Customer Journey Mapping

Customers do not experience a company one department at a time; they live one continuous journey. A customer journey map is a visual story of the steps that a person goes through to reach a goal, such as buying a product or getting help. The Nielsen Norman Group, a research firm in user experience, describes a map that follows one type of customer, called the actor, in one clear scenario. Along the way, the map captures what people do, think and feel, so that teams can see the experience through the customer's eyes. In this title, we build a map in five parts: stages, touchpoints, emotions, pain points and opportunities.

1. Define the Stages

The first step is to split the journey into a few high-level stages, such as discover, choose, buy, use and get support. Stages give the map its structure from left to right, like the chapters of a story. They should follow the customer's view, not the company's internal departments. Good stages come from research, such as interviews and real customer data, not from guesses in a meeting room.

Example: A family planning a holiday defines the stages of its journey: dream, plan, book, travel and share. Seen in stages, the booking is only one small part of a much longer story.

At work: Nada, a customer experience lead at a home internet company, defines the stages for new customers: discover, sign up, installation, first bill and support. Her team sees for the first time that the journey begins long before the sign-up form.

2. List the Touchpoints

A touchpoint is any moment when the customer meets the company, such as an advertisement, a website, a phone call, a shop visit or an email. For each stage, the map lists the touchpoints that the customer uses. Different teams often own different touchpoints, so nobody sees the full picture. Listing them together shows where messages repeat, where they disagree, and where the customer is left alone.

Example: For a restaurant visit, the touchpoints include online reviews, the booking call, the waiter and the bill. Listing the touchpoints shows that the booking call is the only place where guests are left waiting on hold.

At work: Nada lists the touchpoints of the installation stage: a confirmation email, a text message, a call from the technician and the visit itself. Listed side by side, the touchpoints show that the email and the text message give two different dates.

3. Track the Emotions

Next, the map follows how the customer feels at each stage. A simple line goes up for moments of delight and down for moments of worry or frustration. Emotions matter because people tend to remember the strongest moments and the end of an experience more than the average. The emotion line quickly shows where the experience rises and where it falls.

This document is a property of Asaseeyat Academy - © Copy Right Protected.

Example: On a flight, a traveller's emotion line rises at a quick check-in, falls during a long delay, and rises again with a friendly crew. Tracking the emotions shows that the delay, not the seat, shapes the memory of the trip.

At work: Nada tracks the emotions of new customers. The line is high at sign-up, but it drops sharply on installation day and stays low until the first bill.

4. Find the Pain Points

A pain point is a moment where the customer meets a problem, such as waiting, confusion, extra effort or a broken promise. Pain points usually sit where the emotion line drops. For each one, we look for the cause, not only for what the customer sees. Ranking them by impact helps the team decide where to act first.

Example: At a clinic, the patients' emotion line drops in the waiting room. The pain point is not the wait itself but the lack of information, because nobody says how long it will take.

At work: Nada looks for the pain point where the line drops on installation day. The cause is the two different dates: many customers stay at home on the wrong day, and the technician does not arrive.

5. Turn Insights into Opportunities

The last part of the map turns what we have learned into opportunities. An opportunity is an idea for improving the journey, linked to a specific stage, touchpoint or pain point. Each opportunity should have an owner, so that the map leads to action and does not just hang on a wall. A journey map is never finished; it is updated as customers and services change.

Example: The clinic turns its pain point into an opportunity and sends patients a text message with the expected waiting time. Patients still wait, but they feel calmer and complain less.

At work: Nada turns the pain point into an opportunity: one system now sends one confirmed date, and the technician calls an hour before arriving. The installation team owns this change, and complaints about missed visits soon fall.

Conclusion

In summary, a customer journey map tells the story of one customer reaching one goal. We define the stages, list the touchpoints, track the emotions, find the pain points and turn them into opportunities. The map works best when it is based on real research and shared across teams. Its real value is not the drawing, but the changes that it inspires.

Sources

- Nielsen Norman Group, Sarah Gibbons (2018): Journey Mapping 101 – https://www.nngroup.com/articles/journey-mapping-101/
- Nielsen Norman Group, Kate Kaplan (2016): When and How to Create Customer Journey Maps – https://www.nngroup.com/articles/customer-journey-mapping/

This document is a property of Asaseeyat Academy - © Copy Right Protected.