



# JOURNEY MAPPING

CREATING ACTIONABLE JOURNEY MAPS TO  
DEFINE CUSTOMER VALUE

APPLIED  
MARKETING  
SCIENCE

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## What is Journey Mapping?

Product development, service design, and customer experience delivery is fundamentally about creating and capturing customer value. Yet “value” is often hard to pin down. How can a company move from a fuzzy notion of value to a tangible and structured understanding of what customers really want, and when is the best time to give it to them?

A customer journey map is like a GPS for value creation and innovation. A good map shows how customers interact with people, brands, and products in a category as they try to get what they need. Journey mapping is a way to identify all the touchpoints a company has with their customers, across all channels, and encompassing the entire purchase cycle: awareness, investigation,

purchase and the post-sale experience. A journey map helps a company see the entire customer journey as well as understand and improve the customer experience. A journey map defines what kind of experience customers want and expect, how well current solutions deliver these expectations relative to the competition, and if done correctly, guides where and how to improve the customer experience.

## Components of a Journey Map

At AMS, we believe the best journey maps contain four elements: stages, tasks, needs and touchpoints. The most effective journey maps understand the interaction of customer needs with tasks and touchpoints along the various stages of the customer journey.

**1. STAGES:** Major steps in the customer journey punctuated by **moments of truth**. A journey map may examine every stage or drill down into just one or two. To **deliver customer value**, it's important to understand the intersection of tasks, needs and touchpoints within each journey stage.

## Components of a Journey Map (cont.)

**2. TASKS & SUBTASKS:** Objectives a customer wants to achieve at each stage - a checklist of what must or could be done before moving to the next stage. Each task is a discrete opportunity to satisfy customer needs through product, service, or experience innovation. **Mapping tasks show where and when value can be created.**

**3. NEEDS:** Benefits the customers realize as they complete tasks in each stage. Needs can be functional, emotional, experiential or financial. Uncovering customer needs in each stage and task is **the most critical step in creating customer value.**

**4. TOUCHPOINTS:** Channels where customers and brands interact. Some are directly controllable, while others may only be indirectly influenced. **These are the channels to deliver customer value.**

## Stages of the Customer Journey

At a basic level, the customer journey in almost any industry involves some form of awareness, investigation, purchase and post-sale. Some customer journey maps may have subsets or interim steps, but this framework typically holds for companies in consumer and business-to-business markets, as well as those selling directly to consumers or through dealers and distributors.

### Awareness

At the start of any journey, a customer realizes that they have a need for a product or service. At this stage, touchpoints are the ways in which customers become aware of your brand.

## Investigation

Once customers are aware of your brand, they may enter the investigation stage. Common questions may include: What products or services are provided? What's similar or different from the competition? What are the key strengths and weaknesses? Customers may use traditional or digital channels to investigate. These channels could include visiting online forums, consulting with dealers or distributors, reading reviews, watching videos, visiting retail outlets and talking to friends, family and trusted experts.

## Purchase Decision

After completing the investigation process, customers arrive at a consideration set. This consideration set could include anything from one brand to several competing brands. It's here that customers evaluate a range of product, service and experiential characteristics and decide which product to buy or brand to endorse.

## Post-Sale

The post-sale experience is the point in the journey where a prospect transitions to a new customer or a repeat buyer. It's here that companies can win customer loyalty, deepen customer engagement or lose customers to the competition.

## Uses for Journey Maps

An effective journey map drives action across the organization. Companies commonly use journey maps to inform:

- **Customer Experience:** Maximize the development and interaction of your traditional and digital customer experiences.

## Uses for Journey Maps (cont.)

- **Products:** Establish product strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for innovation.
- **Customer Retention:** Develop effective customer engagement and loyalty programs. Understand where in the journey you are delighting or losing customers.
- **Market Strategy:** Examine how you stack up against your competitors throughout the customer journey.
- **Training:** Develop training to improve customer interactions.
- **Operations:** Inform decisions about staffing, process flow, and logistics.

## Research Techniques to Create Actionable Journey Maps

At AMS, our journey mapping research methods have been validated by academic study and proven in real world experience.

### Qualitative Research Methods

- **One-on-One Interviews:** Go in-depth with customers to understand their unmet needs across the journey.
- **Ethnographic Research:** Observe customers, both in-person or virtually, to uncover unspoken needs.

- **Online Discussion Boards:** Engage with customers online to better understand their experiences throughout the journey.
- **Web Content Analysis:** Examine the places where your customers are talking about your company, product or brand such as forums, blogs and social media.

### Quantitative Research Methods

Use quantitative research to help prioritize how to act on journey mapping results. Measure how many customers are lost at each stage and why, the importance of each need throughout the journey, and the frequency of interaction with touchpoints.

- **Web or Telephone Surveys:** Field surveys to understand what customer needs are most important at each stage of the journey.
- **MaxDiff:** Utilize trade-off exercises to understand what drives customer decisions.
- **Multivariate Analysis:** Use logistic regression and structural equation modeling to identify what drives customers to the next stage in their journey and what deters them.

**For additional information and resources on journey mapping**, including journey map examples, visit: <https://info.ams-insights.com/journey-mapping-customer-experience>.