

In today's crowded market, the key to success is standing out from your competitors. You need to create a seamless customer journey that centers around a great user experience. Step one is mapping your customer journey from awareness all the way through conversion.

What is a Customer Journey Map?

A [customer journey map](#) is a visual representation of all interactions a customer has with your business. Customer journey mapping involves identifying each part of the customer journey, including milestones, pain points, and potential motivations. It helps pinpoint the customer's initial engagement with your brand, their conversion point, and any of their further interactions with your brand.

This process gives organizations a chance to view their brand from the customer's perspective and identify gaps and opportunities within the [user experience](#). When brands use customer journey mapping, they examine each stage of the purchase process at a granular level. This gives marketing teams the opportunity to identify and align goals and customer needs in each stage of their funnel — ensuring a [seamless customer experience](#) and long-term customer success.

Mapping out the [customer journey](#) has become more challenging as customers engage with businesses across so many different channels, and a vast variety of devices. From referral sites to [social media](#) to organic search, customers now have many ways to find and interact with your brand. To create an effective customer journey map, you must ensure each and every customer interaction is accurately identified and included for targeting.

[Boost Your Marketing Efforts with the Inbound Marketing Success Kit](#)

Benefits to Customer Journey Mapping

Businesses that invest resources in creating an accurate customer journey map are able to make improvements to the customer experience that ultimately drive sales. Here are the benefits you can expect with a well-mapped customer journey:

Fine tune your marketing initiatives. You may structure marketing initiatives to move

customers through your funnel in a certain way, but do your expectations match reality? Spending time identifying each individual customer interaction allows you to evaluate your current marketing efforts and see whether they need to be adjusted.

Increased conversion rate. By highlighting the different pain points each customer has at various stages of the purchasing process, organizations can better address customer needs ahead of time, so that leads convert faster and more efficiently.

A more cohesive customer experience. Putting yourself in customers' shoes is the best way to understand your customers' needs, wants, and pain points. By mapping out the entire journey a customer takes with your company, it's easier to identify weak points in the customer experience. You can also quickly adjust how each customer interaction is handled. For example, you may want to provide additional information to customers at certain stages of the journey.

Preparation for the future. The changing digital landscape means that your marketing must be equally agile. A customer journey map gives you a foundational understanding of your customers' current interactions, highlighting changes that occur in real time as customer trends and expectations shift.

How to Create a Customer Journey Map

The first step to [creating a customer journey map](#) that accurately reflects how your customers engage with your brand is to gather necessary information. From email marketing to customer service, your company should be gathering data from every customer interaction.

Use [cross-departmental information](#) and include both qualitative and quantitative data in your customer journey map. A map that uses CRM, call service, satisfaction survey, and email information (amongst other data) will expose more opportunities for improvement. A [marketing automation](#) solution is a great way to collect this information in a centralized location.

[Download the Definitive Guide to Marketing Automation](#)

If you don't have the resources needed to map every customer journey, prioritize your audience members by their lifetime value to your brand. Fully map out the key journeys that you need to know inside and out, and

create the others based on combining available information with input from relevant stakeholders.

While this latter approach will not paint a complete — or completely accurate — picture, it will provide some insight until you're in a position to map these less important journeys more intricately.

After you've gathered the data you need and prioritized where needed, it's time to build the map. Depending on what fits your brand and its journey the best, the map may take the form of a diagram, video, or infographic.

Regardless of which medium you choose, list out every interactive moment a customer has with your brand — both online and offline. Customers may engage with your brand through in-store visits, sales events, digital marketing campaigns, interactions with your customer service team, your website, or [social channels](#). For each interaction, note the potential actions a customer could take, any questions or roadblocks they may encounter, as well as what's motivating them at that point.

To see how customer journey mapping works in action, let's take a look at the journey of a sports fan from their first touch to becoming an advocate for the team's brand:

Each touch point is carefully diagrammed and linked to all related interactions. This helps account for variations in the journey — some fans may simply keep purchasing tickets and attending games until they become season ticket holders, while others may stop along the way and require retargeting. The map provides much-needed structure and an indispensable reference point for sales and marketing teams that are targeting and nurturing fans at every stage of this process.

After you've established a customer journey map, you should review it for accuracy. Follow the journey yourself and double-check your work to ensure you didn't overlook any steps or actions during the mapping process. It's also important to continuously monitor the map to find new sticking points in the customer journey. These touchpoints may indicate changes you should implement regarding your website, marketing initiatives, or products and services.

Begin Leveraging your Customer Journey Map Today

Customer journey mapping is no quick task when done manually. And it requires a marketing team

committed to gathering and analyzing necessary data and taking action on what the mapping reveals. [Marketo Engage](#) gives you the tools you need to not only develop an actionable customer journey map, but to create marketing campaigns that deliver exceptional results time after time. Discover how [Marketo Engage](#) can improve your marketing initiatives and boost sales.