



Customer Journey Mapping

A Guide to Touchpoints

Introduction

Even if they are referred to by different names—customer journey, user journey, or buyer journey—their goal is always the same: to understand the numerous interactions and points of contact that potential customers have with a brand.

The challenge for any company is not to lose the customer on their journey. On the way to a purchase, there are many opportunities for a customer to abort the process if they are not completely satisfied or if they become aware of a better offer. During the entire period in which a customer is considering or making the purchase of product, it is important to encourage them along the way and to move them to the final purchase.

Visualizing the customer journey can be very helpful in understanding customer behavior and taking the right measures to support them. With a so-called customer journey map, the entire journey for certain products, customer groups, or services can be graphically displayed. It is important to structure the journey and to record the experiences of the customers at individual points in order to understand them and to be able to intervene in the right places.

The working method for creating a customer journey map within customer experience management is referred to as customer journey mapping. If companies implement this correctly, they put themselves in the customer's perspective and analyze what their wishes and requirements are in each phase of the journey. This enables them to see directly where critical points—so-called pain points—are and how these can be bettered to improve the customer experience.



In this white paper, we introduce the concept of a customer journey map and explain how to create and use it correctly.

Successful customer journey mapping enables companies to analyze the customer's journey and take steps to ensure a positive experience.

The Customer Journey Map

A customer journey map is an image that shows the flow of an average customer's buying process.

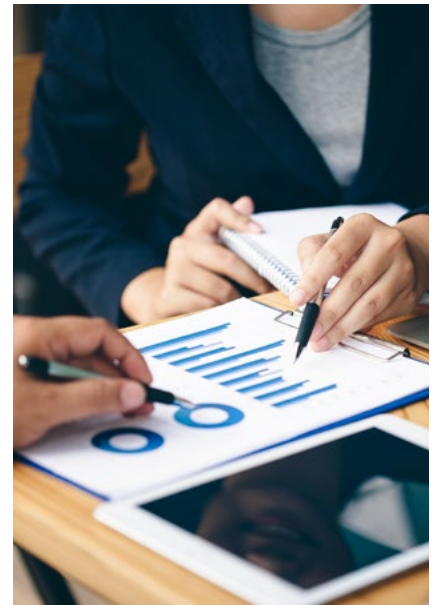
The customer's journey is divided into individual phases with specific points of contact and then visualized. This makes it easy to see how key factors are related and what experiences customers have on the way to purchasing. Not only are the actions of the buyer at the individual touchpoints recorded, but also their thoughts and emotions. In general, a customer journey map is the route taken by the average customer of a company for a specific product or service.

Such a map helps companies to understand why potential customers drop out at certain points and decide not to buy, or why they do not return after the purchase has been made. It tells companies which gaps need to be filled in order to make customers happier in the long term.

The customer journey map is a valuable tool for implementing excellent customer experience management. A carefully prepared map helps to prioritize necessary optimization measures in all areas of the company.

Undoubtedly, every company wants to make their customers' experiences as positive as possible. With a customer journey map, companies can:

- ✓ recognize every point of contact between customer and company,
- ✓ understand the needs and problems of your own customers better and take appropriate measures,
- ✓ discover and complete gaps in the customer experience,
- ✓ develop an understanding of customer behavior patterns in all areas of the organization and better understand key points in the purchasing process,
- ✓ align company activities with needs of customers (customer focus).



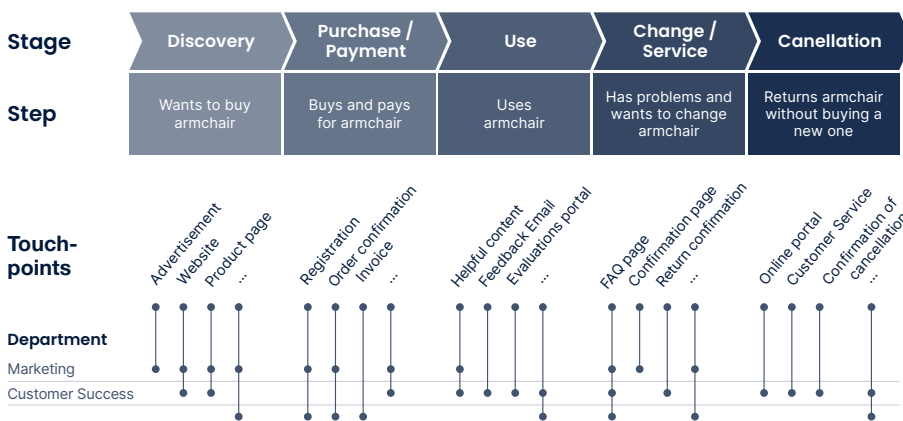
What Does a Customer Journey Map Look Like?

A customer journey map looks different for every company.

Nevertheless, there is a basic structure: As a rule, the customer journey map is created as a linear course in which the individual steps taken by the customer are shown on the horizontal axis with the analysis of those steps on the vertical.

The horizontal axis reflects the steps that the customer goes through from identifying a need, making a purchase decision, buying, and beyond. This means that a complaint, a return, or repurchase is also displayed on the horizontal axis. The more steps are shown, the more detailed the subsequent analysis can be.

The vertical axis shows the levels of analysis at each step. Different levels are, for example, the intensity of the customer's emotions, internal processes, the right contact person in the company, or the marketing channels that are relevant at each point. The visual representation of the levels enables companies to initiate targeted measures to optimize the customer experience.



The horizontal axis reflects the steps of the customer, the vertical axis shows the levels of analysis per step.

The advantages of the customer journey map at a glance:

- ✓ Helps one to recognize the process of the customer journey at a glance and change it if necessary
- ✓ Highlights potential for improvement and identifies precise points of attack for optimization
- ✓ Visual and easily understandable presentation of the customer journey
- ✓ Quick focus on pain points for maximum effectiveness
- ✓ Enables a new customer-oriented perspective on the sales process

Create a Customer Journey Map

There is no standard for creating and visualizing a customer journey map. In a few basic steps, however, the customer journey can be sketched and the correct data integrated. Companies can proceed as follows:

Step 1:

Get Reliable Data

Current data on the customer experience is important for the meaningfulness and relevance of the customer journey map. The following sources can be used for data collection:

- ✓ **Web analytics**
Data about user behavior on the website provides information on online interactions and critical points, such as abandoned shopping carts.
- ✓ **Your own customer service**
Insights from the customer support team are always up-to-date, individual, and honest. Customer service employees know the customer's needs best.
- ✓ **Customer surveys**
Direct surveys mean being in contact with the target group and also reaching customers who do not turn to the company on their own initiative. They provide insights into the expectations and decision-making of customers and reflect at which points difficulties arise.

Questions to ask yourself in this phase:



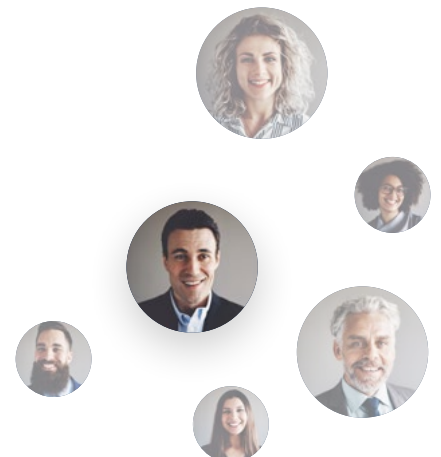
- ✓ Which channels can we use to collect information?

Step 2:

Define the Buyer Persona

In this step, you define the target group whose journey you want to look at. A buyer persona is a fictional customer who represents the typical characteristics of the target group. This figure is then analyzed as to why he or she might be interested in a product or service and what needs, goals, and emotions play a role.

For example, there can be a persona who prefers buying from the online store. Another customer segment prefers personal advice, and a third customer, in turn, researches intensively before making a purchase decision and only comes to the shop to finalize the purchase.



A well-founded buyer persona helps to understand the customer's journey and to recognize what characterizes them.

Note: Depending on the extent to which products or services differ, it can be worthwhile to work with different buyer personas. At the beginning, it is sufficient to develop a customer journey map for one buyer persona. Ideally, this is later adapted to other customer segments.

Questions to ask yourself in this phase:



- ✓ What defines the target group?
- ✓ What do the company's customers have in common?

Step 3:

Create a Timeline with Steps and Touchpoints

Steps describe the actions that a customer takes during the process. Not every step has to be a direct touchpoint with the company.

For example:

Our coffee shop is called Coffeelicious. Sarah wants to have a coffee and searches the internet for popular cafés in the area. If our shop is not among the search results, Sarah's action is a step in her journey, but not a touchpoint with Coffeelicious.

- **A touchpoint is a point of contact between the customer and a company.**



In this phase, steps along the customer journey are shown in chronological order, and the possible touchpoints are added. The touchpoints are arranged in a sequence that depicts the customer's typical journey from the first contact to the final action.

It is also important to map the customer's emotions along their journey as it influences both their own actions and their reaction to the company's actions. By reflecting on the emotional state of the customer, the company can assess where they are particularly happy and open to interacting with a company—or when they have difficulties, are frustrated, and need better support.

Tip: In this step, it is important to determine the scope of the customer journey map. The more detailed the individual touchpoints are defined, the more complex, but also more informative, the customer journey map becomes. Each touchpoint can have an impact on the buyer persona in a way that promotes or hinders the purchase.

Questions to ask yourself in this phase:



- ✓ What steps does the customer take on their journey?
- ✓ At what points does the customer come into contact with the company?

General Phases of a Customer Journey



Step 4:

Identify Relevant Channels

In this step, the various channels that play a role for the buyer persona along the journey are defined. From this, the company can analyze which relevant channels it is already using and where it can position itself even better. It then becomes clear whether the company is present at key points in the customer journey.

These measures make it possible to expand points of contact and familiarize customers with the brand. Through channel optimization, customers become aware of or are won over by a brand, with which the foundation of customer loyalty can be laid.

Potential channels: SEO, social media, personal advice, recommendations, print, content marketing, storytelling, adverts

Questions to ask yourself in this phase:



- ✓ Which channels does my target group use?
- ✓ Is our company present in the relevant channels?

Step 5:

Assess the Intensity of Steps and Touchpoints

Depending on the needs, difficulties, and goals of the buyer persona, certain steps can be more or less important for them. It is, therefore, important to know which steps or touchpoints a person in the target group experiences as particularly intense. If the company offers the right solution or assistance at the right time, it is able to gain the customer's trust.

Questions to ask yourself in this phase:



- ✓ Which points of contact are of particular importance?
- ✓ Is the customer emotionally involved?

Step 6:

Finalize the Customer Journey Map

Once all of these steps have been taken, the last step is to integrate the required additional details and individual adjustments into the customer journey map. Information on the company's internal departments or the appropriate communication channels is useful, for example, to supplement information on the respective touchpoints. Once the customer journey map has been fully developed, the various steps and touchpoints must be analyzed.

It is important to keep in mind that a customer journey map only represents the average customer and that every company still has to react individually to individual customers. However, many individual improvements are decisive for the customer as a whole, which is why the map proves to be a helpful tool in customer experience management.

Questions to ask yourself in this phase:



- ✓ What requirements do I have for the customer journey map, and which presentation suits it best?
- ✓ What information can I use to optimize the experience for the entire customer base?

Use the Customer Journey Map Correctly

A customer journey map identifies critical touchpoints and shows which company departments are involved or responsible for the respective touchpoint.

When the map has been finished, one can see which processes within the company are causing delays or have a negative impact on customer satisfaction. Once this knowledge has been gained, the company must react and develop measures to improve the weaknesses found and analyzed.

After all, the goal of every company is to offer customers a positive experience at all points of contact. Creating a customer journey map is, therefore, only the first step. The correct application of these, however, is far more important.

Customer Journey Map and zenloop

With the integrated experience management platform zenloop, customer feedback can be collected at all relevant touchpoints of the customer journey.

Our SaaS solution automatically collects customer feedback, analyzes, and clusters it to derive personalized measures in order to optimally react to feedback.

Data on customer satisfaction is used at various points of contact, and the voice of the customer moves into the long-term focus of your business activity.





Conclusion

A customer journey map can be created step by step and offers advantages for companies of all types.

It helps to gain knowledge of the points of contact at which customers are satisfied or dissatisfied, and thus to develop a better understanding of one's own product or service offering.

Various departments within the company can benefit from this visual representation because a customer journey map is used to highlight critical points and to involve the responsible team at every stage of the customer journey. In this way, the customer experience can be optimized efficiently, and gaps in the journey are filled.

Need more information?

Our experts are happy to help and are always available for a free consultation on all aspects of zenloop and customer experience management.

