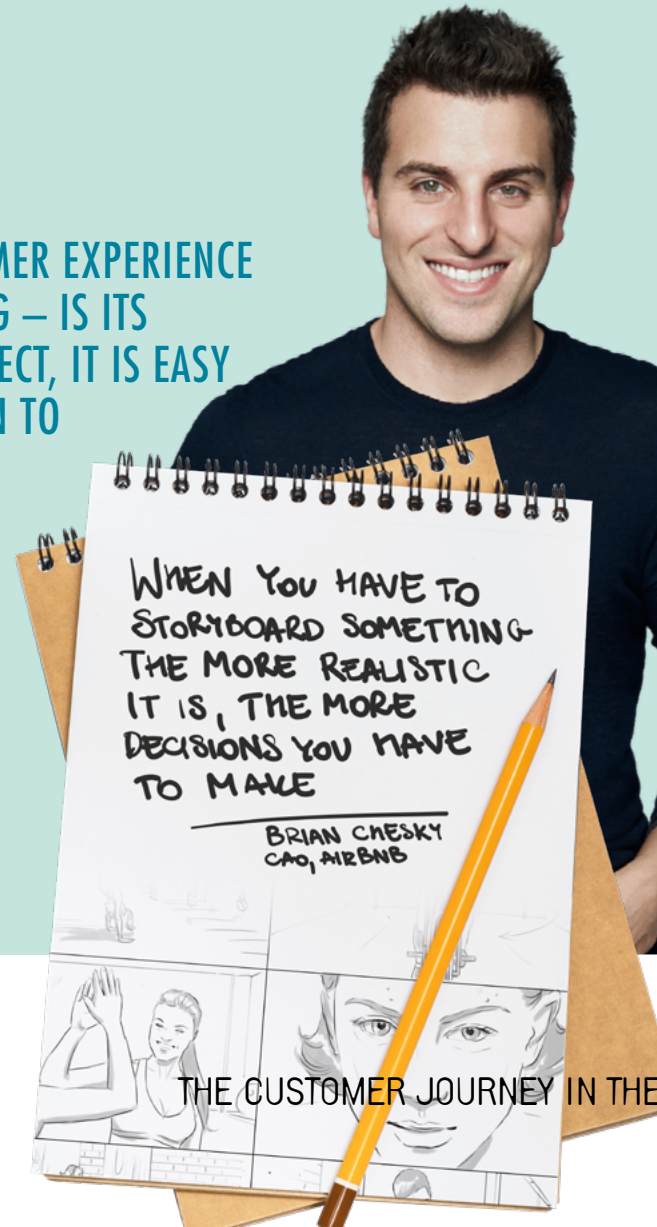
# A PRACTICAL SOLUTION: STORYBOARDS

ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT ASPECTS OF THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE – EVEN SIMPLY UNDERSTANDING WHAT IS HAPPENING – IS ITS COMPLEXITY. ONCE WE BEGIN FOCUSING ON AN ASPECT, IT IS EASY TO LOSE FOCUS ON THE BIGGER PICTURE. A SOLUTION TO THIS IS TO CREATE A STORYBOARD.

Airbnb's CEO Brian Chesky, inspired by Walt Disney, began using storyboards almost a decade ago. Using the technique to visualise the experiences of their three main stakeholders - hosts, guests, and employees.

By storyboarding the travellers' experience at an Airbnb rental, the company thought more clearly about who the customer is. This customer-led thinking set the company on the path to a hypergrowth mode, and the philosophy behind it can be seen in everything Airbnb does today.

Like Hollywood's greatest movie directors, storyboards help shape individual scenes into a collective whole that can take breaths away – a result great companies should aspire to.



# CHAPTER 4

## THE FUTURE OF CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE



# TRENDS IN THE MARKET

**HYPER-PERSONALISATION, BIG DATA, MACHINE LEARNING...  
THESE ARE ALL ELEMENTS THAT WILL RADICALLY ALTER  
CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AS WE KNOW IT.**

The more quality data we have on an individual, combined with the digital capabilities to deliver a unique experience, alongside machines' abilities to constantly iterate and learn will shape future customer experiences.

The Marriott International hotel group, for example, recently unveiled a new prototype hotel room which combines the Internet of Things with customer data to allow users to personalise their hotel rooms, such as the shower temperature and the light levels, based on past experiences. This allows a Marriott traveller to have the same experience in Kuala Lumpur as they do in Paris.

The flip-side of this is the privacy of your customers' information – particularly for someone like a hotel chain. Indeed, Marriott recently experienced a data breach where information on upward of 500 million guests may have been stolen. This type of data breach can directly impact the benefits of personalisation.



## CHAPTER 4: THE FUTURE OF CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

### SHAKING UP MARKETS

For example, new 'Open Banking' rules implemented in the UK in 2018 forces banks to share customer data with third parties if the customer agrees.

However, many experts say that this ruling may energise efforts by companies such as Facebook and Amazon to get into banking, where their knowledge of individual customers could be a significant advantage when personalising their services.

Combine this with digital technologies such as cryptocurrency, and it is no shock to see the current levels of infrastructural investment the banking sector is putting into its digital services for customers. It is this reorientation of all sectors towards being digital and data-led that will shake up markets in unexpected ways in the future.

**THE COMBINATION OF HYPER-PERSONALISATION AND BIG DATA BEING APPLIED TO THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE MAY NOT ONLY SHAKE UP MARKETS, IT MAY END UP SHAPING THEM INTO SOMETHING ENTIRELY NEW.**



# DISNEYLAND A LESSON IN THE FUTURE OF CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

DISNEY IS WHERE, AS THE SLOGAN GOES, 'MAGIC HAPPENS'. IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE HOW TO IMPROVE ON THE HYPER-FRIEND, CUSTOMER-ORIENTATED EXPERIENCE THAT IS DISNEYLAND. HOWEVER, THROUGH DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY AND A FOCUS ON THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY, DISNEY IS DOING JUST THAT.

Launched in 2013, every visitor to Disneyland is now given a wristband with tracking technology imbedded within, allowing Disney to watch how their customers behave en masse. With these technologies, customers that are seen to be waiting too long in a queue could be sent a voucher to create a positive experience out of a bad one, the maître d' of the restaurants are able to welcome customers by name and Mickey Mouse can do the same with the children they meet.

The longer customers stand in the queue, the less time they have to spend money, and this is something Disney understands perfectly. By orientating their business around the customer experience, they not only improve the happiness of the paying public but get them to spend more too.



# CONCLUSION

By using the customer journey as the pivot of their organisation, CEOs can begin to capture their customers' attention in the right way and at the right moment. In the age of distraction, this attention will be one of an organisation's most important assets.

For CEOs and senior leaders, it is their role to ensure the customer doesn't experience a series of touchpoints, but rather have a fully-fledged experience with their brand. Even if that experience is fleeting (and even designed as such), it will greatly influence future success.

Moving from a series of touchpoints into an experiential journey will energise both the customer and the organisation itself, creating a focus on what matters and, often more importantly, what doesn't.



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