

ICXI -POST newsbriefing

Vol 4 – Issue 4–SEPTEMBER 2024

Introduction From The President

Customer service as a topic has been around for as long as there has been suppliers and customers. It is interesting to note that the first recorded incident of service so far found came in the form of a customer complaint!

In around 1750 BC a transaction over some copper motivated the Babylonian customer to attempt to get a refund. The incident is recorded on a clay tablet in The British Museum and is reported in Forbes Magazine along with an amusing interpretation of the incident. However, the picture of the clay tablet below will allow those interested to read the detail for themselves!



The Forbes report continues

It dates to 1750 BC and is from an unsatisfied copper ore customer named Nanni, written to his supplier, Ea-nasir. The letter implies that Nanni had dispatched his personal assistants to Ea-nasir Fine Copper at least once looking for a refund, only to be rebuffed and sent home empty handed – and through a war zone!

I have sent as messengers, gentlemen like ourselves, to collect the bag with my money (his refund, I believe) but you have treated me with contempt by sending them back to me empty-handed several times, and that through enemy territory,” Nanni complained.

The Forbes “interpretation” continues as follows

1. *Nanni walks up to the customer service window and puts the product he was shipped down on the counter.*
2. *“I received these copper ingots, but they aren’t at all like the ones the salesman showed me,” Nanni explains calmly.*
3. *“Do you have your original receipt or sales order?” the bored customer service representative asks.*
4. *“Uh, no.”*
5. *“Then take this clay tablet and bone stylus, sit down over there and cuneiform down all the details.”*
6. *“Could you just get my rep? It’s Ea-nasir. I think he’ll be able to straighten this out.”*
7. *“I’m sorry, Mr. Ea-nasir is on a business trip visiting clients in Mesopotamia and won’t be back until the beginning of the Month of the Bull.”*
8. *“Well, if your supervisor could come down...you see I’ve traveled through a war zone to get here and I’d really like to take care of this quickly.”*
9. *“I’ll see what I can do,” the customer service rep says. She then walks to a back room where she stands around for a few minutes. Eventually she returns to the counter.*
10. *“The best thing is for you just to fill out the clay tablet. We will review your case and get back to you as soon as the war is over. Next!”*

I’ve probably condensed what occurred over a year or more in the Middle East to a one-minute customer service interaction, but what I find fascinating is that the same things that upset customers today were eating at Nanni back in 1750 BC.

The letter ends with Nanni saying that from this point forward he would carefully inspect every copper ingot he received and ship back any that didn’t meet his approval. It is clear that their relationship has been poisoned. Trust and confidence have deteriorated to the point that Nanni will certainly have his eyes open for a new supplier.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/shephyken/2015/04/23/oldest-customer-service-complaint-discovered-a-lesson-from-ancient-babylon>

Importance and Performance

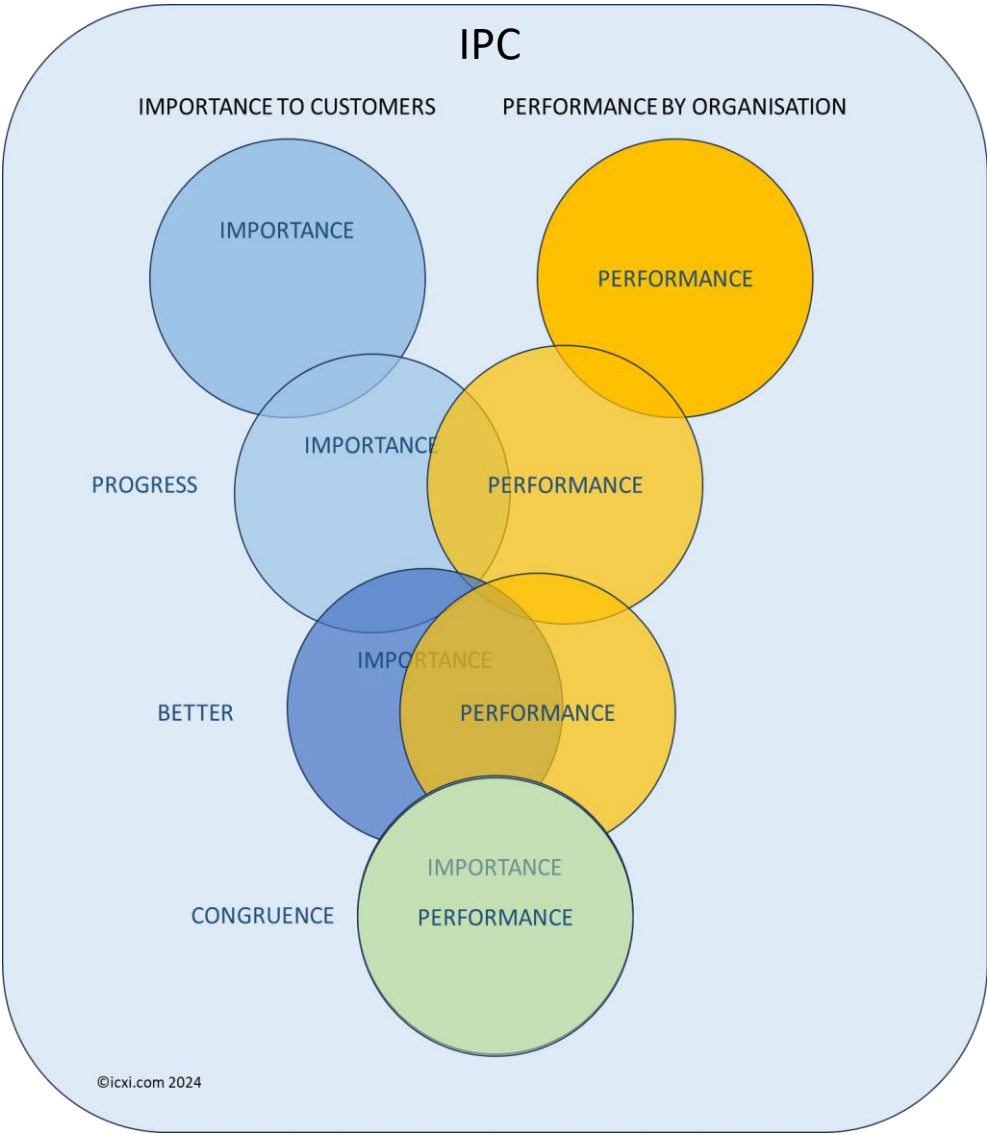
The last point that the article makes is that the supplier has poisoned the relationship and trust of the customer and left themselves open to the customer either actively seeking or being seduced by another supplier.

An outcome obvious to anyone who reads the story..... or is it?

Almost 2000 years later there appear to be many organisations at local, national and international levels in both the public and private sectors who have yet to understand

- a. Which factors are important in positively influencing the customer experience
- b. Focusing their service delivery performance on those factors

The aim should take the initial understanding through to a point where importance and performance are congruent. Many organisations will not know where they are on the route to Importance Performance Congruence -IPC



The Journey

Customer Service may have been important since at least 1750 BC but it is only in the last 50 years that the understanding of its importance as a key factor of organisational performance has developed.

The growth of national and international organisations has gradually made the leaders of such organisations more remote from the point where the money changes hands and thereby perhaps less concerned with the elements of interaction between customer and supplier that lead up to and follow on from the point of purchase.



<https://www.transnationalmatters.com/legal-challenges-in-international-business-operations/>

The total quality movement of the seventies and eighties focused on getting the products and services right first time and introduced a wide range of practices which were highly beneficial to both organisation and customers but did not really focus on the point where the transfer of product or service in one direction was complemented by the transfer of revenue in the opposite direction.

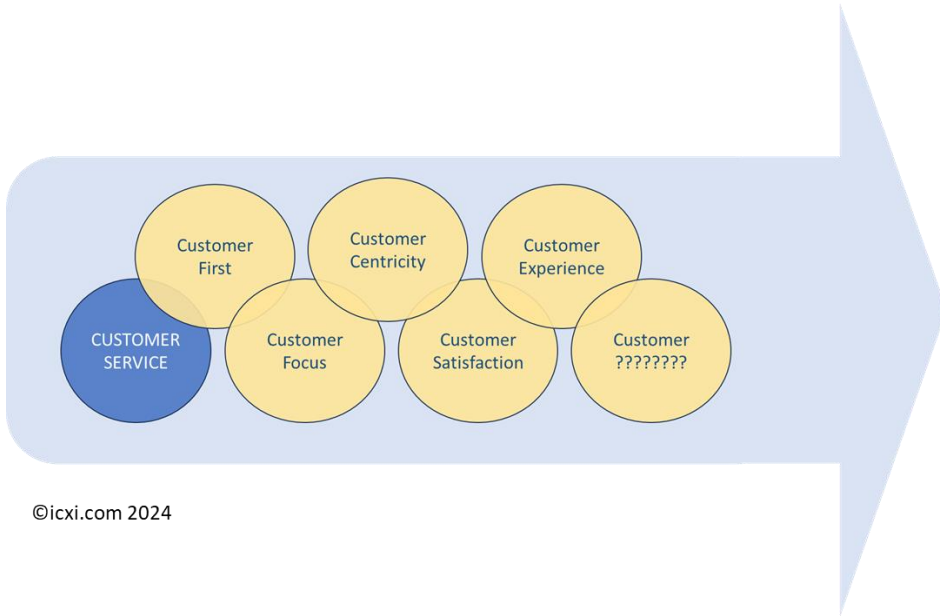
Confusion?

As recognition of the importance of this point began to gather momentum the practice of managing customer service evolved through a number of phases and it may be that these phases were never clearly identified as either organisational policy driven or outcome driven may have created a level of management confusion in the topic and therefore how it should be approached. Each new approach brought with it a number of new ideas not all of which followed coherently from the previous notions.

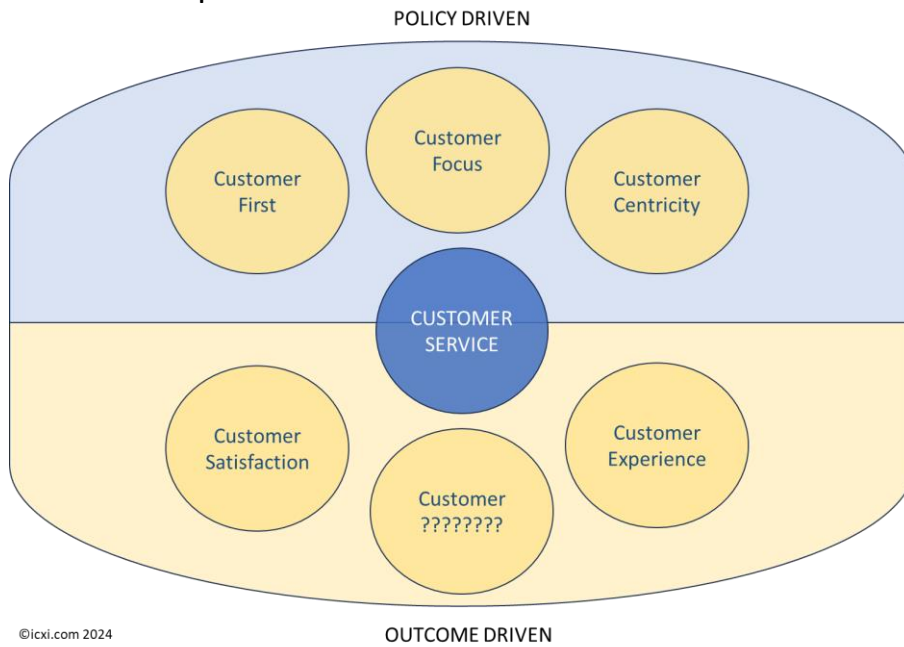
However all of them moved the recognition of the importance of the issue further up the management agenda and as with all such things it ascended faster in some sectors than in others. What is very interesting to observe is that many management initiatives such as Management-by-objectives and Total Quality have been absorbed as business-as-usual practices while service quality management still continues as work in progress.

A Look back to look forward

Some of the evolutionary phases of CX management are shown below



Some of these were the strategic intent was organisational policy driven and others customer outcome driven and each brought with it a number of ideas and priorities on what would achieve the optimum results



It is interesting to observe that the Outcome Driven approaches are chronologically the latest so perhaps the key outcome of the evolution of service quality management has been the shift of greater comprehension of the fact that the management of the point where the money changes hands is a fundamental to the sustained success of the organisation.

In the meantime a look back at definitions of what has been at the leading edge in the past may help to clarify development in the future.

Looking at the differences and similarities

What is Customer Service?

Customer service is the assistance and support provided by an organisation to its customers before, during, and after they purchase or use the organisations's products or services. It encompasses a wide range of activities and interactions, aiming to satisfaction, address any issues or concerns and build a positive relationship between the organisation and its customers.

Key Aspects of Customer Service:

1. **Support and Assistance:** Helping customers with enquiries, technical problems, or other issues they may encounter. In retail stores the sales people were referred to as “shop assistants” their role being to assist customers to buy – win win
2. **Communication:** Engaging with customers through various channels such as phone, email, chat, or in-person to provide information or resolve issues.
3. **Problem Resolution:** Addressing customer complaints or issues effectively and promptly, finding solutions that mutually satisfy the customer and the organisation
4. **Personalisation:** Offering tailored services or solutions based on individual customer needs and preferences.
5. **Follow-Up:** Ensuring that the ownership experience is as expected and that they are satisfied with the outcome.
6. **Feedback Analysis:** Gathering customer feedback to improve products, services, or customer service processes.
7. **Customer Education:** Providing information, tutorials, or resources to help customers better understand and use the product or service.

Importance of Customer Service:

- **Customer Retention:** Good customer service helps retain existing customers by building loyalty.
- **Brand Reputation:** Positive customer service experiences contribute to a strong, positive brand image.
- **Competitive Advantage:** Superior customer service can differentiate an organisation from its competitors especially when products or services are similar or the same.
- **Word-of-Mouth Marketing:** Satisfied customers are more likely to recommend the organisation to others.

The Organisational Policy Driven Phases

Customer First - Customer Focus - Customer Centricity

"**Customer First**" is an approach that prioritises the needs, expectations, and satisfaction of customers above all other considerations. Companies that adopt a "Customer First" strategy make decisions, design processes, and create products with the primary goal of enhancing the customer experience and delivering value to the customer.

Key Aspects of a "Customer First" Approach:

1. **Prioritising Customer Needs:** Every decision, from product development to customer service policies, is made with the customer's needs and preferences in mind.
2. **Empathy:** Understanding and empathising with customers' challenges, desires, and pain points is central to this approach. It requires seeing things from the customer's perspective.
3. **Responsiveness:** A "Customer First" Organisation is quick to respond to customer enquiries, feedback, and complaints. It values timely communication and strives to address customer concerns as swiftly as possible.
4. **Personalisation:** Tailoring products, services, and interactions to individual customer needs is a hallmark of the "Customer First" mindset. This approach recognizes that each customer is unique and values personalized experiences.
5. **Quality and Value:** Ensuring that products and services not only meet but exceed customer expectations in terms of quality and value is essential. This might involve continuous improvement and innovation to keep pace with customer expectations.
6. **Empowering Employees:** Employees are empowered to make decisions that benefit the customer, often having the authority to go above and beyond standard procedures to ensure customer satisfaction.
7. **Customer Feedback Integration:** Customer feedback is actively sought, listened to, and used to drive improvements. Companies with a "Customer First" focus see customer input as vital to their success.
8. **Long-Term Relationships:** The focus is on building long-term relationships rather than just making a sale. This involves maintaining ongoing communication and providing consistent value over time.

Importance of a "Customer First" Approach:

- **Customer Loyalty:** A focus on putting the customer first can lead to greater loyalty, as customers feel valued and appreciated.

- **Competitive Advantage:** Companies that prioritise customers can differentiate themselves from competitors who may focus more on other aspects like cost-cutting or maximizing profits.
- **Increased Satisfaction:** By consistently meeting or exceeding expectations, companies can increase overall customer satisfaction.
- **Positive Brand Reputation:** A reputation for being customer-focused can enhance a brand's image, making it more attractive to potential customers.
- **Sustainable Growth:** Long-term success is often built on a loyal customer base, and a "Customer First" approach is key to achieving this.

Customer Focus

Customer focus is an approach which prioritises understanding and meeting the needs, expectations, and preferences of its customers. It involves aligning products, services, and interactions with what is most valuable to the customer, ensuring that the customer's experience is central to the organisation's strategy and operations.

Key Aspects of a Customer First Approach

1. **Understanding Customer Needs:** A customer-focused organisation invests time and resources in understanding who its customers are, what they need, and how they behave..
2. **Personalisation:** With a strong understanding of customer needs, an organisation can tailor its products or services to better meet those needs. This might involve developing new features, improving existing products, or offering customized solutions that resonate with different customer segments.
3. **Customer Service Excellence:** Providing excellent customer service is a critical aspect of customer focus. This means ensuring that customer enquiries, issues, and complaints are handled promptly and effectively, creating a positive customer experience.
4. **Customer Journey Optimisation:** A customer-focused organisation maps out the customer journey and works to optimise every touchpoint, from initial contact through to post-purchase support.
5. **Continuous Improvement:** Customer focus is not a one-time effort; it requires ongoing attention. Companies that prioritise customer focus continuously gather feedback, measure customer satisfaction, and make improvements to better serve their customers over time.
6. **Proactive Engagement:** Instead of simply reacting to customer needs, a customer-focused organisation anticipates future needs and trends. This proactive approach helps in staying ahead of competitors and maintaining customer loyalty.

Customer Centricity

Customer centricity is a business strategy and culture focused on creating a positive customer experience at every stage of the customer journey. It involves understanding and addressing the needs, preferences, and expectations of customers to build long-term relationships and drive customer loyalty.

Key Aspects of a Customer Centricity Approach

1. **Customer Focus:** Every decision, from product development to marketing and sales, is made with the customer's perspective in mind. This includes understanding their pain points, desires, and how they interact with the product or service.
2. **Personalisation:** Organisations that embrace customer centricity often tailor their offerings to individual customers. This might involve personalized marketing messages, customised product offerings, or tailored customer service experiences.
3. **Customer Experience:** A customer-centric approach prioritises the overall experience customers have with a brand. This includes all touchpoints—online and offline—and aims to make every interaction as seamless, efficient, and enjoyable as possible.
4. **Feedback and Improvement:** Customer-centric organisations actively seek out customer feedback and use it to improve their products, services, and processes. This continuous loop of feedback and improvement ensures that the business stays aligned with customer needs.
5. **Long-term Relationships:** Instead of focusing on short-term sales or transactions, customer-centric organisations aim to build long-term relationships with customers. This often leads to increased customer loyalty, repeat business, and advocacy.
6. **Empowered Employees:** Employees in a customer-centric organisation are often empowered to make decisions that benefit the customer, leading to quicker resolutions and more personalised service.
7. **Prioritisation:** Customer centricity is about putting the customer at the heart of everything the business does, leading to satisfied customers, stronger customer loyalty, and ultimately, better business performance.

The Outcome Driven Phases

Customer Satisfaction – Customer Experience

Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is a measure of how well an organisation's products, services, and overall customer experience meet or exceed customer expectations. It reflects the degree to which customers are happy with their purchases and interactions with the organisation and it is a key indicator of an organisation's ability to fulfil customer needs and build long-term relationships.

Key Aspects of a Customer Satisfaction Approach

1. **Expectation vs. Reality:** Customer satisfaction is largely determined by how well a product or service meets or exceeds what the customer expected. When an organisation consistently meets or surpasses these expectations, customers are likely to be satisfied.
2. **Product/Service Quality:** The quality, reliability, and performance of the product or service are crucial in determining satisfaction. If the product performs as promised and delivers value, customer satisfaction is generally high.
3. **Customer Service:** The support and assistance provided by the organisation play a significant role in customer satisfaction. Friendly, efficient, and helpful customer service can enhance satisfaction, especially when issues are resolved promptly.
4. **Ease of Use:** How easy it is for customers to interact with the product, service, or organisation affects their satisfaction. This includes the usability of a product, the simplicity of the purchasing process, and the convenience of customer service.
5. **Emotional Connection:** The emotional experience customers have with the brand can influence satisfaction. Positive emotions, such as feeling valued or appreciated, contribute to higher satisfaction levels.
6. **Value for Money:** Customers are satisfied when they feel that the product or service offers good value for the price paid. This doesn't always mean the lowest price but rather a fair balance of cost and benefits.
7. **Feedback and Resolution:** How an organisation handles customer feedback and resolves complaints or issues impacts satisfaction. Companies that listen to their customers and act on their feedback tend to have higher satisfaction levels.

Importance of Customer Satisfaction:

- **Customer Retention:** Satisfied customers are more likely to stay loyal to a brand, reducing churn and increasing lifetime value.

- **Positive Word-of-Mouth:** Happy customers are more likely to recommend the organisation to others, which can lead to new customers.
- **Brand Loyalty:** High customer satisfaction fosters brand loyalty, encouraging repeat purchases and long-term relationships.
- **Reduced Costs:** Retaining satisfied customers is often less expensive than acquiring new ones, making it a cost-effective strategy.
- **Feedback:** Measuring customer satisfaction provides valuable insights that can be used to improve products, services, and customer experiences.

Customer Experience

Customer experience (CX) refers to the overall perception and impression a customer has of a brand or organisation based on their interactions throughout the entire customer journey. It encompasses every touchpoint and interaction a customer has with a organisation from initial awareness to post-purchase follow-up, and even beyond, influencing their satisfaction, loyalty, and likelihood to recommend the brand to others.

Key Aspects of a Customer Experience Approach

1. **Customer Journey:** The entire process a customer goes through when interacting with an organisation, including the stages of awareness, consideration, purchase, and post-purchase.
2. **Touchpoints:** Specific interactions between the customer and the organisation, such as visiting a website, speaking with customer service, receiving a product, or interacting on social media.
3. **Emotional Impact:** The feelings and emotions a customer experiences during their interactions with an organisation, which significantly influence their overall perception.
4. **Consistency:** The uniformity of the customer experience across different channels and touchpoints, ensuring that the customer receives a seamless experience no matter how or where they interact with the brand.
5. **Personalisation:** Tailoring the customer experience to meet individual preferences, needs, and expectations, making the customer feel valued and understood.
6. **Ease of Use:** The simplicity and convenience of interacting with the organisation, from navigating a website to resolving issues quickly and easily.
7. **Brand Perception:** The overall image and reputation of the organisation as seen through the customer's eyes, shaped by their experiences and interactions.

Importance of Customer Experience:

- **Customer Loyalty:** A positive customer experience fosters loyalty, encouraging customers to return and continue doing business with the organisation
- **Customer Satisfaction:** Ensures that customers are happy with not just the product or service, but with the entire journey and interaction.
- **Brand Advocacy:** Satisfied customers are more likely to become brand advocates, promoting the organisation to others through word-of-mouth or social media.
- **Competitive Advantage:** A superior customer experience can set an organisation apart from its competitors, attracting new customers and retaining existing ones.
- **Revenue Growth:** Organisations that invest in improving customer experience often see increased sales, as satisfied customers are more likely to make repeat purchases and spend more.

What Next?

Customer ????????????

It is interesting to speculate what the next evolution may be as the world of customer experience management continues to become more complex.

Will AI introduce a whole new world of customer - supplier interface ?

Will *Customer Immersion* whereby the customer can create an avatar of themselves who owns/directs/controls and maintains the their whole buying process and the service they receive thus releasing themselves from any interaction with any organisationor perhaps via an organisational avatar be next?

Avatar Customers

Organisations are already developing AI Avatar Customers as tool for defining and understanding their ideal customer and using it as a research tool for product and service testing and development



Avatar Customers

In their paper “**What is a Customer Avatar**” March 2024 Viral Solutions explain

To market your products or services effectively, you need to gain insight into your ideal customer. That way, you can find them more easily. Plus, you can tailor your messaging to resonate with those who will benefit most from your offerings. And that’s where the customer avatar comes into play.

A customer avatar (sometimes referred to as a buyer persona, marketing persona, or customer profile) is a representation of your ideal customer—the type of person you want to purchase your products or services.

What to Know about Customer Avatars

Although the avatar concept has existed for decades, many still struggle with it. There are a lot of misconceptions about what it is and isn’t. Adopting them can lead you to make some costly mistakes.

Here’s what a customer avatar is:

An essential part of your overall marketing strategy

A fictional (but believable) character with wants, needs, and pain points

A detailed profile of a single individual depicting your ideal customer

A thorough workup of demographics, psychographics, and behaviors

A comprehensive outline based on research and data

A best-case scenario (i.e., spends a lot, makes recurring purchases, and/or promotes your brand)

Here’s what a customer avatar is not:

A “nice to have”

An amalgam of all your potential and/or existing customers

A short, vague description that lacks important details

A list of characteristics based on guesses or assumptions

An examination of just anyone who may buy from you

When handled correctly, an avatar provides valuable insight into who your ideal customer is, what they want, where they spend their time, and how your offerings can address their problem.

Building a customer avatar for your business (and putting it to good use) can help you make the most of your marketing dollars. It serves as a guide that keeps you from wasting resources. That way, you don't target the wrong people, hang out in the wrong place, or apply the wrong messaging. Make no mistake—your avatar is a foundational piece of your marketing strategy that puts you on the path to success.

Does Every Business Need a Customer Avatar?

The short answer is yes. Every organization, regardless of size or industry, should have a customer/client avatar. Even big companies that have been in business for years should have avatars they reference. More importantly, they should take the time to update these profiles regularly. That's because the elements covered (e.g., problems, desires, spaces frequented online) change over time. However, having an avatar—or multiple avatars, depending on how much you need to segment your target market—is especially beneficial for start-ups and small to medium-sized businesses (both B2Bs and B2Cs). As mentioned previously, it allows you to make the most of your budget, focusing your digital marketing efforts for better results. And that's something every business owner can appreciate.

How to Create Your Customer Avatar

Creating your first customer avatar does require a lot of time and effort. As mentioned above, you need to base your avatar on data, not guesswork, and make sure you've covered all your bases. But rest assured it's all worth it in the end.

Step 1: Do Your Research.

First things first, you need to conduct research into your market to get a firm grasp of your ideal customer. The good news is there may be an existing customer who has purchased your products or services already. In that case, you can use their information for reference and send them a survey asking additional questions for further insight. You can also collect data by using the following tactics:

Setting up a poll

Requesting their input on a questionnaire

Conducting an interview

However, if the perfect customer hasn't found their way to your organization just yet, that's okay. There's more than one type of market research you can do. You may just need to perform some secondary research, such as gathering data from third-party reports, looking at Q&A sites, and reviewing social media conversations. This kind of outside information is particularly valuable for businesses that are just getting started and don't have a lot of first-party data of their own.

The trick is to put your biases aside and get inside the mind of your ideal customer. It's all about them, not you.

Step 2: Fill Out an Avatar Worksheet.

Once you've done your research, it's time to start building the actual customer avatar. You'll be pleased to learn this step is pretty straightforward. You just need to put the information you've compiled into an avatar worksheet .

Start by giving your avatar a name, which adds another layer to this fictional character. You could also upload a stock photo to take it a step further

Then, move on to the following sections:

Demographics

How old are they?

What's their gender? - What's their marital status?

How many children do they have? How old are their children?

Where are they located?

What's their occupation? - What's their job title?

How much do they make each year? - What level of education have they completed?

What's a quote they would say? What's a statement that reflects the way they speak?

Goals and Values

What are their goals? What are they trying to accomplish?

What are their values? What's their "hill to die on"?

Where do they get most of their information?

What books, magazines, websites, and gurus do they trust?

What conferences do they attend?

Challenges and Pain Points

What challenges do they need to overcome?

What pain points are they experiencing?

What problem(s) are they trying to solve right now?

Objections & Role in the Purchasing Process

Why might they object to purchasing your offering?

What's their role in the purchasing process? Are they the direct buyer, or do they need approval from someone else?

Step 3: Repeat the Process as Needed.

You probably have more than one ideal customer. And if that's the case, you need to create a customer avatar for each. That way, you can ensure your marketing efforts are unique to whichever segment you're targeting.

Fortunately, the process becomes a breeze once you've done it before. You just need to repeat steps 1 and 2 until you've covered all your segments.

Here are some examples of when you need multiple avatars:

- *You have a wide range of offerings that solve different problems.*
- *A single product or service appeals to more than one type of person.*
- *Your business is split up into different divisions.*

Note: *When you're just starting out, it's best to stick to three or fewer. That way, you can stay organized and hyper-focused on a select group. If you create dozens of avatars, you'll wind up targeting too many at once.*

Step 4: Update Your Avatar Routinely.

After creating your customer avatar, it's important to go back to it now and then (yearly is a good place to start). Many business owners overlook this step. But if you want to leverage this tool fully, you can't afford to skip it.

Your avatar is a representation of a real person. And as you know, people aren't static; their preferences and habits evolve over time. They may flock to new social media channels, develop different purchasing behaviors, or experience fresh challenges.

By keeping up with these changes, you can ensure that your marketing efforts remain relevant and effective. Updating your avatar allows you to accurately reflect your audience's current needs, desires, and pain points. It helps you tailor your messaging and strategy to resonate with them in the here and now.

On top of that, regularly revisiting your avatar enables you to stay ahead of the curve. By anticipating shifts in behavior or emerging trends, you can position your brand as a leader.

Don't underestimate the importance of returning to the drawing board, collecting new data, and adjusting your avatar.

<https://viralsolutions.net/customer-avatar>



<https://doneforyou.com/guide-ideal-customer-avatar/>

So Looking Back on CX Management Approaches of the Past 30 years are Things Going to Get Simpler or More Complex Going Forward?

Customer Experience (CX) management has become more complex and multifaceted over the past 30 years. Several factors contribute to this increased complexity:

1. Proliferation of Channels

- **1990s:** Customer interactions were primarily limited to in-person, phone, and mail.
- **Today:** The rise of digital channels (email, social media, live chat, messaging apps, and AI-driven interfaces) means organisations must manage customer experiences across a wide range of platforms, ensuring consistency and quality across each one.

2. Increased Customer Expectations

- **1990s:** Customers had more modest expectations for service and were often willing to tolerate delays.
- **Today:** Customers expect near-instant responses, personalized experiences, and seamless service across all touchpoints. The "Amazon effect" has set a high bar for convenience and speed, pressuring companies to meet these expectations or risk losing organisation.

3. Data Overload

- **1990s:** Companies had limited customer data, often relying on basic demographic information and purchase history.
- **Today:** The explosion of data from various sources (online behaviour, social media, IoT devices, etc.) provides a wealth of information but also requires sophisticated tools and strategies to manage, analyse, and act on it effectively. The challenge is not just gathering data but making sense of it in real-time to drive decision-making.

4. Personalisation

- **1990s:** Personalisation was often limited to basic segmentation.
- **Today:** Customers expect highly personalised experiences, with recommendations and interactions tailored to their specific needs and preferences. Achieving this requires advanced analytics, AI, and machine learning, adding layers of complexity to CX management.

5. Globalization

- **1990s:** organisations typically focused on local or national markets.
- **Today:** Many companies operate on a global scale, necessitating the management of CX across different cultures, languages, and regulations. This globalization adds¹⁷ complexity in maintaining consistency while also being sensitive to local nuances.

6. Regulatory Environment

- **1990s:** The regulatory landscape was simpler, with fewer data protection and privacy laws.
- **Today:** Regulations like GDPR, CCPA, and others around the world require companies to be vigilant in how they handle customer data, adding another layer of complexity to CX management.

7. Technological Advancements

- **1990s:** CX technology was rudimentary, with basic CRM systems and limited automation.
- **Today:** The landscape is dominated by advanced CRM platforms, AI-driven chatbots, and complex customer journey mapping tools. Keeping up with technological advancements and integrating them effectively into the CX strategy is a significant challenge.

8. Competition and Differentiation

- **1990s:** Competition was less intense, and differentiation was often based on product features or price.
- **Today:** With products and services becoming commoditized, CX has become a critical differentiator. Companies are competing not just on what they sell, but on how they sell it and the experience they offer.

9. Customer Empowerment

- **1990s:** Customers had limited means to voice their opinions, with feedback typically given directly to the company.
- **Today:** Social media and review platforms have empowered customers to share their experiences publicly, amplifying both positive and negative feedback. This public scrutiny means companies must be more proactive in managing their reputation and responding to issues quickly.

10. Integration of CX with organisation Strategy

- **1990s:** CX was often seen as a customer service function, separate from the core organisation strategy.
- **Today:** CX is recognized as a critical component of overall organisation strategy, influencing everything from product development to marketing and sales. This integration requires coordination across departments and alignment of objectives, further complicating management efforts.

The Last Word

Customer Service has come a long way since 1750 BC when a failure of Ea-Nasir to resolve a product quality issue set off the first recorded customer complaint from Nanni. Perhaps there should be a mention of thanks to the postman having to deliver clay tablets. Harder work than emails!

It is however only in the past 30 years that CX management has become mainstream. The management approaches evolving over that period have many common aspects as the underlying trend moved from being an organisationally managed activity to being customer driven and ever more detailed and analytical.

Looking forward, the future presents an even more complex picture with technology presenting both a level of assistance on one hand and complexity on the other. One of the keys to successfully navigating a path through such a business climate is likely to be education. This will involve organisational leaders and managers as well as staff and, just as importantly customers. Technological advances in some sectors will undoubtedly raise customer expectations across the board and for those organisations unable or unwilling to engage with such technology will need to educate their customers on how to engage with them.

Recommended Reading

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/shephyken/2015/04/23/oldest-customer-service-complaint-discovered-a-lesson-from-ancient-babylon/>

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<https://www.forbes.com/sites/henrydevries/2019/09/25/what-is-an-ideal-customer-avatar/>

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