



How to Navigate the B2B Client's Emotional Journey

How well do you really understand your clients? You may think it only comes down to quality products or services but, underneath it all, your clients are real human beings with real pain points, emotions, and uncertainties—and you need to start putting yourself in their shoes to deliver better service and create stronger relationships.

In today's marketplace, success hinges on addressing human needs to offer the most positive customer experience possible. To do this effectively, you need to get into your customers' shoes, follow their emotional journey and keep your eyes peeled for opportunities to create value and strengthen their relationships with your business.

Whether it's a parent opening a bank account for their child or a company looking to upgrade its IT infrastructure, both transactions are initiated by human beings with real pain points, emotions, and uncertainties. Customer Journey Mapping (CJM) uses empathy to allow businesses to understand their clients' interactions and experiences.

CJM generally involves sitting down with your internal team, customers and prospects, and breaking down the customer journey from start to finish. When executed correctly, the exercise should allow you to uncover ways to improve your selling process and identify new options for growth.

While CJM has been a useful tool for B2C companies, the benefits are available to B2B businesses as well. CJM can traditionally help you:

- better identify their needs and offer tailored customer service by providing real-time visibility into your existing processes
- compare your customers' current experience to their ideal experience
- measure and capture key touchpoints

Customers should be at the centre of everything you do. CJM allows you to take a fresh perspective on your internal processes and realize the impact they have on customers. How do they perceive your products or services and do they

meet their expectations? Is there a better way to address their needs?

Spark innovation

Designing processes using CJM frees thinking limited by internal structures and historical ways of delivering service. One of our clients was building their internal processes to deliver requirements for an RFP, and maintained a customer-centric lens throughout. They were able to eliminate historical redundancies and offer differentiating services such as company portals and automated notifications.

We took a page out of our own book and created a simple change that garnered great results. After realizing our service offerings were too lengthy and confusing for clients, we streamlined them around their needs. Now clients tell us they are better able to understand who we are and what we do more clearly.

Improve service quality

With thorough CJM, you can better understand client pain points and identify key areas of improvement. For instance, if you're experiencing a period of poor service quality, a CJM can help push you to empathize with your clients, forcing you to examine your internal processes from the client's perspective. This can identify the activities that are most directly causing negative client impacts. From there, you can address the activities—potentially by eliminating those that are redundant (and are likely leading to slow service) or implementing quality control measures. This information can also be used to enhance your employee training programs or reinforce specific best practices, with a greater understanding of why they are important.

Enhance productivity

Non-customer facing teams still have a significant impact on the level of service the customer experiences. Back-office efficiency translates into whether the customer receives what they are expecting when they are expecting it. CJM is a great tool to evaluate not only the sales process, but also the delivery of services to customers.

Information gleaned from CJM allows you to gain a new perspective on activities that are impactful to your customers (value added) and those that are not (non-value added). Are there reports being created for clients that aren't useful? Duplication of documents? By trying to make the experience more seamless for customers, redundant activities can be eliminated and siloed processes among teams can be streamlined.

The human side to business

Whether you're B2B or B2C, be sure to remember that your customers are actual human beings, with an emotional response to the purchase of your product or service. The more you understand their journey, the better you can find ways to delight your customers and keep them. CJM is an underutilized tool in the B2B space but can make all the difference when it comes to understanding customers.

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