CUSTOMER JOURNEY MAPPING:
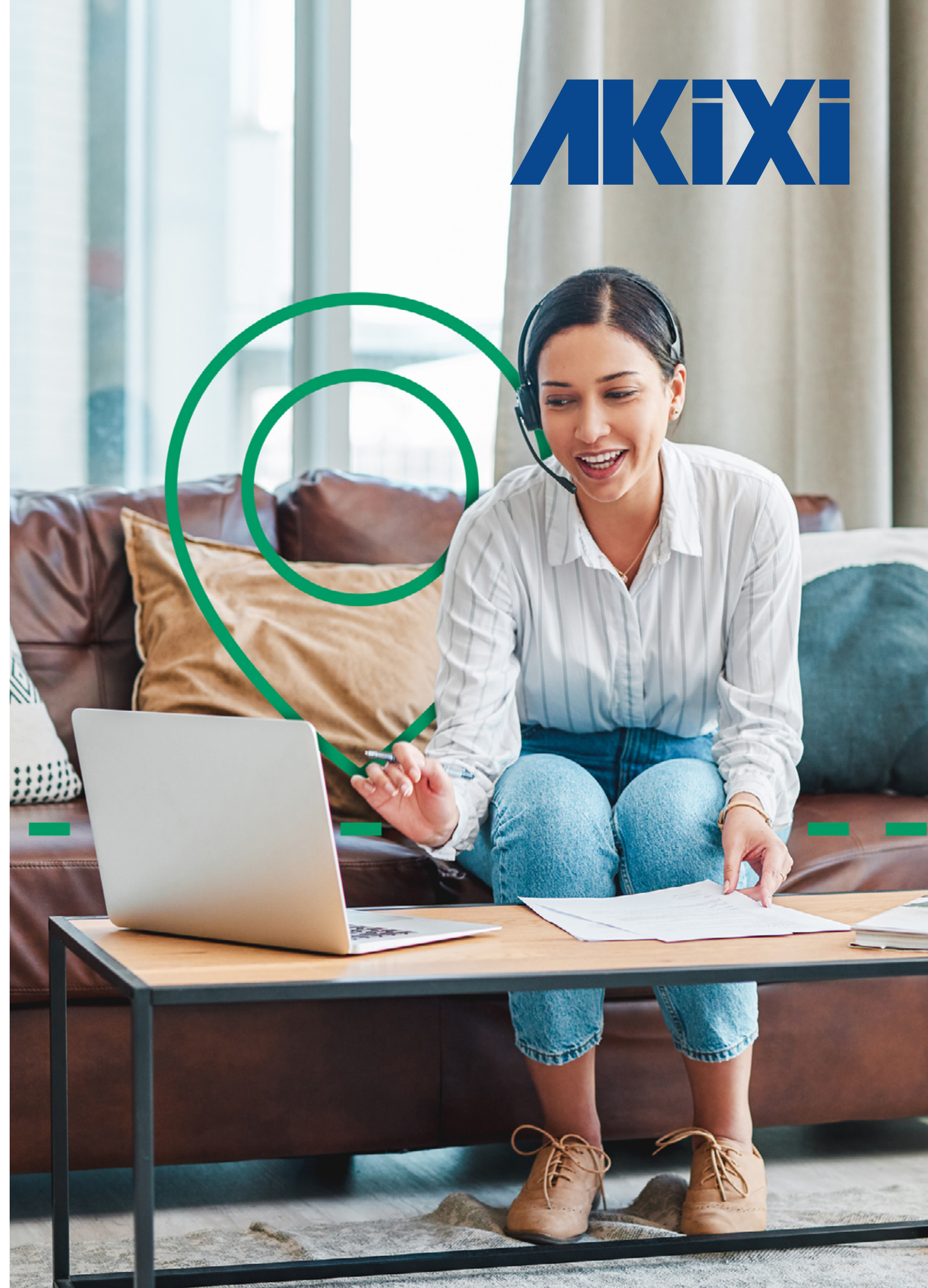
THE ROUTE TO BETTER CX

HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT YOUR CUSTOMER JOURNEY?

Typically, most customers won't see a product or service advertised online and instantly decide to purchase it. There's a path each prospect follows, starting when they recognise the need for a solution and ending when your customer stops investing in your product.

Customer journey mapping refers to the strategies companies use to understand the paths their customers take each day. With the right map, you can visualise what it takes to turn an interested lead into a loyal customer and even improve customer experience on a fundamental level.

For years, the customer journey remained shrouded in mystery. With minimal access to data, companies could only guess at what it might take to convert a one-time transactional customer into a loyal repeat customer. Now, we're living in a digitally-enhanced world, where you can pinpoint every interaction with your customer and determine the impact it has on their relationship with your business.
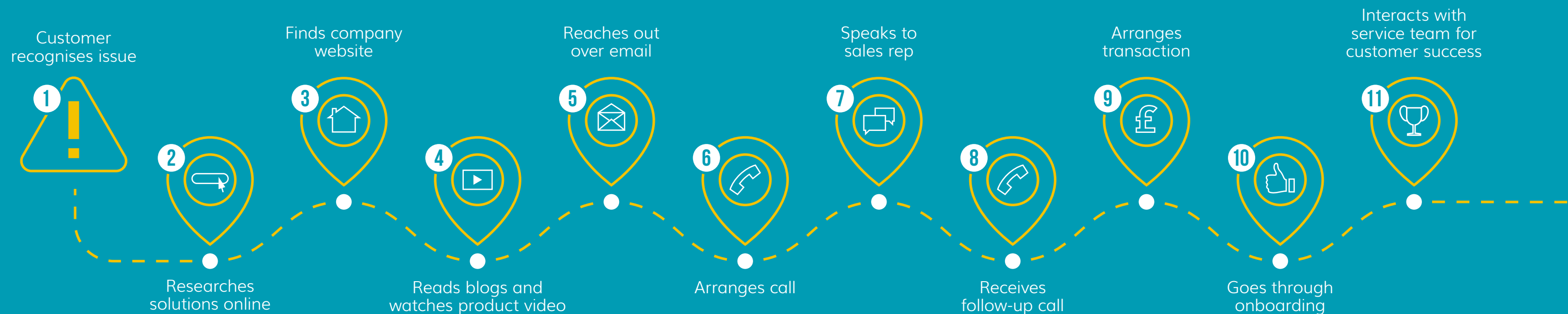
CUSTOMER JOURNEY MAPPING IS THE KEY TO NOT ONLY **IMPROVING CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE**, BUT DETERMINING WHERE YOU NEED TO **TRAIN** YOUR EMPLOYEES AND WHICH **METRICS** YOU NEED TO TRACK TOO.

WHAT IS A CUSTOMER JOURNEY MAP?

A customer journey map is essentially just a representation of the steps your customers might take to interact with your business. For instance, if someone sees your product advertised online, they may reach out via email to arrange a call-back from one of your team. That employee then connects with the customer via phone call and answers questions. Follow-up conversations might happen to help determine the needs of the customer before a purchase is arranged.

IN THIS CASE, THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY MIGHT LOOK SOMETHING LIKE THIS:

Customer recognises issue
1

Researches solutions online
2

Finds company website
3

Reads blogs and watches product video
4

Reaches out over email
5

Arranges call
6

Speaks to sales rep
7

Receives follow-up call
8

Arranges transaction
9

Goes through onboarding
10

Interacts with service team for customer success
11

As you can see, even a customer journey that seems simple on the surface can include a variety of touchpoints. As a business, you need to be aware of every step in the customer journey, so you can effectively optimise experiences with your brand.

Crucially, customer journeys aren't always linear. A customer might recognise an issue, arrange a call, then go back to researching solutions online. Because of this, customer journey maps need to include tips for sales, service, and marketing teams which could reduce the friction between different points in the conversation.

WHY DO WE USE CUSTOMER JOURNEY MAPS?

So, why is customer journey mapping becoming such a vital part of the business process?

Simply put, your customers **expect more** from you. Today's customers know you have digital tools available to monitor remote workers and enhance business productivity. They know you can update your software to connect with them on multiple channels, and they expect you to be constantly striving to update and improve the experience you offer. With **32%** of customers saying they would stop doing business with a brand they loved after one bad experience, the importance of delivering consistent excellent customer experience should not be underestimated.

Customer journey mapping essentially allows businesses to take a strategic approach to better understanding customer expectations. Once you know what your customers want and need, you can train employees to deliver the right results, ensure you're tracking the right metrics, and constantly optimise your CX strategy.

When you map the customer journey you can:

See every touchpoint your company has with customers, and where they need to improve. For instance, if you notice that it's taking several days to onboard each customer, you can look for ways to streamline the process with self-service tools and AI bots.

Track the metrics that matter most to your team. Real-time dashboards give your hybrid employees an insight into the metrics they need to be aware of, like time spent on a call or number of calls answered. A customer journey shows you which KPIs are really going to have an impact on your bottom line.

Get deeper insights into your customer personas. A customer journey map can differ from one customer segment to another. Deeper insight into your audience will make it easier to determine how your customers differ, so you can provide more personalised experiences.

Improve employee training: Customer journey maps show where you're missing opportunities to delight and retain customers. This information, combined with compliant call recording and in-depth metrics can show you how to enhance and empower your team with the correct training.

Outshine the competition: When you know your customers and what they need, you can align every part of your service process to suit those customers. Now that customers are searching for personalised, relevant experiences more than ever, a customer journey map could be the key to beating the competition.

WHAT SHOULD A CUSTOMER JOURNEY MAP INCLUDE?

Customer journey maps can serve various purposes in your business. Today, they are becoming increasingly valuable in enabling the omnichannel service experience and ensuring your employees can deliver the service customers deserve. While there's no one-size-fits-all answer to what a customer journey map should include, the most common requirements include:

Buyer personas

Each user persona is likely to have its own distinct map. Because of this, you need to nail down your understanding of who your customers are. Create personas that allow you to step into the shoes of your customer and figure out who they are, as well as what they do. Make sure you understand the goals and expectations of each customer when they approach your brand. What are they looking for?

Potential buyer touchpoints

Next, you need an aligned view of all the areas where your customers can connect with your business. This includes calls to and from your contact centre, connections via social media, SMS messages, online chat, and anything else you use to reach your customers. Touchpoints can also include platforms such as websites and social media pages, where your customers interact with your company in a less real-time way.

Customer pain points

Now it's time to see where your customer journey could be improved. Are your customers getting the answers they need to their questions on your website, or do they need to call your contact centre? Where are the main areas of friction and frustration that cause your customers to abandon their purchases?

Strategies for success

When you know where your customers' pain points lie, you can begin to develop strategies for how to overcome them. For instance, if you know your customers struggle to find the information they need in your FAQ pages, maybe you could add a chatbot to help them track down the right data.

Measurements and metrics

These are the metrics that you and your team should focus on when tracking the success of the customer journey. Customer satisfaction rates and online reviews, for example, will show you whether your efforts are making a positive difference or not.

ORGANISATIONS THAT HAVE AND USE CUSTOMER JOURNEY MAPS ARE TWICE AS LIKELY TO OUTPERFORM COMPETITORS THAN THOSE THAT DON'T.
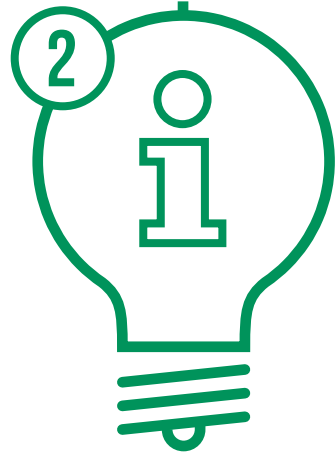(GARTNER)

HOW DO YOU USE A CUSTOMER JOURNEY MAP?

1
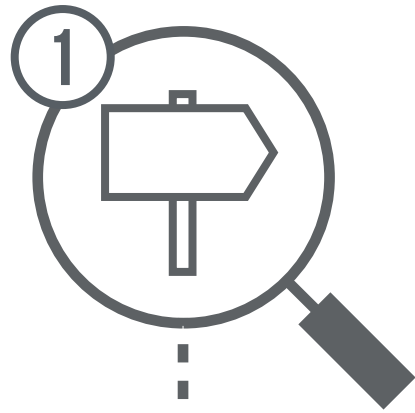
HAVING AN **EFFECTIVE INSIGHT** INTO YOUR CUSTOMER'S JOURNEY IS JUST THE **FIRST STEP...**
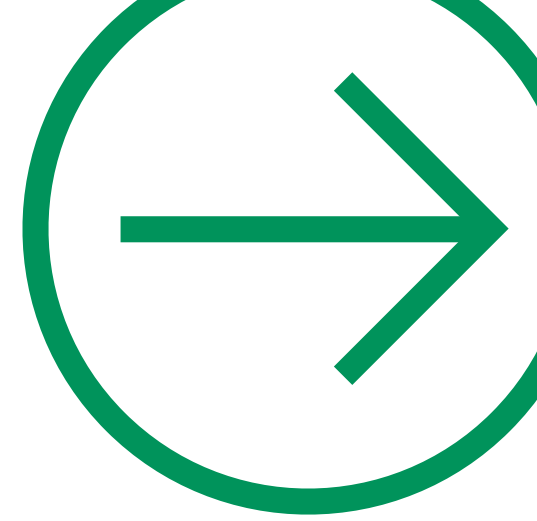
2

...BUT WHAT MAKES CUSTOMER JOURNEY MAPPING **TRULY TRANSFORMATIONAL**, IS WHAT YOU DECIDE TO DO WITH THE **INFORMATION YOU COLLECT**.

HERE ARE SOME QUICK INSIGHTS INTO HOW TO GET STARTED...

1. BUILD A BLUEPRINT FOR CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Using your knowledge of your customer journey and the outcomes your customers want to achieve, you should be able to get an insight into what the experience *should* look like for your customers. This is the kind of document that can guide your employees (whether they're working in office or remotely).

Before you can begin to make significant changes to your customer journey, you first need to know what kind of experience your audience is dealing with right now. How many times do your customers need to be transferred before they finally talk to someone who can solve their problems? How often do your employees reach their goals for metrics such as number of calls answered, or first-time resolution?

WHEN BUILDING A BLUEPRINT FOR CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE, YOU SHOULD LOOK AT:

Customer pain points

If customers currently spend too much time waiting in a queue to get service, what can you do to address this? Can you ensure that your remote and in-office staff are always monitoring the time they spend on a call with real-time metrics, so they know when they need to move people along in the queue? Do you need to bring on additional staff to help out during times of peak demand?

Expectations for your employees

What kind of results are you expecting from your customer-facing employees each day? Setting out solid expectations can be a great way to boost your chances of positive results, because it gives your staff something to work towards. Share a vision of the values that matter most to your company with your entire team. What sort of benchmarks should your employees be aiming for, how are you going to measure their output?
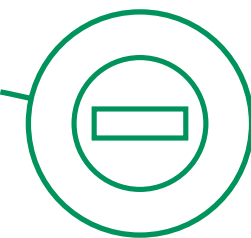
Gaps in the customer journey

Are there any discrepancies between what your customer expects from your business, and what you can provide? For instance, are your competitors offering SMS support for customers, but you're still only answering phone calls? Failing to offer the kind of touchpoints your customers appreciate most can significantly damage the experience map.

2. DEFINE A BETTER CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Now you know what your customers need from you, and your employees know what you're expecting from them, you can begin to define a better journey for your customers. This allows you to pinpoint areas where you may need to increase investment or unlock new opportunities.

For instance, if the main reason why you're not delivering a seamless customer journey now is that you don't have the right omnichannel contact centre in place, no amount of team motivation is going to help. Defining what you want the customer experience to look like shows you where you need to be willing to make changes.

SOME OF THE BEST WAYS TO INVEST IN THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY INCLUDE:

Hybrid team management

In the age of hybrid work, more employees are serving customers from home than ever before. To ensure that you're enhancing the customer experience, you need to be able to effectively manage a hybrid team. This means investing in collaboration tools that keep teams connected, workflow optimisation services for managers, and even real-time tracking. You can also invest in things like presence features and performance analytics, so you can see when you need to bring more people into the team.

Better employee training

How are you empowering your team members to deliver the best results for your customers? Maybe they have a view of their performance via a dashboard at all times, but they don't know how to increase their calls-per-hour rating, because you've never taught them how to find customer information quickly on a back-end system. Upgrade your training strategy with insights into new tools, and even call recordings where they can learn from previous successful discussions.

New technology

Contact Centre as a Service (CCaaS) solutions which allow you to align your contact centre agents on the same cloud-based back end are growing increasingly popular today. These flexible environments can also come with access to add-ons and integrations that make it easier to support the customer journey. For instance, maybe you can implement smart routing technology to ensure that customers in need of help reach the right agent first time.

3. MEASURE AND TRACK IMPROVEMENTS TO THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY MAP

Customer journey mapping isn't a set-it and forget-it strategy. Once you've got an insight into your customers' current experiences with your company and the kind of interactions you want to provide, you need to track your progress.

Look at each area where you're planning on making changes to the customer experience. How can you measure the impact those updates have? For instance, if you're implementing call recording features for better employee training, you can use metrics like customer satisfaction scores and first-time resolution to track the performance of staff after they've received training. If these metrics improve, you know that your efforts are working.

You should have tools in place to monitor and measure the impact of everything you do to enhance customer experience. Only by constantly measuring the results of these changes can you determine whether you're making the right investments on behalf of your staff.

TO CONTINUE OPTIMISING YOUR CUSTOMER JOURNEY MAP:

Create a feedback loop

Make sure there's a feedback loop in place for all of your team members, so you can keep optimising the customer journey. Your employees need to be able to tell you if they see parts of the customer journey map changing, and if they're struggling with hitting their benchmarks. You need to be ready to offer positive and negative feedback whenever necessary to guide and motivate your teams.

Listen to your customers

Tracking metrics like NPS score and customer satisfaction rate is a great way to determine whether your understanding of the customer journey map is improving. You can also send out surveys and ask for feedback from customers after calls to collect as much actionable information as possible.

Plan regular updates

Regularly come together as a team to discuss ways you can improve the customer experience even further. This will be particularly important in an environment where your customers' communication preferences and expectations might be changing regularly.

ALIGNING YOUR COMPANY TO YOUR CUSTOMER'S JOURNEY

Businesses in the competitive landscape are constantly looking for ways to outshine the competition and earn new customers. However, in order to do that, you're going to need more than just a good view of your internal processes and employee performance. While tracking the number of calls you answer each day and tracking your general output is helpful, you also need to think about whether your performance is aligned to your customers' expectations.

Customer journey mapping is a chance to see each interaction with your company from the customer's point of view. By stepping into their shoes, you can see where you're missing out on opportunities for sales, better experiences, and even brand loyalty.

Customer journey maps are the compasses that drive businesses towards the most meaningful process changes and transformations. If you align the development of your business with customers' needs and desires, you'll benefit from happier customers, more conversions, and reduced churn.

The reality is that customer experience is here to stay as the most important differentiator for any brand. Without a map of the journeys customers take with your business, how can you make sure that you're setting your customers up for success?
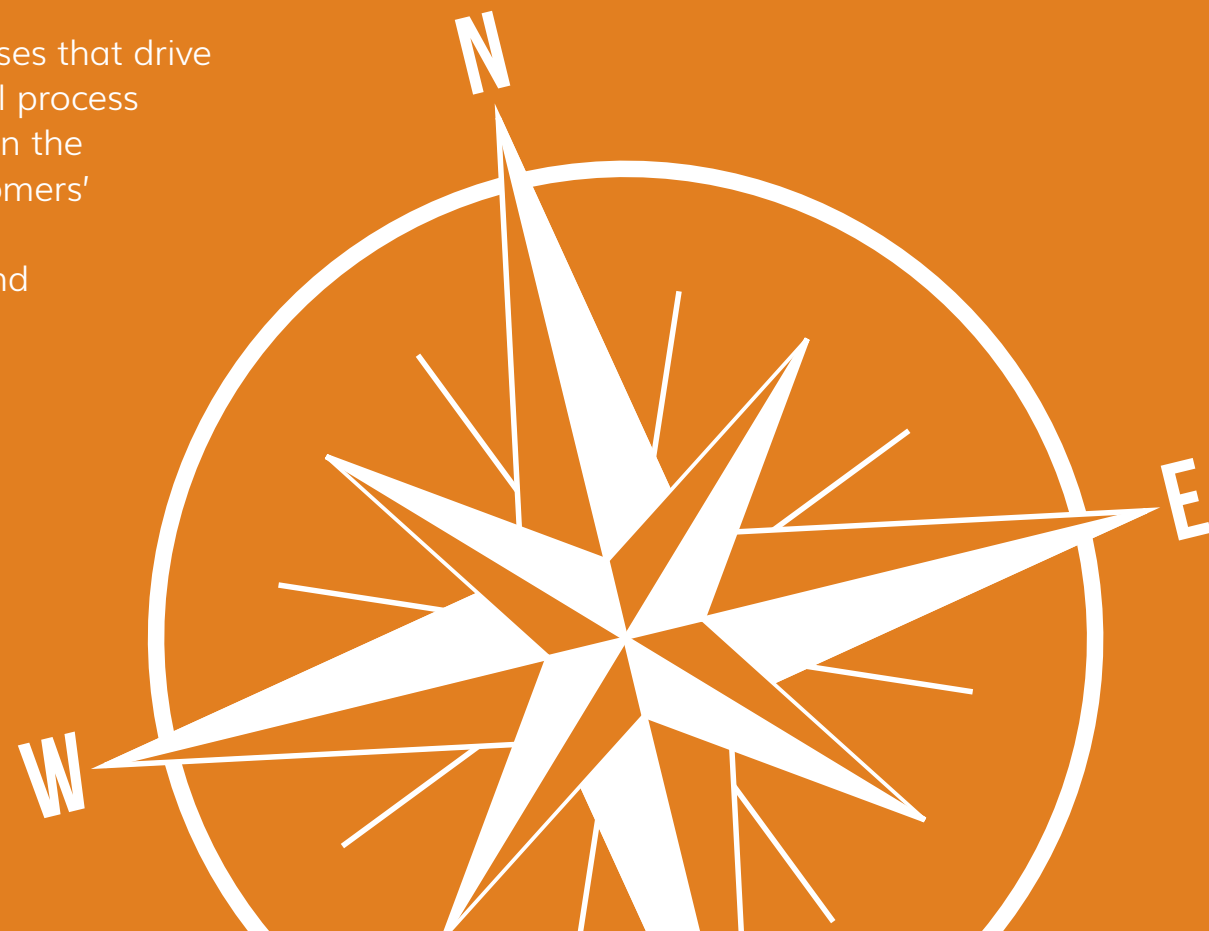
NEXT STEPS

Contact Akixi today to discover how our call and contact analytics solutions can give you the insight you need to improve your customer interactions.

Visit **www.akixi.com/book-a-demo** to request an online demonstration of our award-winnng reporting software, or get in touch to find out more.

Get in touch:

📞 **+44 (0)1293 853060**

✉ **info@akixi.com**

🌐 **www.akixi.com**

Join the conversation:

in 🐦 ▶ f

AKiXi