

# Cognisi Insights: Management should be there to serve frontline staff, not instruct them.

## (Moments of Truth and Understanding The Customer's Journey)

In today's world where the internet allows us to easily compare most of the functional aspects of competing products or services, the real reason we chose to use a supplier is increasingly based upon the treatment we get and the feelings/emotions that we go through during our interactions with the company. From initial research, to buying, to remaining or leaving, the emotional journey we go through is effected by the numerous "touch points" that we have with the company.

These "touch points" were recognised many years ago by Jan Carlzon who helped turnaround SAS the Scandinavian airline. He recognised that these touch points were so important that he called them "Moments of Truth" which he defined as: *"Anytime a customer comes into contact with any aspect of a business, however remote, is an opportunity to form an impression."* And in the age of social media the importance of these moments of truths are probably even more important than ever before.

### INSIGHT

Interestingly, Jan also described the value of SAS's assets (aircraft) differently to most of us. In his own words from a discussion with Bob Bob Thompson of CustomerThink Corp he said;

"Assets that you present on your balance sheet have no real value as long as they are not filled up with customers. I mean, aircraft, itself, only causes problems for a company because it's a high investment; you have to depreciate the investment; you have to pay interest to the bank; and all those hurt your profit and loss statement. But the moment you have customers entering into those aircrafts paying for being there then, also, the aircraft gets the value.

And if you realize that the real value—the real value—is the perception of a customer when they use your company's products and services, you will also ask yourself what is, then, the company? And for some

time, we thought if we just had very new and nice and technically developed aircraft, people would regard our company as good. But when we questioned our passengers, it showed that 90 percent of them didn't even know what kind of aircraft they were flying. Where did they get their impression or perception of the company?

We found out that they got the perception in those meetings with human resources, the employees working in the company: a salesman over the telephone; a girl behind the check-in counter; a stewardess on board the aircraft; the captain, the way he spoke over his microphone. And all these meetings really constituted the company as such. *That's why I said that if those meetings are good meetings, our asset side on the balance side will increase. If those meetings are bad meetings, the value of our assets on the balance sheet will decrease.* In other words, the only thing we have to do is to see that those critical meetings are as good as ever and that they exceed the expectations of the customers. Then we are going to be a successful company in moments of truth.

For an airline, there are many obvious Moments of Truth: researching flight times and departure information, reservation, check-in at the ticket counter, boarding at the gate, in flight, baggage claim. Every interaction, however remote, is an opportunity for the customer/passenger to form an impression. *It is important to note that most of these touch points involve human interaction and it is why "front line" staff are so important*.

In thinking about the touch points in your business consider, there are three types:

- Bad interactions - leading to loss of opportunity or loss of existing clients.
- Average interactions - damaging because Average is no longer good enough - customer expectations are higher than ever.
- Wow moments – when we experience positive emotional responses as a result of the interaction we have had.

The goal is to manage every Moment of Truth and where possible to create above average experiences. Even if you have a complaint or a problem, the way you handle it is really an opportunity to turn it around and create a Wow Moment.

### **ORGANISATIONAL IMPLICATIONS/IMPORTANT INSIGHTS**

In Jan Carlzon's words: "Those companies who really understand the necessity of being customer-driven and business-oriented, those companies will end up with a flatter organization, not as a tool but as a

consequence of that, because, if you really want to be business-oriented and customer-driven, you understand that *you must give the responsibility not to the top management of the company, not to the middle management but to every individual person managing those moments of truth out there in the front line.*

If you give away that responsibility and if you are brave enough - because you have to be brave as the CEO to give away responsibility - to give away information and to create an environment where people are prepared to take risks. If you do that, then, of course, the consequence is that you don't need that many middle managers, anymore, because their jobs of giving directions and orders and instructions are not there, anymore.

What you end up with is top management who should not do the business, themselves, but who should create the conditions or prepare the conditions for people to make business out there.

*The middle management, they should be support groups serving the frontline people, not instructing them.* The frontline people should take on responsibility and to be able to do that, you, as a top leader, must be a strategic leader. A strategic leader will tell, "This is my vision and this is my strategy; this is the avenue that we all have to walk down. On that avenue, you have all the freedom to take your own solutions, but we all go the same way. And, if there is somebody in this organization who does not accept and who does not want to go the same way, then you have to leave."

The problems you face are at least two-fold. The middle management are very often people who earlier worked in the front line but who were seen as better and were rewarded by becoming middle management. To be rewarded by being in middle management means that you get the right to give orders and instructions to your old colleagues in the front line. And here comes now another guy, who says that you should not give any instructions and orders, anymore. *You should serve. You should serve your old friends in the front line.* What promotion is that? To be a serviceman, you see? Right? So you have to educate people that the best—the most valuable—thing we have to do is to serve all the people that are really managing those moments of truth when they're face to face with the customers."

***"The job of everyone, from the front line up in the organization, is really to support the front line to serve customers."***

The role of middle managers under the old system was purely administrative. Under a “customer-centered” organization, middle managers become leaders and facilitators to the frontline people who actually serve the customer. Carlzon’s method was to get rid of the horizontal barriers to communication and allow for more direct responsibility of the people who interact with customers daily.

***"Problems are solved on the spot, as soon as they arise. No front-line employee has to wait for a supervisor's permission."***

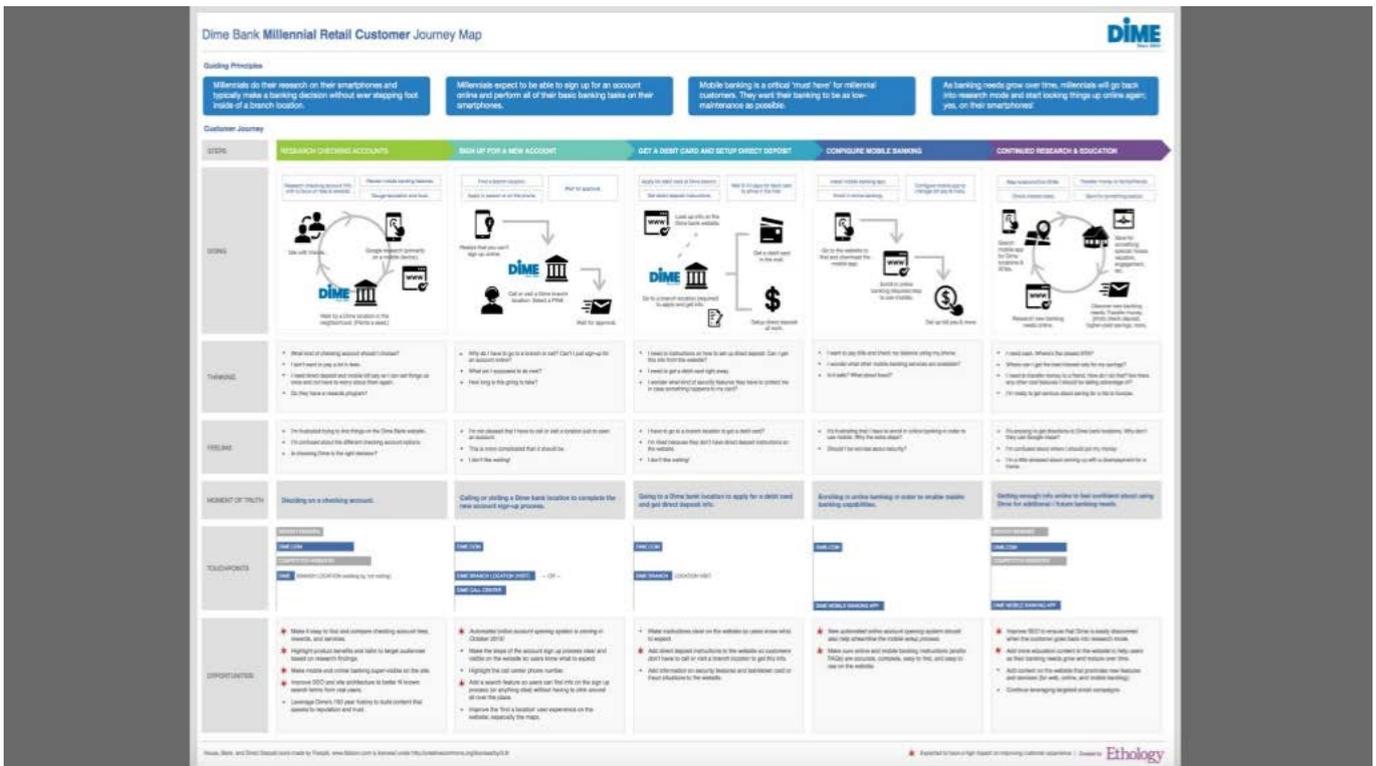
### CREATING WOW MOMENTS IN YOUR ORGANISATION:

The first step is to produce a map of your “customer’s journey” highlighting all the interactions that they can have and to acknowledge the emotional conditions that they are in. A good customer journey map should be something the organisation would be happy to share, without embarrassment, with a customer.

There are no right or wrong customer maps (just Google Customer Journey Maps to see the wide variety or interpretations that exist) However, I like the simplicity of the first example:

	Getting to the airport	Check-in	Comfort until flight	In-flight comfort	Arrival	Getting to destination
<b>Feelings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stressful</li> <li>Complicated</li> <li>Parking</li> <li>Heavy luggage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Long, frustrating queues</li> <li>Only necessary to the airline</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Want/need to work</li> <li>Want/need to relax</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planes are uncomfortable by nature</li> <li>Long time spent in a seat</li> <li>Boredom</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unkempt</li> <li>Unshowered</li> <li>Clothes a mess</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Traffic</li> <li>Unfamiliar place</li> </ul>
<b>Customer Experience</b>						
<b>Service solution</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transport to airport provided</li> <li>Driver handles luggage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Faster check-in</li> <li>Airline knows where you are</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Area with Internet access &amp; fax</li> <li>Salon, massages, beauty</li> <li>Entertainment facilities (e.g. driving range)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Full sleeper seats</li> <li>Mood lighting</li> <li>Bar</li> <li>You decide meals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Arrival valet</li> <li>Showers</li> <li>Makeup &amp; shave</li> <li>Clothes pressed</li> <li>Hot &amp; cold breakfast</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chauffeured delivery to destination</li> <li>Comfortable ride door-to-door</li> <li>Knowledgeable local driver</li> </ul>

The second example is more complete:



Ideally the map should be able to communicate a number of things:

- The individual customer profiles or personas describing their personal and business situation now and in the future
- A description of their desired outcome - what is they are trying to achieve?
- The steps the customer takes, their expectations, concerns and state of mind and the outcome they are seeking at each stage.
- What success looks like from their perspective and from the organisation's.
- What the organisation can influence and how their policies and processes affect customer experience, engagement and value.
- Moments of truth – the points in a journey that define the overall experience; positive and negative:
  - The moments that present an opportunity to delight the customer.
  - The things the customer expects and does not notice unless they are absent.
- Things the organisation needs to do/could do to deliver wow moments.

## IDEAS FOR CREATING THE MAP

- Identify core customer types – create personas. Using the Airlines as an example the Customer Journey Map would recognise differences between a frequent flyer to a holiday flyer.
- List all actions (as far as possible) the customer takes to reach the outcome (placed in a horizontal line). Including the moment before they have decided to use your product or service e.g internet research, responding to an advert.
- Underneath every action list the touchpoints services the customer encounter.
- Identify the most important 'moments of truth'.
- Underneath every touch point, we write down who delivers the service. Who is directly responsible for it.
- For each touch point rate the experience or emotional responses i.e how do you think the customer felt at that moment? Use a scale from 0 to 10 or emotions (Happy, Sad, Indifferent) The higher the number, the better the experience.
- Use creative, brainstorming and any other ideation techniques for the service opportunities to design new and ideal journeys or services.