

Developing a customer-  
centric operating model  
Part 2 | Design and activate



Building a better  
working world



As we explored in the last article, the first step toward improving your overall customer experience (CX) and customer-centricity is listening and understanding what your customers are saying. Without that step, one would not have the necessary information to begin the improvement journey. Equally as important, however, is the knowledge and road map of what to do with this newfound customer feedback.

The design of a standardized approach to address identified CX opportunities centers around establishing major activities that help define the customer experience based on the data collected. The types of activities and frequency can vary company to company, industry to industry. However, several major activities are critical components to consider when creating your approach to address your CX opportunities.

## Design

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### Standardizing an approach to addressing CX opportunities

- ▶ **Customer distinction:** prioritizing customers based on their current and potential value in order to strike the right balance between too few or too many resources committed
- ▶ **Journey mapping:** documenting processes, touchpoints, hassles and emotions from the customer's point of view, while also collecting challenges across the employee experience
- ▶ **Experience redesign:** Defining future-state capabilities to enhance current-state processes, with ability to define net-new service offerings
- ▶ **Business case for change:** prioritizing short-, medium- and long-term capability developments based on return on investment (ROI) and benefit to your company
- ▶ **Engagement strategy:** developing a plan to engage with impacted stakeholders to drive change through mindsets and behavior modifications, such as purpose, culture change and leadership alignment



Developing a standardized approach to address the data and knowledge gained from customers gives you the ability to identify and quantify the impact of creating a compelling offering for customers that drives the optimal business results. This quantification and plan to execute ultimately informs the prioritization of future investment based on expected ROI and a consistency in CX design to support broader cultural changes.

## Dow case study

Understanding the customer journey is the yin to the yang of listening. You need both in order to get a full picture of the actual experience offered and identify effective ways to improve it.

Armed with feedback from surveys and customer interviews, the Dow CX Team started journey mapping – a discipline that helps map out the current state of the customer experience, identify pain points and start the conversation about where to improve.

We hosted journey-mapping sessions and invited stakeholders within Dow that impacted the customer journey to collaborate and bring their perspective. Colleagues from sales, marketing, customer service, manufacturing, supply chain and R&D – to name a few – provided their perspectives on the issues and collectively brainstormed the future state of Dow's customer journey.

## Activate

### Establishing a robust implementation framework to achieve success

The greatest challenge in any paradigm shift is the “stickiness” of the changes proposed. One could have all the data and analytics needed, a sound approach and a detailed execution plan, but without proper activation a well-laid plan is doomed to fail. The success of any endeavor is driven by the people executing it, because, ultimately, they are the ones tasked with deploying a new, different and sometimes conflicting strategy from what has been used in the past. Because of this, people and change management is paramount in activating any new CX infrastructure. While similar to the design portion of this discussion, activation of your people can be achieved through many different means and is often driven by the culture of your company. However, there are several key levers to keep in mind when thinking of ways to fully achieve success.





### Engage your people

Individuals are more likely to believe in something if they have a hand in building it. It is important to encourage active contributions from all stakeholders. Enable those individuals directly impacting customer satisfaction to identify the change needed – and show the ripple effect of roles and behaviors of those who are further from the customer.



### Train your people

Execution of communication, training and other readiness activities is key to making sure the new ways of working stick. Providing those individuals with hands-on scenarios and quick access reference materials make sure they have the knowledge and preparedness to execute the new state of customer-centricity, while minimizing the risk of reverting back to previous behaviors due to lack of knowledge or comfort.



### Support your people

Providing necessary support prior to, during and after go-live will further facilitate adoption. Having a known and stable support system helps those individuals tasked with driving change execute that change even in difficult and ambiguous situations because they will know how, where and when to leverage their appropriate resources.

Overall, the activation phase is arguably the most important in driving sustainable change. By managing and promoting activation through people-driven means, you achieve adoption of new experiences with minimal business disruptions. This creates an alignment of internal culture consistent with external CX initiatives and an overall well-organized approach to roll out, with an opportunity to evaluate results prior to scaling and fully driving home that change.

## Dow case study

One of the critical components to igniting and sustaining change was to establish and build a grass-roots effort among the employee base. In the early stages, we solicited and built a cross-functional, cross-business and cross-geography group of change agents to build awareness and help spread excitement and engagement throughout the entire organization. We referred to this group as the CX Change Champions. This network was a support system to the CX Team and gave the opportunity to colleagues from all across Dow to play a bigger role in CX.

We often forget that the biggest challenge when undergoing an enterprise-wide transformation isn't about process change, but getting the people managing those processes to be aligned and inspired to change their behaviors.

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