SmartSurvey

Quick Guide to Customer Experience

Find out why CX is critical for businesses and what makes a good experience

Introduction

New to the world of Customer Experience (CX) and wondering what it's all about? Thinking about setting up a CX program? Looking for inspiration for your current program?

You're in the right place–no matter your level of understanding, this guide will walk you through CX. Starting with the fundamentals of CX, right through to the five key steps for setting up a CX program.

Contents:

The SmartSurvey guide to CX is designed for new CX professionals looking for inspiration and tools to get started, as well as seasoned CX pros looking to validate existing activities.

Introduction to Customer Experience

What is CX?

Customer Experience (CX) is the impression you leave with a prospect or customer, impacting how they think about your business or brand. The customer's perception of your business is built over time, through every interaction they have with you. CX is not based on a single occasion, it is impacted by every touch point where a customer has interacted with your business.

A good customer experience will leave your customer feeling happy and satisfied, whereas a poor customer experience will leave them feeling unhappy, annoyed, angry, frustrated or any combination of these emotions.

Why is CX important?

Good CX not only leaves the customer happy, but it can also generate additional revenue and reduce costs. CX is pivotal to retention, it can strengthen brand loyalty and advocacy, leading to the phrase "turning customers into fans", whereby customers willingly recommend you to their network.

But don't just take our word for it

Research shows how impactful CX can be, The Tempkin Group says you can **"Potentially double your revenue within 36 months – a good experience means customers will spend more"**.

PWC has found that **86% of buyers are willing to pay more for a great customer experience** and that **49% of buyers have made impulse purchases after receiving a more personalised experience**.

Salesforce discovered that customers who had a great experience are **four times more likely to buy from the same company again**.

This is powerful data that supports the need to manage your customer's experience.

CX Versus Customer Service

When it comes to customer experience, there is often confusion with the term customer service, with many people using the two terms interchangeably. But there is a key difference.

Customer Service

Customer service is the act of supporting your customers before, during and after the purchase of a product or service. Customer service is usually a single department or division within a business. Customer service is reactive to customer's needs, quite often when something has gone wrong.

Example:
Answering a customer call or support ticket.

Customer Experience

In contrast, customer experience is cross department and pro-active which requires a planned approach to what your customers experience at every touch point. You need to ensure that the experience you have planned, is the experience customers feel they receive. To make continual improvements at every touch point, you need to collect feedback and take action based on the insight.

Ideally your CX program will uncover potential issues or sticking points for customers which will inform the changes you can make to processes or systems. Ultimately by unblocking the issues, you can reduce the reactive workload upon your Customer Service Team.

What is Voice of the Customer?

Voice of the Customer (VoC) is a pivotal part of any CX program. VoC describes customer feedback about their experience with your business as well as their expectations for your products or services. In order to assess whether your planned customer experience is being delivered, it is essential for customers to tell you about their experience with you.

VoC programs should allow customers to share their voice at a time that suits them, so you need to offer feedback opportunities in real time at the point of interaction as well as post interaction.

Example:
use a tablet to collect data at the point of checkout (real time) or send a survey via email later (post interaction).

It is important to note that allowing real time feedback, increases the need to listen, act and report back to the customer quickly.

In the same way as CX, voice of the customer is cross department and should be omni-channel, which means that all channels are measured in the same way.

Example:
Have the same feedback opportunity at checkout in both stores and online.

Step 1: Management buy-in

Before getting started with your CX program, it is essential to gain management buy-in. Usually, a CX program will have an Executive Sponsor who builds Exec buy-in and supports you with wider business buy-in.

As a cross-functional program, you'll need the support of stakeholders across the business to not only get things up and running, but to make changes as you collect your feedback and insights. Therefore, it is essential that your management team understand why CX is important, the impact it can have and can support you to deliver the program. To this end, it is good practice to create an aligned view on the scope of the program and then provide your stakeholders with regular updates. These updates can be program meetings or 1-2-1s, whatever the format, the key to success is showing benefit from having the program in place. We'll cover this in more detail in step 5.

When getting your program up and running it's a good idea to communicate the goals of the program with the wider business, this could be through business roadshows, presenting at team meetings or all staff meetings. Whichever route is suitable for your business, the content will be similar, covering some of the same topics as this guide:

- What is CX and why it's important
- What are your program goals – what will be different as a result of the program?
- How you plan to measure success
- Your commitment to providing updates to the wider business (in what format / how often)
- What other teams can expect from you / what they will be expected to support you with

Once you have buy-in you are ready to move to step 2.

Step 2: Mapping the customer journey

To successfully plan, execute and manage a CX program, you will first need to spend some time mapping the customers journey. This is not to be confused with process mapping. Instead, you are looking at the company outside-in, from a customer's perspective.

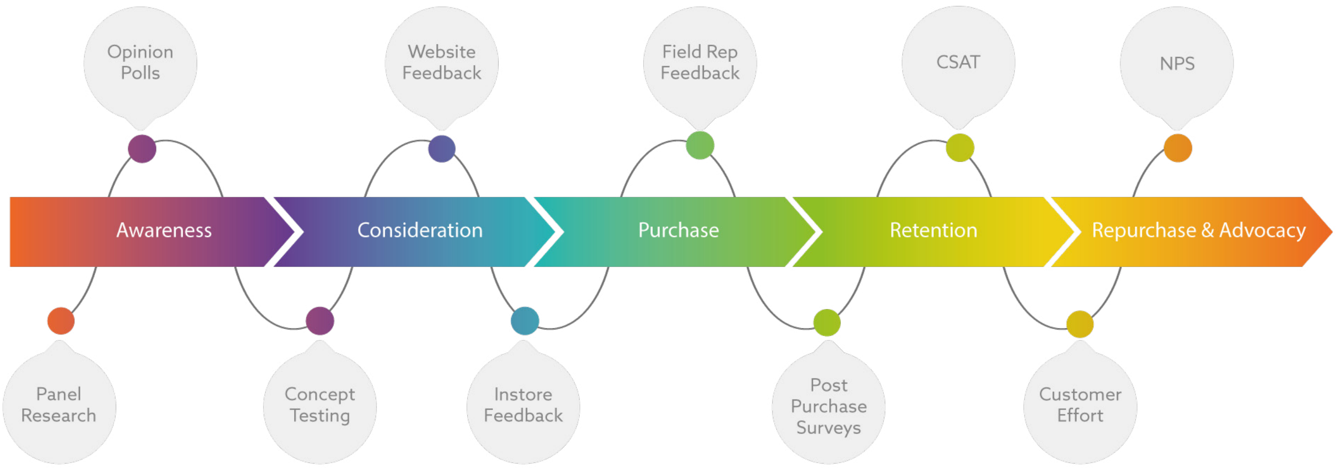
The purpose of customer journey mapping is to understand what journey a customer might take with you and what the interaction points will be, to establish what experience you want them to have.

The map is a guide on which CX questions are appropriate to ask at each point in the customer journey. From your map, you need to deep-dive into each interaction point, capturing in detail what the customer is doing, what action they are taking, what their needs are at this touchpoint and how they might be feeling. Finally, you can start to identify what happens internally at each stage and what outcomes you are expecting. There are many tools that can help with this.

Whilst you can kick start data capture from a high-level journey map, the detailed journeys will highlight potential overlap of surveys across departments and teams. Ideally, you need to establish a set of rules to ensure your customers don't get survey fatigue.

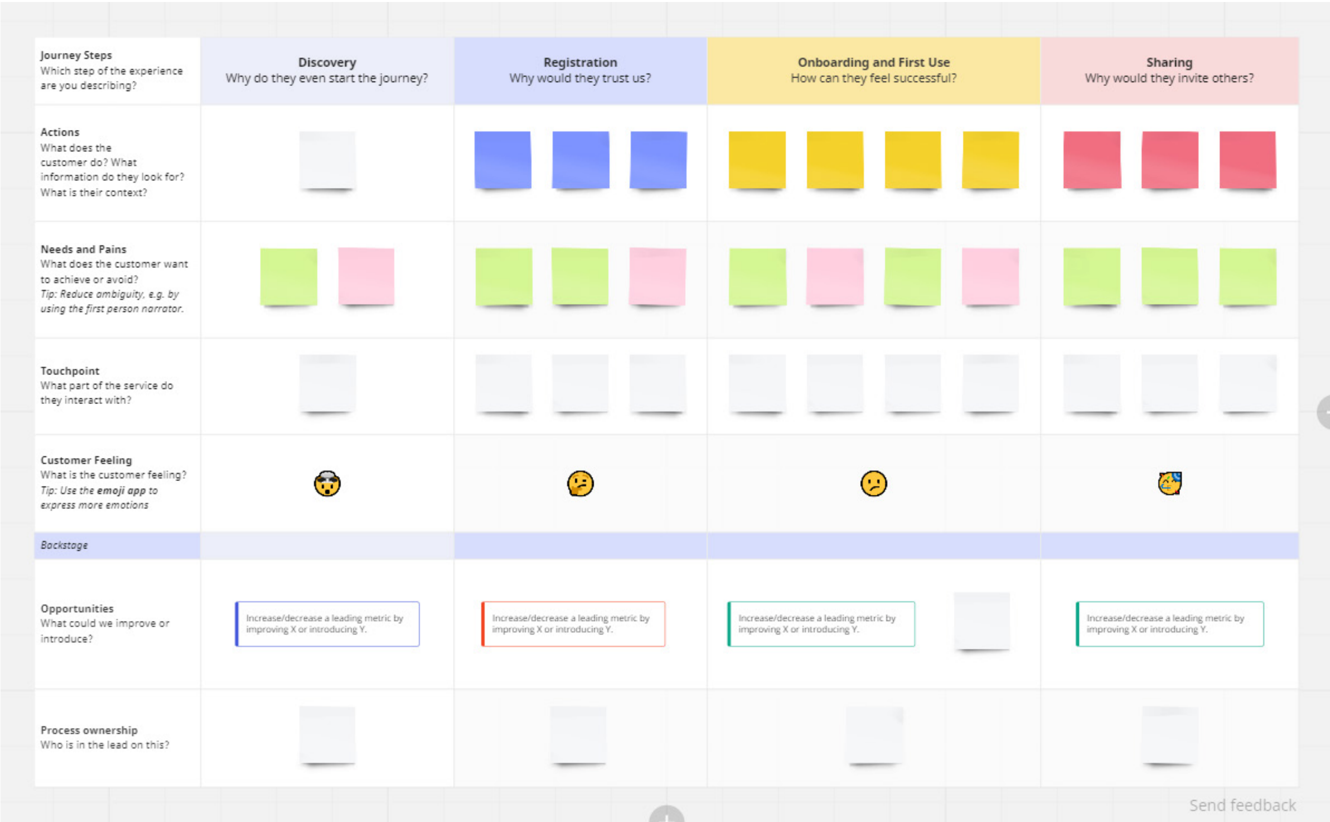
Example:

If a customer raises a support ticket which is resolved and triggers a customer effort survey (see step 3), and then a week later raises a second, do you want to gather insight on both interactions or have a rule that avoids repeat surveys in a set period?



Above: A high-level customer journey and potential surveys at each touchpoint looks like this.

Your baseline metrics act as your starting point to measure the success of your program. Once you have mapped your desired experience, you can then start to implement changes and track your CX change program - step 3 explains the key metrics and tracking you should put in place.



Above: Create a customer journey map with tools like Miro.

Step 3: Metrics and Measurement

There are 3 key metrics associated with any CX program:

1. Net Promotor Score (NPS)
2. Customer Satisfaction Score (CSAT)
3. Customer Effort Score (CES)

Each metric allows you to track performance over time, to quickly see trends and gauge if the changes you've implemented are having the desired impact.

The metrics are often used interchangeably, for example, NPS used in a customer satisfaction survey, but each question type is designed to provide insight on different aspects of the customers experience so it is better to use each of the questions at the right touchpoint.

NPS is usually the key metric of any CX program, but without insight from the other questions you may believe the experience being delivered is meeting your customers' expectations and then suddenly have a dip in the score.

Advocacy is a bit like having savings in the bank, you can afford a couple of unexpected bills before it becomes a problem.

Customers can still be advocates even when something has gone wrong, but over time if the same problems persist the customer is less likely to recommend you to others.

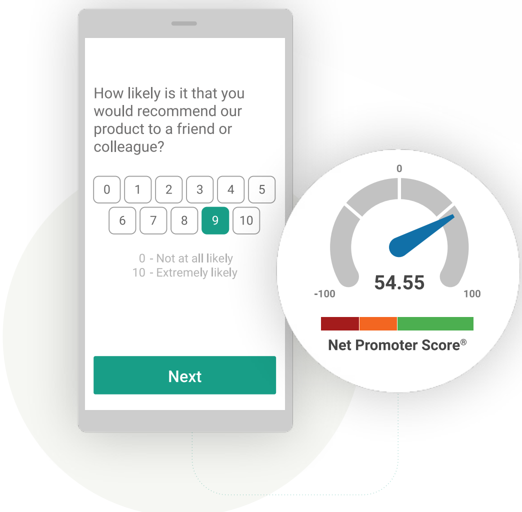
Let's look at the questions in more detail

NPS

NPS was developed by Bain and Company in 2003 to measure advocacy and loyalty. It is one question and cannot be changed.

"How likely is it that you would recommend (company name / product / service) to a friend or colleague?"

It is answered on a rating scale of 0 (not at all likely) to 10 (extremely likely).



- A score of 9 or 10 is known as a Promotor, these customers are typically loyal and enthusiastic customers.
- A score of 7 or 8 is known as a Passive, these customers are satisfied with your company or product / service but not happy enough to promote you.
- A score of 0 to 6 is known as a Detractor, these are unhappy customers, they will be unlikely to buy again and may discourage others from buying from you.

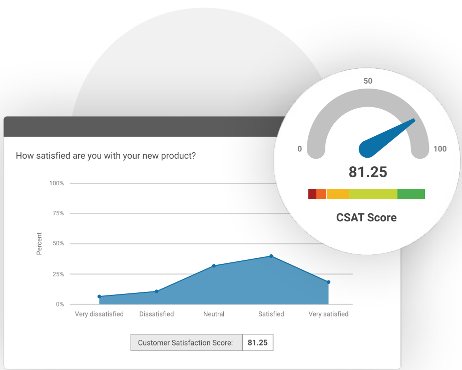
The actual score is reported on a scale of -100 to +100, the higher the score the more advocates you have. To calculate the score, the percentage of detractors is subtracted from the percentage of promotors.

As mentioned, NPS is usually the key metric of success for CX programs and can be used for health checks to track trends over time. NPS provides you with a periodic pulse about how customers feel about your company, which could be done via quarterly or annual surveys. In some industries, NPS scores are published so you can track your score against your competitors.

Ideally, you want to follow the NPS question with: “why did you give us that score”, this helps identify any areas for improvement.

CSAT

Customer satisfaction is a measure of short-term happiness in relation to a specific interaction, purchase or event. Unlike NPS, CSAT is not generally used as a measure of a customer’s ongoing relationship with a company. As such you should use your customer journey map to plan when to ask this question.



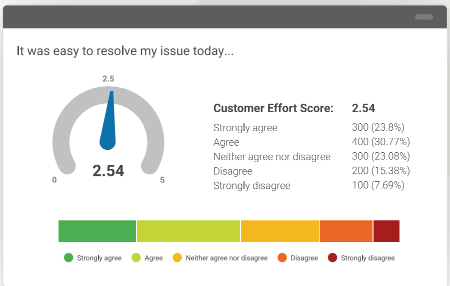
Example:
A good point to trigger a CSAT survey would be post purchase where you can ask “how satisfied are you with the checkout process today?” or when presented with the bill in a restaurant, you could provide customers with a QR code to access a satisfaction survey asking “how satisfied were you with your food/server today?”

CSAT is asked using a 1-5 scales from “Very Unsatisfied” to “Very Satisfied”, the results are usually expressed as a percentage, 100% being total satisfaction and 0% being total dissatisfaction.

CES

Customer Effort Score (CES) is a single item metric, generally used at specific interaction points. Similarly to NPS and CSAT it is easy to deploy and track over time. CES measures how much effort a customer must exert to use a product or service, get an issue resolved, get a question answered or a request completed or to make a purchase or return. It is typically asked in this format:

"On a scale of "very easy" to "very difficult" how easy was it to interact with (Company Name)?"



Example

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the statement: (Company Name) made it easy to handle my issue (slider scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree)

The idea behind this measure is that customers are more loyal to a product or service that is easier to use. By using insight from the CES question you can remove obstacles for the customer, and in so doing, the cost to serve and churn rates can be reduced.

Tracking to insight

Customer experience is about how a customer feels after interacting with your company. To gain the insight needed to make changes and improvements across the customer journey, it is good practice to follow up each tracking question with a 'why' question and a 'feelings' question. This moves you from quantitative (tracking) data to qualitative data and insights.

Example:

Trigger a CES survey after a support ticket has been closed.

You might ask the following questions:

- Why did you need to contact us today? (Gives you the specific problem)
- How easy was it to resolve? (CES question - provides a score for tracking)
- Why did you give the answer you did? (Gives you more context)
- How could we make it easier? (Drives your continuous improvement / change program)
- How did we make you feel and why? (Gives you insight on the emotions the experience created, which helps you make improvements to align with your desired experience)

There are many other questions that you can ask, such as product satisfaction, which is like CSAT but focused on product use, this is usually used post purchase. You may want to use consumer panels to gather brand insight or have web intercept surveys to capture feedback if someone exits the checkout journey. You can even use the feedback form as an incentive by providing a discount code for the next purchase in return for providing feedback.

As discussed in step 2 it is important to understand how often customers might be asked for feedback across the entire customer journey. Ensure you have appropriate rules in place to prevent survey fatigue whilst still providing an appropriate sample size to base decisions on.

Once you have your touchpoints and CX questions mapped you need to ensure you have the right people on hand to move from data to insight and action, which we discuss in step 4.

Step 4: Management and improvement

A good CX program needs a core team who are responsible for the day-to-day management and execution of the program.

These team members will be responsible for:

- Mapping the entire customer journey, engaging with each department to understand what is done and how from both a customer and business point of view.
- Create and manage customer surveys to collect feedback, analyse the insights and ensure others take any required action, ideally in real time.
- Own the continuous improvement plan, working cross functionally on large scale transformational change.
- Updating key stakeholders and the wider business on the success of the program.

In addition to the core team, it is good practice to have working groups to support the CX program. These groups are usually made up of influencers from across the business, they will be subject matter experts for their own area of the business, and will work within the business as advocates and change leaders of the program.

Members of the working group will have their day-to-day role to carry out alongside the CX program, so it is important that they have support from both the core team and the CX sponsor to be able to prioritise workloads and deliver meaningful changes on behalf of the CX program.

Mapping the journey and collecting feedback is only the start, the key to any successful CX program is moving to action. Some feedback will need immediate action on an individual basis.

Example:
A long-term customer who gives a low satisfaction score may need to be passed to a customer retention team to pro-actively follow up and look to turn around the experience in order to retain the customer.

When thinking about the tools you put in place to collect your feedback and insight, you will want to ensure you can trigger actions or integrate feedback straight into key systems such as your CRM to facilitate this.

Other feedback will need to be aggregated to uncover trends and potential changes to improve the overall experience. The survey tool you select should give you the ability to easily analyse free text, as well as filter data by specific parameters to make the data easy to analyse.

Step 5: Management updates

Once your program is up and running it is important to provide updates to management and the wider business, these updates should instill confidence in the program and show tangible changes and benefits.

A good approach is to provide updates in the **“our customers said, we did”** format, where you provide summaries of customer feedback alongside what changes have been implemented on the back of this. Of course, it is also important to celebrate wins - so ensure any feedback shares good news stories and give credit to teams who are receiving positive feedback from your customers.

You will probably find that you need high level, exec summaries, for your key stakeholder and program sponsor, as well as more detailed touch point / department focused insights to share with your working group and the wider business. When selecting your insight platform, check to see how easy it is to share data or specific views of data with people outside of this system.

As you did when gaining business buy-in, you’ll need to carve out time for regular updates. These will likely be more frequent with your working group:

- Either weekly or every two weeks to maintain traction
- Monthly with your Exec sponsor or aligned to their meeting schedule
- And as a good rule of thumb - quarterly updates to the wider business works well

How to get started

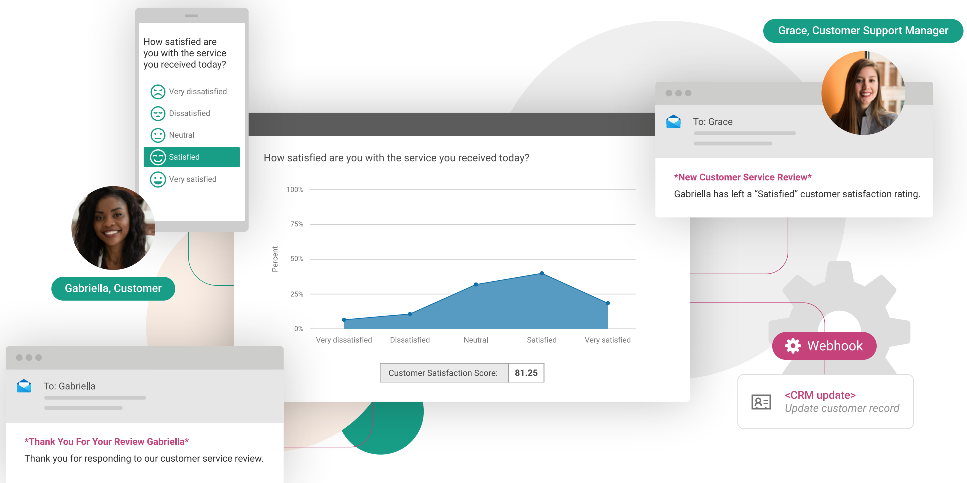
We have reached the end of the Quick Guide to CX, which will have equipped you with the knowledge to start implementing your CX program.

Now you are ready to get started! Which means it's time to consider which survey provider you want to collect powerful data insights with.

SmartSurvey is a UK based survey platform, supporting over 500k customers worldwide to answer over 1 billion questions.

GDPR, ISO27001, Cyber Essentials Plus and NHS Data Protection Toolkit compliant, with UK data storage.

We offer out of the box CX question types with automatic scoring and trend charts, the ability to integrate with other systems or trigger emails to teams for action. Stakeholder management is easy with shared report views, combined with white label options to maximise your brand trust.



SmartSurvey

Our team is here to help you discuss your goals and build a survey package that best fits your needs

Contact us today

meetings.hubspot.com/danielle-f1/cx-guide

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