

5 Proven ways to optimize your customer experience



In today's highly competitive markets, consumers demand real value and exceptional experiences in return for brand loyalty. Businesses need to continuously raise the bar on how well they understand the customer and meet their needs. This becomes more challenging as technology and social business are evolving rapidly, which means organizations need to adapt quickly as consumer expectations change.

The following five strategic approaches have proven effective in helping companies understand how to [design customer experiences that build brand loyalty](#) and win new business.

1 Look at the big picture

Before you start making ad-hoc improvements, first make sure you truly understand your customers' experience with your business as a whole. Customers see one company; they don't care if you operate in silos, they want a seamless experience from one touch point to the next. Start by "journey mapping" to gain a complete picture of the customer experience across all interactions with your company, as well as their lifecycle of interactions over time.

For example, how smooth was the sales process? What kind of continued support have customers received, if any? Do you know their preferred channels of interaction and are you making that easy for them? Are you tailoring new offers to meet their unique needs? Are customers demonstrating their satisfaction by recommending your brand to others?

Taking a holistic perspective helps you focus on optimizing the entire customer journey, rather than isolated touch points. To gain insight, be sure to look at both structured data (e.g., transactions, surveys) and unstructured data (e.g., call center transcripts, social media) as this can uncover connections between interactions across your company, and help you understand how to create an end-to-end optimal customer experience.

2 Listen first, then take action

Key to understanding the big picture of your customers' experience is to listen and learn –before you take action. That way you ensure you're making changes that really matter to your customers, and prioritize improvements that create the biggest wins first. [Voice of the Customer \(VOC\) analytics](#) are a powerful tool for gaining insight about what works and what doesn't at each touch point as well as across the entire customer journey. Customer "listening" programs (such as VOC and social media monitoring) can also help you identify unmet needs and opportunities for increasing value, which can drive brand loyalty.

Make sure your VOC efforts align with key business objectives to help ensure that any improvements you make will generate measurable value for your customers and the business. For example, to acquire more profitable customers, you can use predictive analytics to define targeted segments based on purchase and interaction patterns, preferences and feedback, and then deliver highly tailored experiences and offers that are most likely to appeal to those customers.



3 Think global, act social

When it comes to designing optimal customer experiences, today's business simply cannot ignore the value of social media. By [monitoring social networks](#), you can learn what your customers really think about your products and your company, which helps you better understand how to deliver experiences that create value and delight.

Similarly, with an effective social engagement strategy, you can influence how consumers feel about your brand. For instance, by providing prompt, personalized responses to customer concerns (on Twitter or Facebook), you can [transform negative sentiment into brand loyalty](#). In fact, improving your risk management is a key way your business can [gain valuable ROI from social media](#), as you can reduce attrition and increase customer satisfaction.

4 Build a customer-centric ecosystem

Another vital component to delivering an optimal customer experience is to have a company culture that places the customer at the center of everything you do. The customer journey is not simply about meeting needs, it's about creating feel-good experiences that people want to repeat or recommend. To ensure your employees help make that happen, develop initiatives that build buy-in across your organization and encourage everyone to play a part in optimizing the customer experience --whether it's best practices in store service, marketing communications, product packaging, technical support, billing, you name it.

Creating a company-wide eco-system focused on the customer helps you increase collaboration across lines of business and build a cohesive understanding of how all the various touch points impact the customer. As a result, the entire collective can work together to deliver a consistently great experience throughout the customer lifecycle.

5 Define metrics: Lather, rinse repeat

Central to optimizing your customer experience is making sure you're doing the right things to deliver value to both your customers and the business. That means you'll want to define metrics early on that align with key business objectives and customer experience goals. Then, after you've taken action, measure the impact. For example, did you reduce customer service calls? Increase response rates for cross-sell offers? Boost customer satisfaction rates and increase word of mouth referrals in social media?

Once you've got answers, keep refining the customer experience to meet evolving needs, and keep measuring the impact of your changes. Don't just focus on measuring volume; be sure to track the impact you're having on how customers feel about your brand, and look for

By taking a holistic perspective on the customer journey, and nurturing a customer-centric culture, your organization will be well-equipped to deliver the experiences and value that keep customers coming back, and reduce the cost of acquiring new business.

Let's Talk

Toll-free: [1. 877.676.3743](tel:1.877.676.3743)

Email: info@beyondthearc.net

Website: beyondthearc.com

Blog: beyondthearc.com/blog

Social:    