



# Journey Mapping

30+ REASONS TO MAP CUSTOMER JOURNEYS

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## Have you started journey mapping yet? Or are you still wondering why it's an important weapon to have in your customer experience management arsenal?

Journey maps are getting a lot of flak right now. They've been discounted as fluffy or useless or a waste of time. These are some of the headlines I've seen:

- “Five Fatal Flaws of Most Customer Journey Maps”
- “Journey Maps are a Waste of Time”
- “7 Huge Misconceptions about Journey Mapping”
- “The Fundamental Flaw in Customer Journey Mapping”
- “Journey Mapping Fail”
- “Are Customer Journey Maps More Than a Pretty Diagram? Are They Worth the Investment?”
- “The Trouble with Journey Maps”
- “Why Journey Mapping Sucks”

None of that sounds very promising, does it? No wonder there's little interest in mapping among companies that haven't yet done so. That sounds scary and ominous – and certainly not worthy of the time and resources it takes to make customer journeys. But I'm here to tell you that maps are a catalyst for change – when done right! (I'll save the “done right” part for another white paper; I think I need to re-establish why journey mapping is important and what some of the benefits of mapping are first.)

But, consider this. None of these headlines sounds great, either.

- “United Airlines Apologizes After Dog Dies in Overhead Bin”
- “United Airlines Passenger is Dragged from an Overbooked Flight”
- “United Replaces Employee Bonuses with a Lottery”

I don't mean to pick on United Airlines; I just know they're always good for a story about an experience gone wrong.

But let's be real. Most companies design the experience from the *inside out*, based on what's best for the company. If they designed the experience from the *outside in*, based on listening to – and understanding – their customers (or in the case of the employee experience, their employees) and bringing the customer voice and perspective into all they do, these headlines wouldn't exist today.

### What is Journey Mapping?

Let me start by explaining what journey maps are not: they are not lifecycle maps, sales funnels, buyer funnels, buyer lifecycles, etc.; those are all marketing tools and are too high level for customer experience design. Customer experience professionals require a lot more detail at a more micro level in order to understand what's going well and what isn't.

Instead, journey mapping is a creative process in which you illustrate the steps customers' take for some interaction they had with your company, some journey they were taking to complete a task and to achieve a desired outcome. It's a timeline of what customers are doing (and thinking and

feeling) throughout each interaction. The map tells the story of the customer's journey as she interacts with your brand, all the while building empathy for her. Once companies understand how they make the customer feel, they can identify gaps in the customer journey and areas for improvement, fix the pain points, and ensure they keep delivering on the delighters.

And finally, journey mapping isn't just about what the experience is like today; mapping is also used to co-create a better experience with your customers for the future. Ultimately, if done right, that latter statement is what this process is all about: *Journey mapping is a tool – and a process – that allows companies to walk in the customer's shoes to really understand her experience today and to build a better experience for tomorrow.*

## Benefits of Journey Mapping

Mapping isn't just a lame exercise; it's a learning exercise. Companies learn about their customers and about the experience they put them through to interact with the business. And that learning allows them to become more customer-focused and more aware of the experiences they create for their customers. That's just the beginning.

It's important to note that **journey maps aren't just a tool; journey mapping is a process**. Just because you've created the map doesn't mean you're done. There's still a lot of work to do. That work yields some amazing outcomes for your company and for your customers. That's what I'm here to write about in this paper.

Done right, maps help companies...

- Understand the experience today
- Design new experiences for tomorrow
- Implement and activate new experiences
- Communicate and socialize experiences
- Align around the customer
- Shift the organizational culture and mindset

These sound like lofty goals and outcomes, but if you've been through the mapping *process*, you know this isn't a stretch.

## Journey Mapping Outcomes

Let me add some color commentary around each one of those bullet points to help you get a better picture of what lies ahead for you.

### *Understand the experience today*

You can't transform something you don't understand, is what I like to say. Maps bring understanding. They highlight and diagnose existing issues and opportunities; let's not forget that, at the same time, they also capture what's going well.

Some of the specific things that maps do to help companies understand the experience today are outlined below.

1. **Tell the customer story.** By walking in her shoes, by understanding her needs, goals, and emotions at each step, companies get a very clear picture of where the customer started, how the company made her feel, and whether her needs were met or not.
2. **Identify gaps in the journey.** The maps call out which steps in the interaction are not clearly defined, causing the customer to fail at the job he's trying to do or the task he's trying to complete.
3. **Identify points in the journey that are outside of the company's control.** Why is this important? You need to map in enough detail so that you can understand where pain points exist or where the experience is breaking down. Oftentimes, these steps are outside of the company's control; the company must then use that information, in turn, to design an experience that mitigates those pain points.
4. **Identify hand-offs that are being missed.** These are often steps in the interaction that the customer takes that the company isn't even aware of. And if the company is aware, these hand-offs are often painful and could be deemed a key moment of truth.
5. **Identify key moments of truth,** which are those make-or-break moments in the journey at which the customer decides if she will continue with the journey or go elsewhere.
6. **Identify performance measurement opportunities and optimize VoC efforts.** Listen where it makes the most sense to listen, and uncover those areas where you should be listening but aren't.
7. **Learn about and understand your customer.** When companies collaborate and map journeys (both current state and future state) or validate assumptive maps with customers, a huge opportunity exists; it opens the door for companies to connect with and learn about the customer, his needs, his preferences, how he uses your products, and more.
8. **Build empathy for the customer.** When you capture what the customer is feeling at each step as he interacts with the brand, it's an eye-opening view into how the company makes customers feel. Data can't communicate those frustrations, but journey maps tell the customer story, as noted earlier.
9. **Get a single view of the customer/customer experience.** Journey maps include data and artifacts collected about the customer experience; the maps should become the one source for all data and insights about the particular experience being captured. Ultimately, this should drive collaboration and help break down silos. More on that in a bit.

### ***Design new experiences for tomorrow***

Once you understand the current experience and have identified the key moments of truth, maps help you prioritize and rethink existing processes and/or create new ones. But that can only be done when you create two other maps in conjunction with the journey map you've just created: a service blueprint and a process map.

Journey mapping cannot be done in a vacuum, so to speak, without creating those other two maps, too. While the journey map captures what the customer is doing, thinking, and feeling, the service blueprint captures service delivery across the touchpoints, including onstage and backstage people, tools, documents, and processes.

Oftentimes, some of the service blueprint items – specifically onstage people, tools, documents, and processes – are captured at the same time the customer journey is being mapped, but the

entire service blueprint must be developed to get a clear understanding of the entire experience ecosystem.

While the service blueprint focuses on service flow and delivery onstage and backstage, you must also identify the supporting systems and workflow that occur behind the scenes to ensure successful delivery of services. Process maps capture the behind-the-scenes details, including those provided by third-party vendors. The main difference between a service blueprint, which is technically a type of process map, and a process map is the inclusion of the customer in a service blueprint, i.e., how the service is delivered for the customer.

Between the end-to-end experience uncovered by the journey map and the surface-to-core look at what happens to support that experience, you've got a great picture of the ecosystem and are better able to prioritize and rethink existing processes and how the experience is being delivered.

Given the coordination with service blueprints and process maps, journey maps help you to redesign the experience as follows.

1. **Identify inefficient touchpoints and processes, rules, policies that don't make sense.** And then subsequently design a better experience by updating, fixing, or killing all of these inefficiencies.
2. **Prioritize resources for improvement efforts/projects.** Because of this new-found awareness for all things inefficient in your customer experience, you can now not only prioritize the improvement efforts but also the resources required to execute each.
3. **Use as a decision support tool.** In order to prioritize improvements, the maps provide you with information about the impact on the customer and the customer experience should you choose to fix/not to fix, and you must marry that information with cost to fix, time to fix, impact on the business, resource requirements, and more.
4. **Brainstorm and ideate the ideal customer experience.** It's not enough to just kill bad rules and processes; you need to design a better experience, as well. In future state mapping workshops, the conversation revolves around doing just that: designing the ideal experience. You ask customers to brainstorm and provide a ton of suggestions on what they would ultimately like the experience to be.
5. **Visualize future state.** Once you have an idea of what customers consider the ideal future state experience, you can map that and use that as a blueprint for the redesign.
6. **Adapt to emerging and changing needs.** Those customer conversations give you a heads up and a better understanding of emerging trends and needs ("skate to where the puck is going to be"), thereby allowing you to get ahead of the curve and more easily plan for the future.

With all this information in your hands, you can design the new experience of tomorrow. This is what the journey mapping process is all about.

### ***Implement and activate new experiences***

Journey maps are not just a design tool but also provide a blueprint or a statement of direction for the work to be done to implement and active the new experience. They aid with this in many ways, including as a...

1. **Tool in the change management process.** Journey mapping is a process in and of itself, one that involves or includes change management; after all, maps are a catalyst for change. As such, there must be a process in place with and around the maps to ensure that change occurs.
2. **Blueprint for the new experience to be delivered.** Once completed, the maps outline the new experience, becoming the guideline for implementing new steps and processes for the future state experience
3. **Teaching tool.** The blueprint also teaches employees about the new experience they must deliver.
4. **Guide to influence talent requirements and hiring decisions.** Knowing the experience that needs to be delivered and the roles that impact that experience, journey maps can inform and influence staffing requirements and hiring decisions to ensure the right people are on the job for your customers.
5. **Reduce effort for employees.** When you've looked at the service blueprint and the process map and then redesign the delivery and support, you've simply got to make the experience better for employees, too, by making it easier to do their jobs and to deliver a great experience for customers.

### ***Communicate and share experiences***

Maps are great communication and teaching tools. These visualizations are used to socialize the current and the future state experiences, bringing awareness and understanding of the customer and her journey to interact with the company. Socializing maps offers the following benefits.

1. **Define and build ownership and accountability for moments of truth and improvement areas.** One of the swim lanes I like to add to journey maps is Ownership, defining who will be accountable for improving a step in the journey, if it causes the customer pain. Oftentimes, this creates awareness that did not exist prior to creating the map.
2. **Train and coach employees about the customer experience.** Employees often don't think of the customer and the customer's interactions with the company in the form of a journey or in the form of a broader experience. Maps are used to teach employees about the customer experience discipline, in general.
3. **Teach employees about the experience they are expected to deliver.** The visual aspect of the maps, especially, makes them easy teaching tools for employees, allowing them to see exactly where they fit into the customer experience, the impact they have on the customer at that moment in the journey, and what they need to do to make that moment a great experience for the customer.
4. **Onboard employees and indoctrinate them into the CX culture.** Similar to #2, journey maps can also be used during employee onboarding, to help them understand the customer-centric culture they've just become a part of and what that means both overall and specifically for each individual.
5. **Ongoing educational tools.** As the experience is improved, the maps must be updated. They then need to be shared and socialized with the employees impacting the specific journey that was mapped, allowing employees to help implement the improvements and then understand the requirements for delivering the new experience.

## ***Align around the customer***

Journey maps place the focus on the customer and on his experience interacting with the brand. They help align the organization around the customer in a variety of ways, all of which are related and build on each other.

1. **Get executive commitment for your customer experience transformation.** Oftentimes, executives are so far removed from the day-to-day customer interactions and transactions that they have no idea how painful it is to do business with the company. Journey maps create those eye-opening, aha moments that get the executives on board to commit resources for improving the experience.
2. **Get organizational buy-in and adoption.** When employees understand what is changing, why, and how it impacts them, they are more likely to get on board with the change. And when they are asked to be a part of that change – rather than having it forced on them – they are more likely to buy into it. Maps tell the story of the change and how it affects everyone involved.
3. **Drive organizational ownership and engagement.** Stakeholders understand why improvements need to be made and take ownership of what they've learned is broken.
4. **Speak a universal language (customer).** The more you understand about your customers and their experience, the more you get everyone on the same page, talking the same language, talking about the customer, and wanting to design and deliver a better experience.
5. **Similarly, align the organization around a common cause.** The common cause, of course, is the customer.
6. **Provide a clear line of sight for employees to the target: customers.** The maps call out for employees how and when they touch customers along the journey.
7. **At the same time, maps help both frontline and back-office employees understand how they impact the customer experience.** Most back-office employees probably don't even think they are part of the customer experience. Just because an employee is not customer-facing does not mean she doesn't affect the customer's experience. Maps provide a clear view into how each employee impacts the customer experience.

## ***Shift the organizational mindset***

A lot of this CX transformation work is really a mindset shift. Executives and employees alike must choose to prioritize customers and the customer experience differently; it needs to be a primary focus. Journey maps can help. Anything you can do to educate the organization about customers and the customer experience or to keep customers, their needs, and their pain points front and center is going to help.

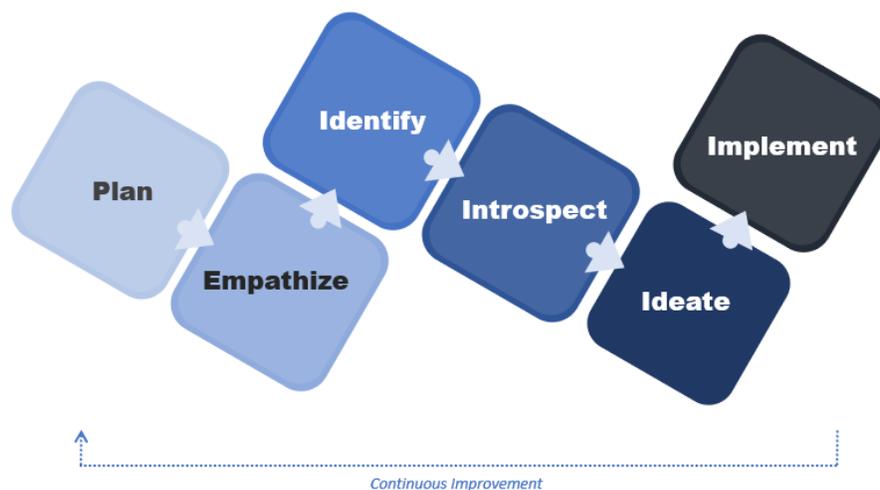
1. **Bring the customer (voice) to life for the organization.** Hang the maps on the wall. Place them in your customer room. Share the digital versions of the map. And don't forget to have the corresponding personas clearly displayed, further helping people understand who the customer is and what problems she's trying to solve with your products – except that it's too painful to do so.
2. **And keep customers top of mind.** Talk about the maps. Share the maps. Refer to the maps.
3. **Return the business to human thinking, not number (policy, account, case, etc.) thinking.** The maps really put the interactions customers have with the business into human terms

and shift the perspective to the customer viewpoint. Oftentimes, the human component is forgotten, and companies treat customers as policy or account numbers.

4. **Break down or connect organizational silos.** When cross-functional teams work together to create current and future state maps, sharing data and information in the process in order to create that single view of the customer, only good things can happen.
5. **Shift CX thinking from touchpoints to journeys.** While employees learn about how they impact the customer during her interaction, they will also learn that the experience is more than just that touch; they will learn that the experience is a journey comprised of many touchpoints strung together – and should be viewed holistically. It changes the perspective from transactions to relationships.
6. **Shift organization thinking from inside-out to outside-in.** Inside-out thinking happens when executives think they know what's best for the customer; instead, they are really just doing what is best for the business. Outside-in thinking shifts that to always bring the customer into every decision, every conversation, every process design; journey maps help do just that.

## Journey Maps are More Than a Tool

As you can see, there are a lot of different ways that journey maps can inform the organization about the customer and her experience. The benefits are real. I've mentioned that journey mapping is a tool and a process. This is my six-step process from maps to outcomes:



1. **Plan:** This first step includes all the pre-work and prep work that needs to be done in order to get ready for your journey mapping workshop, including identifying the personas for which you'll map, outlining the scope and the objectives of the map, determining the appropriate workshop participants, and educating the participants on what lies ahead.
2. **Empathize:** This is the actual current state mapping workshop, where you'll map what customers are doing, thinking, and feeling along the journey you selected in Step 1. You'll also add data and metrics into the map to help identify moments of truth and bring the map to life with artifacts (e.g., pictures, videos, documents); and assign owners to each of the customers' steps.

3. **Identify:** The map alone doesn't identify moments of truth; for that, you need data - and it's one of the main reasons you need to insert data into your maps. In this step, you'll identify and prioritize moments of truth, research issues behind those broken moments, conduct root cause analysis, develop action plans, and assign owners and deadlines to the plan.
4. **Introspect:** Once you're done with the journey map, it's time to look inward and create a service blueprint, which outlines the people, tools, and systems that support and facilitate the customer experience, and a process map, which outlines the workflows that do the same, to correspond with the customer journey you've mapped. By linking the service blueprint to the customer's journey, you've got that end-to-end picture of the journey plus the surface to core view, giving you the complete picture of what's working and what's not.
5. **Ideate:** Next up, you'll conduct future-state mapping workshops - for both the customer journey and the corresponding service blueprints - during which you'll ideate solutions to customer and backstage pain points, identify ways to differentiate the experience, and then design the future state.
6. **Implement:** And finally, it's time to get to work, time to implement the changes. Prototype and test the new design with customers – and fail fast; fix, test, and fail fast; implement the new experience; share the maps and train employees on the updated processes and the new experience to deliver to customers; close the loop with customers and let them know what's changed; and always update the maps to reflect the new current experience.

Know the tool. Embrace the process. And remember this one thing: creating the map is only half the battle, what you do with it wins the war.

## A Closing Thought

Journey mapping isn't just for the customer experience. Map the employee experience, the partner experience, and the experience of any other constituent who interacts with your company, including your internal customers. If there's an experience that needs to be improved, there's a map to be created.

## About the Author



Annette Franz is founder and CEO of CX Journey Inc. She's got 25 years of experience in both helping companies understand their employees and customers and identifying what drives retention, satisfaction, engagement, and the overall experience - so that, together, we can design a better experience for all constituents.

Annette was named one of “The 100 Most Influential Tech Women on Twitter” by Business Insider and is regularly recognized by companies around the world as a top influencer in Customer Experience.

She co-hosts the weekly #CXChat on Twitter, serves as an executive officer on the Board of Directors of the Customer Experience Professionals Association (CXPA), mentors other professionals in this field to help them advance their careers, and is a speaker and an avid writer; you can find her work not only on her own blog but also in Forbes, Business2Community, CustomerThink, Quality Digest, APICS Magazine, and more. She is a Certified Customer Experience Professional (CCXP).

She is also an official member of the Forbes Coaches Council, an invitation-only community for successful business and career coaches. Members are selected based on their depth and diversity of experience.

And she's an Advisory Board member for CX@Rutgers.

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