

ICXI -POST newsbriefing

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Introduction From The President

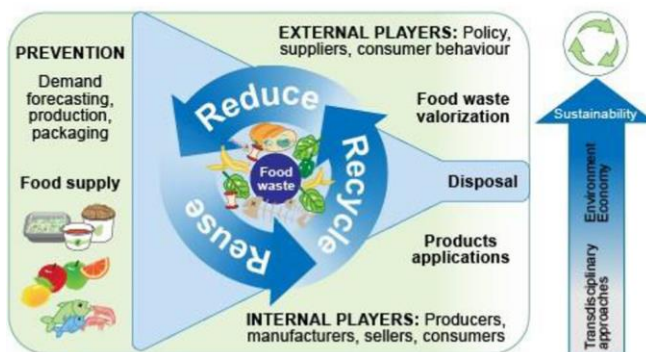
One of the core truisms that applies to all organisations is that

“All organisations have to have costs but no organisation has to have waste”

Waste is neither compulsory or necessary especially when it is of the repetitious kind where a failure to fix the root cause means that an element of waste can become built into the daily operational processes. This means that it can become invisible and assumed to be part of the operational cost and thereby affect the organisation in terms of its price competitiveness or its profitability or both.

Waste is often perceived to be a by-product or function of production processes or with poor planning, over supply and purchasing processes or in the management and disposal of the residues of such actions. The truth is that it occurs in every part of the supply chain, in every function in an organisation and in every stage in the customers engagement and relationship journey. When it occurs in their supply chain organisations run the risk of having their suppliers cost of waste being passed along to them and the effect may be subtle and gradual , when it occurs in the management of their customers’ engagement and relationship journeys the impact can be very direct and very damaging in terms of both short-term cost and long-term revenue.

It is interesting to note that ineffective service quality management is never referred to as waste. Wasted customers, wasted money, wasted opportunity, wasted value, wasted effort. Instead, the viewpoint seems to be focussed on the COST of resolving the issues generated by waste, cost of compensation, cost of customer replacement, cost of replacement and repair etc., all of which seems to contradict the core truism stated above. While looking for and the elimination of waste could inevitably lead to a more customer experience it seems the over-riding general view of waste may be blurring a clear view of how the real issues could be addressed.



So Where is the Waste in Customer Experience Management?

The usual approach is to focus around the holy grail issue of customer loyalty and the financial benefits associated with its preservation and the costs associated with its loss. There are, however a multiplicity of related areas where waste occurs and which may provide early warning signs of impending customer loyalty damage. For example

1.Product Returns: Poor customer service may result in customers receiving incorrect, damaged, or unsatisfactory products. This can lead to higher rates of product returns, which can generate waste in terms of packaging materials, transportation emissions, and additional processing required to handle returned items.

2.Excessive Communication: If customer service fails to address customer inquiries or concerns effectively, it can result in prolonged back-and-forth communication. This leads to an increase in the number of interactions required to resolve an issue, wasting time and resources for both customers and the company.

3.Repeat Service Calls: Inadequate customer service may fail to resolve customer issues adequately during the initial interaction. This can result in customers needing to make multiple service calls, causing unnecessary consumption of time, energy, and resources to address the same problem repeatedly.

4.Production Waste: If customer feedback regarding product defects or issues is not effectively communicated to the appropriate departments within a company, it can lead to ongoing production of faulty or unsatisfactory products. This results in waste of raw materials, energy, and resources in the production process.

5.Negative Word-of-Mouth: When customers have a negative experience with customer service, they are more likely to share their dissatisfaction with others, either through word-of-mouth or online reviews. This negative publicity can harm a company's reputation and lead to a loss of potential customers, resulting in wasted marketing and advertising efforts.

6.Refunds or Replacements: When customers return products due to quality issues, the company often incurs the cost of providing refunds or replacements. This includes the cost of the product itself, as well as any associated shipping or handling expenses

7.Reverse Logistics: Returning products involves logistics and operational processes, such as receiving, inspecting, and restocking the returned items. Companies need to allocate resources and labor to handle the reverse logistics process, which incurs additional costs.

8.Repair or Rework: In cases where the returned products can be repaired or reworked to meet the quality standards, the company may need to invest in labour, materials, and equipment to fix the issues. This adds to the overall cost of managing returns.

9.Disposal or Liquidation: In situations where the returned products cannot be resold or repaired, companies may have to dispose of them or liquidate them at discounted prices. This results in financial losses, as the company may not recover the full value of the products.

10.Customer Acquisition Costs: When customers return products due to quality issues, it can lead to negative word-of-mouth and potentially deter other potential customers from purchasing from the company. This can increase the cost of acquiring new customers and impact future sales.

11.Loss of Customer Loyalty: Poor product quality and subsequent returns can erode customer trust and loyalty. Losing loyal customers can have long-term financial implications, as acquiring new customers is generally more expensive than retaining existing ones.

12.Customer Churn: Poor service experiences can result in customers switching to competitors or discontinuing their business relationship with the company. The loss of customers directly affects revenue, particularly if those customers were frequent or high-value purchasers.

13.Customer Retention Costs: Retaining existing customers is generally more cost-effective than acquiring new ones. Poor customer service can lead to customer churn, which requires additional resources and efforts to regain customer trust and loyalty or acquire new customers to offset the loss.

14.Reduced Customer Lifetime Value: Customers who experience poor service may decrease their overall spending or frequency of purchases with the company. This reduces the customer lifetime value (CLV) as they are likely to spend less over time.

15.Diminished Repeat Business: Poor service experiences often discourage customers from making repeat purchases. Instead, they may seek alternatives or explore other options. Reduced repeat business can result in lost revenue opportunities and lower customer retention rates.

16.Missed Upselling or Cross-selling Opportunities: When customers are dissatisfied with the service they receive, they may be less receptive to additional sales or upgrade offers. This results in missed opportunities for upselling or cross-selling, limiting revenue potential.

17.Other Lost Revenue Opportunities: Poor customer service can result in reduced customer spending, lower repeat purchases, and missed upselling or cross-selling opportunities. These factors contribute to potential revenue losses for the organization.

18.Operational Costs: Inefficient or ineffective customer service processes can increase operational costs. This includes expenses related to handling customer complaints, resolving issues, training employees, implementing better systems, and managing returns or refunds.

19.Brand Damage and Reputation Costs: Poor customer service can tarnish a company's brand reputation, resulting in negative perceptions among current and potential customers. Rebuilding trust and repairing the brand's image can be a costly and time-consuming endeavour.

20.Employee Productivity Costs: Unresolved customer service issues or frequent customer complaints can negatively impact employee morale and productivity. Increased time and effort may be required to address customer concerns, leading to decreased efficiency and productivity across the organization.

21.Legal Costs: In extreme cases, poor customer service can lead to legal disputes, lawsuits, or regulatory fines. These legal costs can be significant and have a direct impact on the organization's finances.

22.Compensation Costs. A favourite tactic to resolve customer dissatisfaction is to give customers some financial compensation. The best effect this may have is to ***“buy the organisation a second chance”***. If the root cause is not resolved and the same issue recurs there is a high chance the customer may be lost for ever.

23.Loss of Key Suppliers. Especially in B2B relationships where key suppliers are negatively impacted by the poor performance of an intermediary in their supply chain to the end customer they may choose to withdraw their supply and seek an alternative distributor. This can become a particularly sensitive issue in the case of internationally distributed products or services.

How Do These Factors Impact External and Internal Performance Measurement.

Measuring their experience through the voice of the customer is the first place to start but the analysis and deeper investigation and measurement to uncover, measure and resolve every issue of substance uncovered becomes an organisational imperative if it is to understand and manage the waste generated and to prevent it becoming invisible in the cost base and an impediment to optimising organisational performance

A Few Conventional Stats

The cost of bad customer service according to Neil Patel co-founder of NP Digital described by the Wall Street Journal a sa top influencer on the web, Forbes says he is one of the top 10 marketers, and Entrepreneur Magazine says he created one of the 100 most brilliant companies. Neil is a New York Times bestselling author and was recognized as a top 100 entrepreneur under the age of 30 by President Obama and a top 100 entrepreneur under the age of 35 by the United Nations

The Cost of Bad Customer Service

Bad customer service has got to be the fastest way for a business to lose customers. Everyone has had a really bad experience at some time or another whether in a restaurant, when buying a car or even when buying from an online retailer. The graphic below will show you the actual cost of all this bad customer service that we experience.

\$289 is the average value of every lost business relationship in the U.S. per year
71% of consumers ended a business relationship due to a poor customer service experience

61% of customers take their business to a competitor after a poor customer service experience

The financial sector lost \$44 BILLION as a result of bad customer service!

Bad service consists of confusing automated self-service, long waits, poor attention and inexperienced representatives

<https://neilpatel.com/blog/customer-service/>

THE PRICE OF BAD CUSTOMER SERVICE

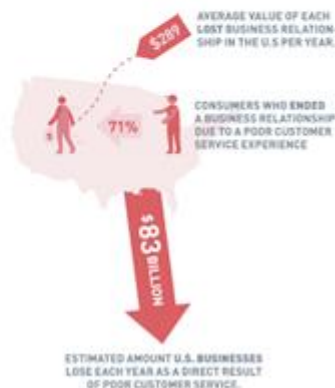
HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU HEARD, "THAT'S NOT A PART OF MY JOB DESCRIPTION" OR HAD TO DEAL WITH IRATE CUSTOMER SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES? THE TRUTH REVEALS THAT BAD CUSTOMER SERVICE COSTS VARIOUS INDUSTRIES AROUND THE WORLD BILLIONS OF DOLLARS EVERY YEAR. HELL HATH NO FURY LIKE A CUSTOMER SCORNED.

CUSTOMER SERVICE FAIL

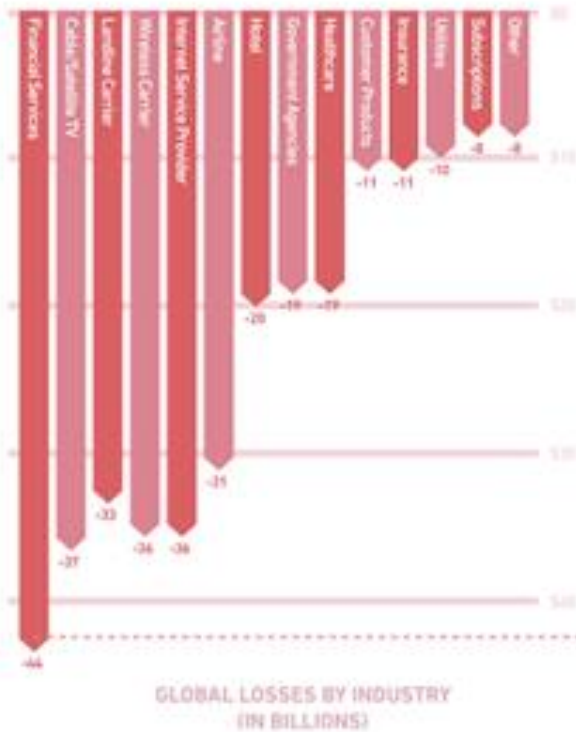
AROUND THE WORLD



IN THE U.S.



HOW BAD CUSTOMER SERVICE AFFECTS INDUSTRIES



WITH NEARLY **60%** OF CALLS INTO BANKS FAILING TO REACH THE DESIRED PERSON FIRST TIME IT'S NO WONDER THE FINANCIAL SECTOR WAS THE HARDEST HIT INDUSTRY, WHICH LOST **\$44 billion**



ACCORDING TO CONSUMER SATISFACTION STATEMENTS:

BAD

SERVICE CONSISTS OF...

- CONFUSING AUTOMATED SELF-SERVICE
- LONG WAITS
- POOR ATTENTION
- INEXPERIENCED REPRESENTATIVES

GOOD

SERVICE CONSISTS OF...

- COMPETENCY +
- CONVENIENCE +
- PROACTIVITY +
- PERSONALIZATION +

MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS IN A SATISFYING CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE:

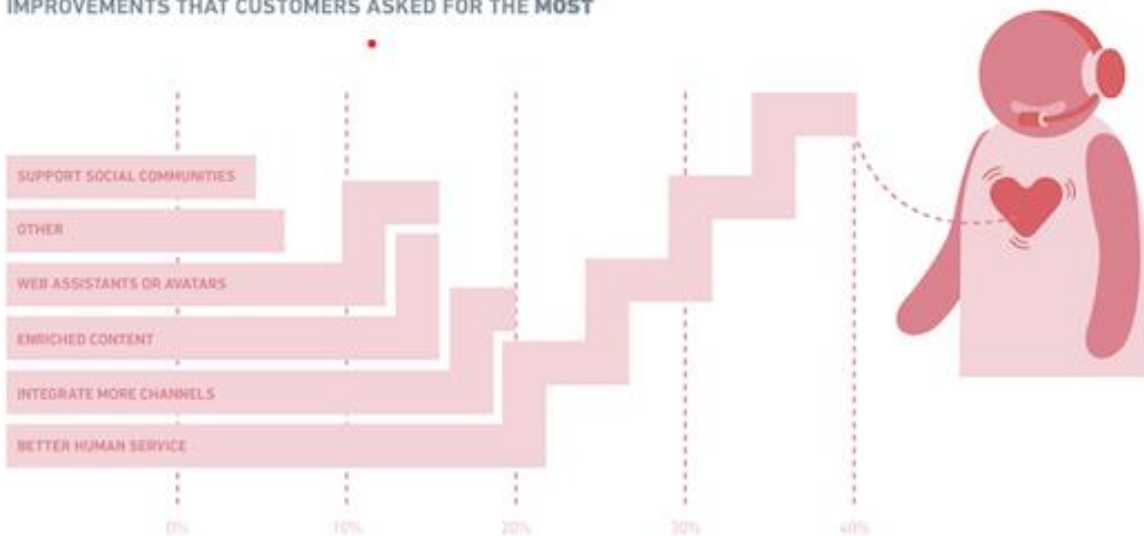


THE COMPETENCE LEVEL OF THE CUSTOMER SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES PLAYED THE LARGEST ROLE IN CUSTOMERS' EXPERIENCES.



WHAT CAN BE DONE?

IMPROVEMENTS THAT CUSTOMERS ASKED FOR THE MOST



OVERALL, CONSUMERS ARE DEMANDING BETTER INTEGRATION BETWEEN SELF-SERVICE AND ASSISTED SERVICE, WITH CLOSE TO 40% REQUESTING MORE LIVE, HUMAN SERVICE.

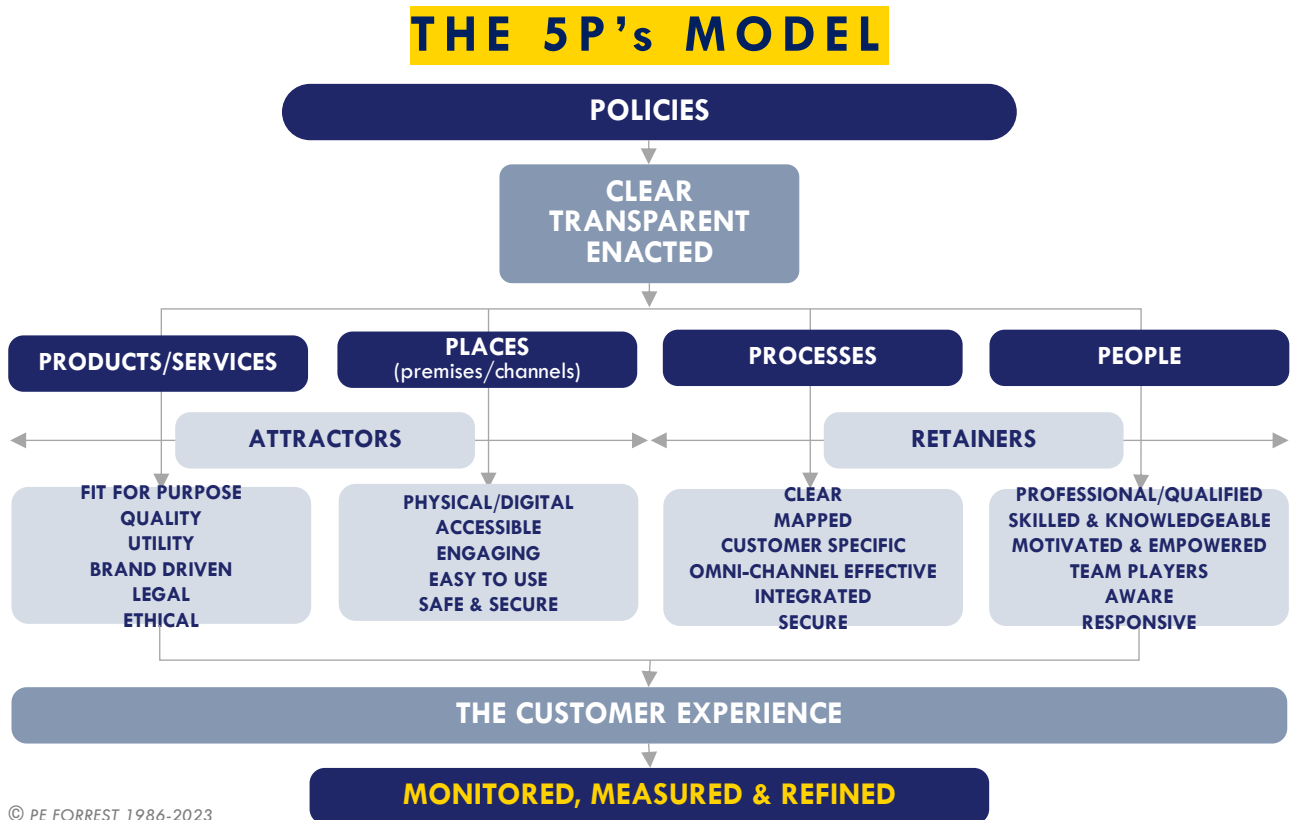
MAKING THESE IMPROVEMENTS CAN MEAN A BETTER BOTTOM LINE FOR ANY BUSINESS.

These statistics are a very good example of the kind of thing that many organisations gather to understand what customers do or do not want but in themselves they do not address the wider issues that arise when

A cost-of-loss mindset is replaced by an elimination-of-waste mindset for addressing customer experience management issues.

So Where Is Waste More Likely to be Found?

A useful starting point in mining for waste in pursuit of finding customer experience gold could be the “5 P’s Model Service Excellence Model” that has been used for many years by organisations as the key platform on which to base their customer experience management and upon which the International Customer Experience Standard (ICXS 2019-02 and the International Digital Customer Experience Standard(IDCXS2022-02) have been developed.



Originally developed by one of the founders of the Customer Experience Institute in conjunction with a service quality study by Brunel University London the model has been reviewed, developed, and adapted throughout the past 40 years to ensure its effectiveness and relevance to both the traditional and digital worlds. The 5P’s identifies the importance of the 5 key elements of service excellence which need to be concurrently managed and delivered. It is also a valuable diagnostic tool and in conjunction with the areas of potential waste identified earlier may provide some structure and focus for a waste elimination strategy.

POLICY

Policies create the framework for actions within an organisation should be driven by the expected outcomes of the core values relating to service excellence.. Policies are the mechanism which enable and condition the other 4Ps (Places, Products, Processes and People). They set the parameter for the allocation of resources (time, money, effort, people etc.) to assist the achievement of the organisation's service excellence goals.



Organisational values and corporate behaviour is becoming an increasingly important factor in customer experience delivery but that is a discussion for another time.

But, on the, sometimes misplaced, assumption that **Service Excellence** is a core value of an organisation then it should logically flow that the leaders of the organisation, in deciding that service excellence will be one of the directional controllers of the way the organisation behaves, then they will have established a number of expected requirements that must exist for a consequential number of expected outcomes or results to be achieved. For example one expected outcome might be a totally customer centric culture throughout the organisation.

Such a thing will not just occur. A policy is required to define the objectives of such an aim, to set the rules and parameters for its achievement, develop an implementation strategy and plan, set the success measurement criteria and allocate the resources required to achieve the desired outcome.

It may sound somewhat complex but is no more complex than normal procedure for deciding to build a factory, open a call centre or develop an online business. Not so doing risks wasting the opportunity to optimise the benefits from the organisation's only source of revenue - the customer.

PRODUCTS /SERVICES

Products and Services are the principal reason customers initially engage with organisations. The quality of the delivered Products and Services, the value they represent to the customers and their suitability for the customer's intended purpose are the crucial factors on which customers base importance and performance.

Products and services can have a significant impact on the customer experience and are a key area for waste mining. The following areas provide some sectors where fit-for-purpose can be examined

Quality: The quality of a product directly influences the customer experience. When a product meets or exceeds customer expectations in terms of performance, reliability, and durability, it enhances their satisfaction and when coupled with perceived value may be indicative that waste levels are low. Conversely, a low-quality product with disappointing perceived value can indicate the opposite.

Functionality: The functionality of a product plays a crucial role in shaping the customer experience. If a product performs its intended function effectively and efficiently, it enhances the user's experience. Products that are intuitive to use, offer useful features, and fulfill customer needs contribute to a positive customer experience. Conversely poorly performing products create waste in areas like complaints management, compensation and refunds. Even if such products have a replacement agreement built into their supply contracts waste is still created in the cost of administration.

Design: The design of a product encompasses its aesthetics, ergonomics, and user interface. Well-designed products can create an emotional connection with customers, evoke positive feelings, and enhance the overall experience. User-friendly interfaces, visually appealing packaging, and thoughtful design elements can contribute to a memorable and satisfying customer experience.

Innovation: Innovative products that introduce new technologies, features, or improvements can greatly impact the customer experience. Customers often appreciate products that offer unique or advanced capabilities, as they provide a sense of novelty and differentiation. Innovations that solve customer pain points or address unmet needs can significantly enhance the customer experience. When innovation introduces updates/upgrades to existing products or services ensuring customers are properly pre-warned and prepared can mitigate waste arising from customer confusion.

Customization: Offering customizable options or personalized experiences can greatly improve the customer experience. When customers have the ability to tailor products to their specific preferences or needs, it enhances their sense of ownership and satisfaction. Customization can range from personalized product configurations to tailored recommendations based on customer data. However the higher the degree of customisation the greater the necessity to ensure it is always right first time.

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Support and Documentation: The support and documentation provided for a product also influence the customer experience. Clear comprehensive instructions, online resources, and responsive customer support contribute to a positive experience. Conversely, inadequate support or confusing documentation can create waste from frustrated customers.

Brand Perception: The quality and reputation of a brand can influence the customer experience with its products. If a brand is known for consistently delivering high-quality products and services, customers are more likely to have enhanced positive expectations failure to meet such expectations can be both a short term and long term source of waste, firstly by having to deal with the issues of disappointment and secondly from the damage to the brand image.



PLACES

The Places are interpreted to be inclusive of all environments in all the delivery channels of the organisation, whether physical or digital. Places are a major contributory factor to the customer's overall impression of the organisation and can act as important attractors to new customers. They should be easy and safe for customers to always access. It is important that this factor is considered beyond physical buildings to include the general ambience, environment, and ease of use of all delivery channels.

As almost every organisation now has a website customers, particularly those from the newer generations, expect their experience on that website to meet their needs.

So how might waste be detected on a website?

"Fullstory" in their article "**The guide to understanding user frustration online**" identify seven ways that websites frustrate customers. The article goes on to describe how to detect customer frustration.

1. *Clunky, dysfunctional, dated, or just bad site or app elements and design*

Below are listed just a few ways to frustrate customers with design, UI/UX, or "stuff" you put on your site or app:

Eye-catching, whizbang look-at-me elements.

Auto-play video (or music).

Hiding/omitting common/useful navigation elements E.g. "Where is [Search | Login | Support | Contact | some other basic thing]?"

Too clever navigation—i.e. using clever words for common navigation elements.

Text/images/elements that are too big or too small

Confusing icons i.e. icons don't clearly convey what they represent.

Graphics for text.

2. *Performance*

Is your site or app slow to load?

In 2010 a page viewed on a computer that took 4 seconds to load would see a 30% decrease in page views.

Fast forward to 2012 and that same 4 second page load would drop your page views by 40%. Jump to 2016 and 53% of mobile site visits are abandoned if pages take longer than 3 seconds to load

It's 2018, what do you think the impact of slow-loading sites is now?

Today, nobody has time for anything. Everyone is impatient. Attention is scarce.

3. Aggressive tactics

There are some things that websites and applications still do that have a high likelihood of triggering your users into a fit of frustration. While some tactics only become "aggressive" in a specific context, most should almost always be avoided. Here are some of the most common aggressive tactics that are likely to make users angry:

Pop-ups, pop-unders, lightbox overlays, etc.

Perhaps the most egregious offender that still gets a lot of playtime is the CTA to "sign-up for our newsletter" lightbox overlay—triggered on the first visit to a site after a handful of seconds.

Ads! In particular, the one's that take over the entire screen, mandate you watch them, auto-play sound, and on and on.

While advertisements may be a required revenue stream and the more in-your-face the ads are, the more likely they are to be seen, clicked, and valued, there's a tenuous balance, and the rise in ad-blocking software is a solid indicator that many advertisers and publishers are taking ads too far.

Additionally, advertisements with clickbait thumbnails or titles create cognitive load for your users, who must tease out if the "article" is real or an ad. That's not fun. Associating your brand with clickbait should likely be avoided.

Opt-in boxes, automatically checked. Automatically being opted-in to marketing materials may increase sign-ups, but they can also infuriate your users.

Which one/where's the download button? While this should go without saying, attempting to trick users into clicking the wrong button sows distrust, at best. If ad placements on your site sit near critical buttons, consider how those advertisements may be used against your users.

4. It's broken

An old broken page error on Reddit.

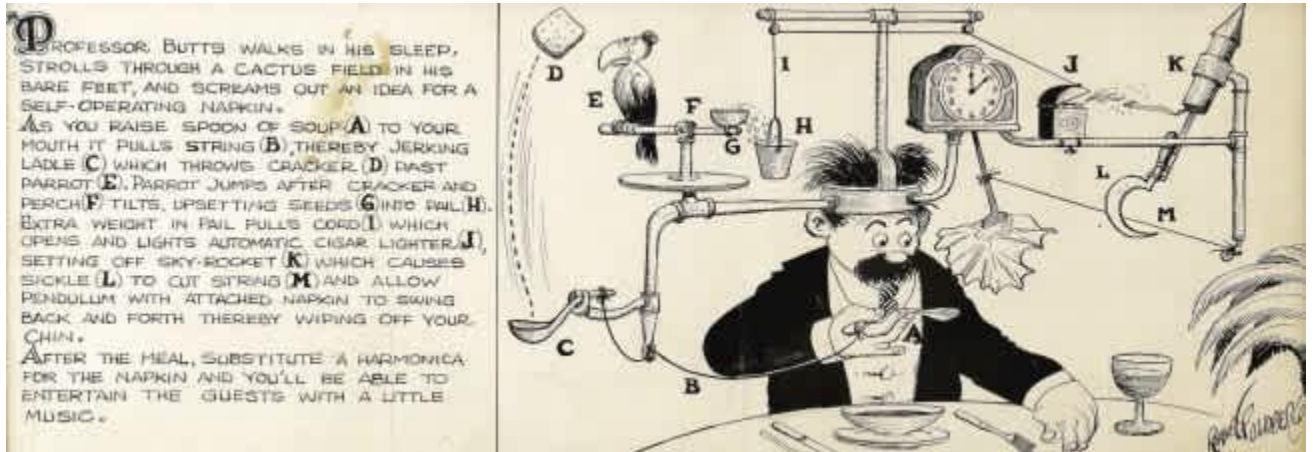
If your website or application isn't working, it's highly likely your users are going to notice. Granted, the site or application may not be working for lots of reasons. Here are just a couple:

User error. Sometimes customers can't seem to figure out how to use your site or app. And that's your fault, like it or not.

Bugs. Some part of the site is broken. Perhaps it's a bug. Perhaps something else.

5. It's taking too long to do

When it comes to the web, it's easy to turn a simple task into something incredibly complicated.



This is similar in nature to performance, if users feel the process to reach a certain page on your site (or point of conversion) is too slow, they will quickly become frustrated. The difference to performance is that we can design frustration into a process by making it overly complex, administrative, or tedious.

Filling out forms or navigating the checkout process are two trouble areas that can rapidly turn into a bad user experience. Consider that roughly 70% of consumers will abandon their shopping cart with over 1 in 4 citing the checkout process was "too long/complicated"

6. I'm confused and/or I have no idea what I'm doing

Ever been interacting with a site/app and felt like you should be able to do something obvious but you cannot figure out how to do it? UI confusion is a major cause of frustration.

Most users will just leave with only a select few making it over to the Help documents. An even smaller number will actually reach out for support..

7. My device is broken and/or my internet connection stinks, etc.

We've all been there—a slow (or missing) Internet connection, a lagging, uncooperative device.

The kicker about this one is that it doesn't even have to be your site's fault for your site (or app) to take the blame. What can you even do about this one?

One solution, though not an easy one, is to prepare the responsive design of your site for users who might have poor Internet connections. Google, for example, encourages employees to test out their products over slower Internet speeds by mimicking 3G (and other) connection speeds as options across the Google corporate Wi-Fi.

There are only imperfect solutions, if any, for this one. You may need to get creative⁴

Frustration detection—indirect vs. direct

Today, online businesses rely on two broad means for gauging customer sentiment, whether positive or negative (frustration or engagement). These two methods can be categorized as direct or indirect.

Direct methods to measure user frustration on the web

Direct methods of gauging frustration require user participation. “Tell us your dissatisfaction.” Tools like surveys, support tickets, contact forms, social media monitoring, etc. all function as a “direct” read on the customer experience.

There are three major problems with direct methods of frustration measurement:

1. They require the customer to do the hard work

That “work” is jumping through hoops—e.g. filling out contact forms, using chat support, placing phone calls, going on social media rants, whatever, to express frustration.

This process selects for customers who are willing to go through the hassle, which is very likely a lower number of individuals than the total set of frustrated customers. The result is data that is going to be slanted to a certain level of frustration. It very likely will miss low-level frustrations—the kind of things that customers will grumble through and not report.

2. They assume a customer can articulate their frustration

Have you ever been in a bad mood but you weren’t exactly sure why? Online experiences need not be in-your-face frustrating for them to be dissatisfying.

Many times it takes a number of events in combination to create a frustrating experience—the kind of bad experience that drives a customer to respond to a survey and provide critical feedback. The problem here is that the content of the feedback may not articulate what exactly went wrong. The customer may only report the last straw, the first, or maybe some part in the middle.

3. They can bias results

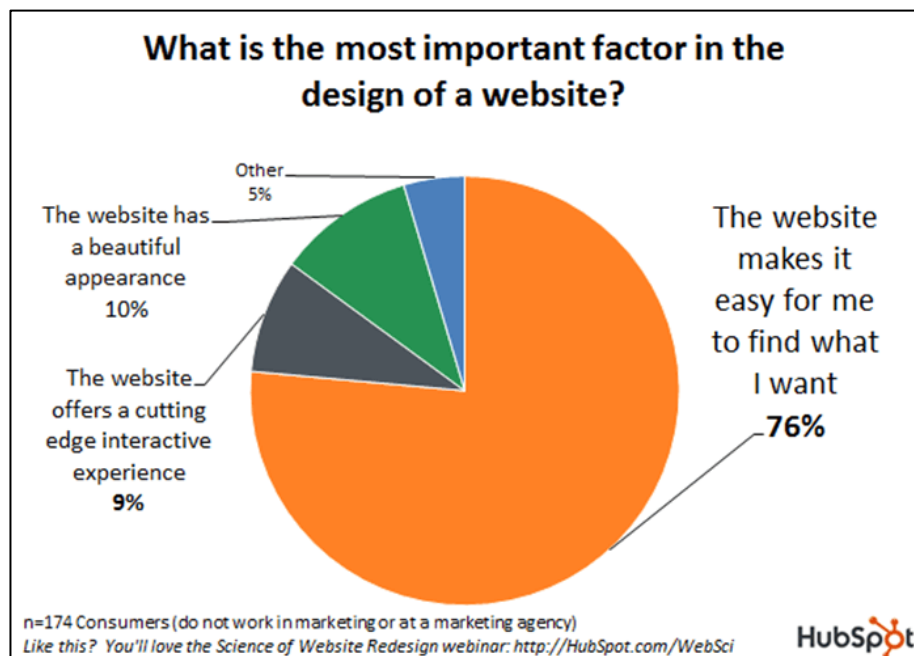
The Hawthorne Effect is a real problem when it comes to polling users on their experience. If you’re not familiar, the Hawthorne Effect is “a type of reactivity in which individuals modify an aspect of their behavior in response to their awareness of being observed.”

Directly asking customers about their experience can be fruitful; however, it’s important to recognize its limitations. And the greatest limitation of directly asking customers about their experience is that the respondents will always be a limited set of users.

Indirect methods to measure user frustration on the web

Indirect methods for measuring online experiences show a great deal of promise when it comes to understanding customer frustration. However, the metrics most often used to track frustration—metrics such as elevated bounce rates off a given page, average time on page, changes in conversion rates, etc.—have been blunt instruments and limited in their usefulness.

Some website design advice from blog_smile



They say you only have 8 seconds to capture your user's attention once they land on your website. That means only 8 seconds to show them how amazing your brand is and to compel them to make a purchase. If all visitors see the second they enter your web page is awful design and undecipherable messages, there's no way they'll notice the value you have to offer. Use a clean, uncluttered layout that puts your brand's value front and center. Include visuals with bold typography and attractive photography that display well on both desktop and mobile devices. Pay attention to the colors you use, as they each have psychological impacts of their own

Help Visitors Find What They're Looking For

Your site's usability, or how easy it is to use, is far more important when it comes to delivering an awesome customer experience.

Navigation *Your site's navigation is how your customers are able to explore and move through your website. As a result, it needs to be intuitive and effortless to use.*

Content Organization. *Users do not read a website like they would read a book, from cover to cover. They scan down, looking for snippets of information.*

Make Your Online Experience Accessible Everywhere

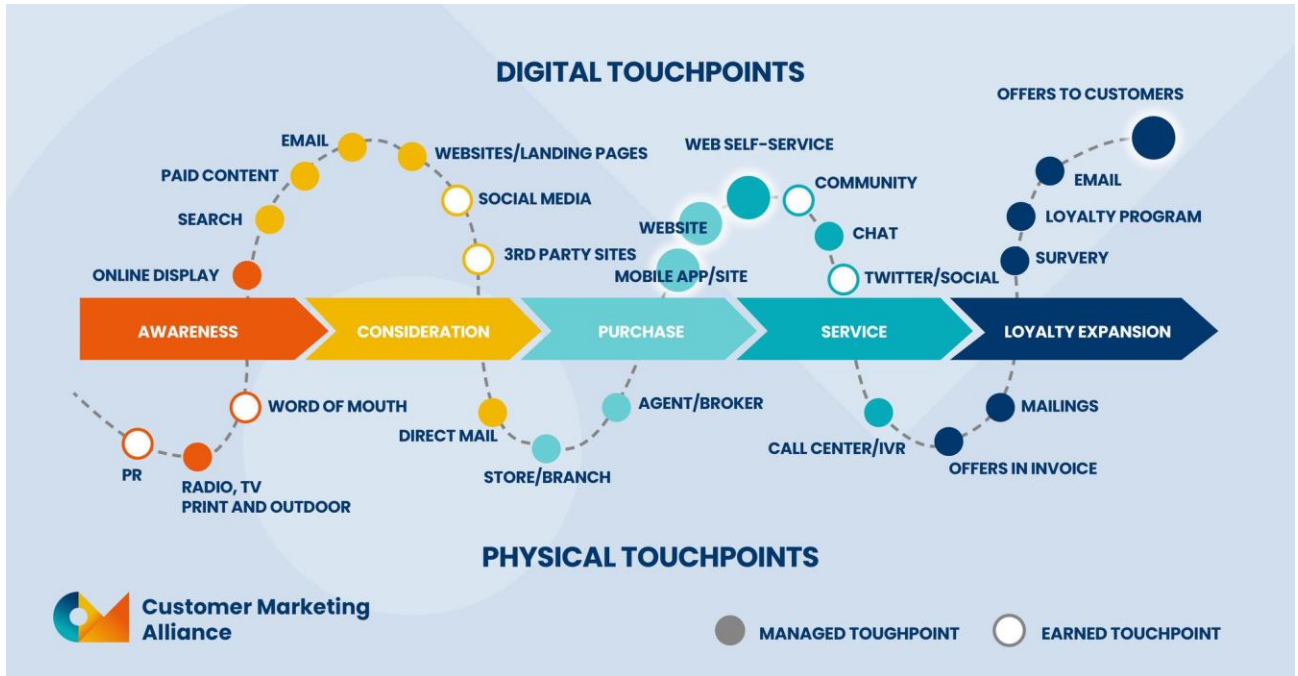
Mobile traffic has grown significantly this means you cannot afford to ignore your mobile users, opening conversations around the idea of responsive design. Improve customer experience mobile versus desktop from your product pages to your rewards program, your online experience should adjust to any screen size, making your website look good and function properly on any device.

Optimize all of your images to maximize load speeds and minimize wait times

*Include more white space in your overall design to speed up page loading times
Disable autoplay for all multimedia elements (audio and video)*

PROCESSES

Processes contain what are probably the richest veins for waste mining, The diagram below shows the potential touch points that a customer has with an organisation



Every touch point will have a formal or informal organisational process to manage it. The waste risks of formal processes are that they become too rigid and inflexible, overcomplicated or become outdated and actually contain steps that are either ineffective or unnecessary. It is possible for ineffective processes to suffocate and/or paralyse people trying their best to meet their customers needs. Where this leads to employee engagement or resignation it means the process has generated unnecessary waste.

The waste risks from informal processes are that they may be ad hoc, vague, contain no standards and are thereby inconsistent in the way products/services are delivered and thereby mean that customers' expectations going through the same process receive an entirely different experience.

The key to avoiding waste is to have regular reviews of all key processes to re-examine their necessity and effectiveness prompted on either a timescale basis or from negative customer feedback. Processes are the primary area where waste becomes invisible often protected by the words *"because we have always done it that way"*

Why Are Processes Important?

In their article ***Customer service process: What is it and why does your company need it?*** gb-advisors.com state

*For all types of businesses, customer service processes are a must. We tend to think that we have it all covered when dealing with our customers, but the truth is that there is a lot to handle. **In addition, it is necessary to work towards constant mandatory improvement.***

No matter the company goals and objectives, none of this can be achieved if there is no established order within the company. Internal processes are one of the best business organization systems to achieve magnificent indexes of quality, productivity, and excellence.

Its outstanding results have spread the application of this approach in companies and organizations of all kinds; regardless of their size or activity sector. In the current competitive context as it is today, process management has become a necessity for companies; not just to succeed, but even to survive. Considering the high expectations of the customers, companies need to set their focus on what customers want and need.

An IT agent on a call

A customer service process is aimed at satisfying the customer.

A customer service process is the set of operations that a company carries out with all its personnel, integrating different departments. The objective is to guarantee a solid and satisfactory experience for each customer in order to:

Know and assist customers with their needs.

Maintain fluid communication.

Offer quick and effective responses to their requests.

Detect their needs in order to propose improvement actions.

Your customer's trust must be renewed continuously and with each purchase, request for information, claim, or consultation.

Why do you require a customer service process?

Ensuring the satisfaction of your customers should be one of the main objectives of your company. For this, your customer support along with the appropriate service process must be synchronized. Your team needs a standardized customer service process. Without it, your employees would not know how to approach an issue: leading to duplication in effort and delayed responses for customers.

Your customer service process should ensure that the flow of support does not get affected by "back and forth" situations between teams for solving simpler customer queries

With a customer service process, your employees will automatically know what to do, and you're providing them with a definitive set of support workflows and decision-making patterns. This way, your customers will receive a completely coherent service.

When you have effective customer service processes it shows, and when you don't it shows even more.

PEOPLE

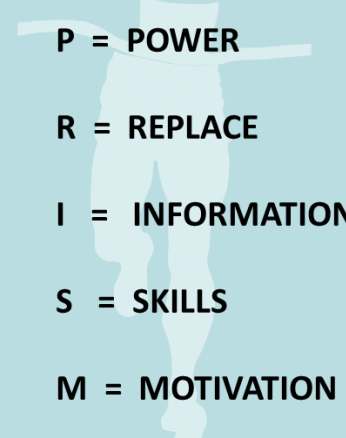
People are the key dynamic resource in every organisation.

Their knowledge, competence and skills can positively influence the service quality performance and success of the organisation. Well trained and highly motivated employees can engage with customers easily and apply themselves appropriately in addressing customer needs.

However, the very worn out and often insincerely expressed platitude *“That our people are our greatest asset”* can be a highly conditional and suspect statement when viewed from the customers’ standpoint. Sometimes the customer can receive a bad experience due to ignorance or incompetence of the people with whom they are interacting sometimes it is to do with poor emotional or values based disparities, sometimes with disinterest or lack of engagement but for whatever reason people do not always present themselves as an organisations greatest asset.

On the other hand it is true that people can deliver an outstanding experience, retrieve a lost cause or turn a good experience into one that is exceptional . So where is the difference and what can lie behind the waste when poorly performing people in an organisation deliver a sub acceptable customer experience.

There are five fundamental performance barriers. What they are , what people need and what is required and the solution required can be identified when viewed through the following PRISM

THE BARRIER	THE NEED	THE SOLUTION
NOT ALLOWED TO ACHIEVE CANNOT ACHIEVE WHAT TO ACHIEVE ? HOW TO ACHIEVE ? WANT TO ACHIEVE	 <p>P = POWER</p> <p>R = REPLACE</p> <p>I = INFORMATION</p> <p>S = SKILLS</p> <p>M = MOTIVATION</p>	DIRECTION RECRUITMENT COMMUNICATION EDUCATION MOTIVATION

The barriers can exist singly or collectively at an individual level or collectively within any element of an organisational structure. Identifying and quantifying and subsequently addressing such needs can greatly diminish the associated waste.

One Big Team? – The Other Big Barrier

The other key barrier to exist in many organisations is dissociation.

This is where a part of the organisation dissociates itself from the management of the customer experience. It is vital that all people in the organisation and execute their role in that endeavour. Teamwork in the customer experience management context does not refer to the way one or more individuals engage but to the way the whole organisation understands both the importance and role of the customers and their individual and collective responsibility in delivering an upper quartile customer experience

The solution to this barrier is a leadership issue

So why are people important in the days of self service and online business?

People in customer experience delivery play a crucial role in every organization. Even where there may be little day to day actual customer contact. For example

1.Issue Resolution: Customer service representatives are often the secondary point of contact for customers to assist them with the resolution of issues such as technical difficulties, product defects, billing issues, and other challenges customers may encounter so also avoiding the waste costs of issue escalation

2.Brand reputation: Customer service interactions significantly impact the reputation of a brand or company. Positive experiences with customer service can lead to positive word-of-mouth recommendations and enhanced brand reputation. On the other hand, poor customer service can quickly damage a brand's image and lead to negative reviews or social media backlash.

3.Customer retention: Acquiring new customers can be more expensive than retaining existing ones. Effective customer engagement builds trust and strengthens the relationship between a business and its customers. When customers feel valued and well-supported, they are more likely to remain loyal and continue doing business with the company..

4.Upselling and cross-selling: People have the opportunity to identify additional needs or preferences of customers. By understanding their requirements, professional people can suggest complementary products or services, leading to upselling or cross-selling opportunities. This benefits both the customer, who may discover useful offerings, and the business, which can increase revenue and avoid the waste marketing cost of the cross sold products.

5.Feedback and insights: Customer experience professionals on the front line interacting directly with customers can gather valuable feedback, insights, and suggestions from customers, which can be shared within the organization. This feedback helps identify areas for improvement, product enhancements, and overall business growth strategies.

Overall, people in customer service serve as the face of the company, ensuring positive customer experiences, fostering loyalty, and contributing to the long-term success of the business.

The Last Word

At the start of this newsletter there is a list of twenty three areas where organisational waste can exist. It may well be that some organisations measure the negative value effects of poor customer experience in some of these areas but it is almost certain that no organisation measures the majority of them.

Measuring what the customer needs and expects is important and measuring waste in the processes that deliver such expectations is perhaps, at first glance, an unlikely place to look

Perhaps it is because of being more focussed on cost control than on waste control but it whatever the reason it appears to be true that the elimination of waste in all of the 5P's Service Excellence Model could improve the experience of the customer and the performance both operationally and financially of the organisation and its people.

Mine for waste, to find gold

Recommended Reading

<https://www.fullstory.com/resources/guide-to-understanding-frustrating-user-experiences-online/>
<https://hbr.org/2007/06/companies-and-the-customers-who-hate-them>

<https://www.customermarketingalliance.com/mapping-out-the-customer-journey-and-finding-your-audience/>

<https://blog.smile.io/improve-your-customer-experience-with-web-design/>

<https://consumergoods.com/new-research-shows-consumers-more-interested-brands-values-ever>

<https://www.fullstory.com/resources/guide-to-understanding-frustrating-user-experiences-online/>

<https://www.qualitygurus.com/consequences-of-poor-quality/>

<https://www.gb-advisors.com/customer-service-process-what-is-it-and-why-does-your-company-need-it/>