



COWORKING

by Corro

A community to help you grow, scale and thrive.



**DRIVE THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE
WITH EFFECTIVE TOUCH POINTS AND
SURPRISE THEM WITH A MAGIC TOUCH**

Drive the Customer Experience with Effective Touch Points

and then Surprise them with a Magic Touch

Every business wants to improve customer satisfaction, but unless you have your customer in mind at every brand touch point, there is a chance that you are missing an opportunity to drive the customer experience and advance your business. This entails more than just saying the customer is central to your decisions. It is about truly understanding the customer, so you can anticipate their needs, desires and communication preferences, create meaningful experiences, and build lasting relationships with them.

You might always deliver a great product, on time, with a smile, but wayward target advertising, invoicing errors, an unwieldy website, or an unanswered phone call can deter customers from choosing to do business with you. Fortunately, most consumer touch points are within your control. All you have to do is identify them and seek feedback to measure customer satisfaction at each point of contact.

► What are Brand Touch Points?

Generally speaking, a touch point is that intersection between your business and your customer where there is any point of contact that gives you an opportunity to interact and communicate something. The goal is to communicate something of value. The intersection or encounter can be pre-purchase, during purchase and post-purchase – in person, through a website, a TV ad, an app, talk-show, window display, roadside billboard, or discussion between friends. Basically it is any form of communication. Anytime a consumer comes in contact with a one of your business's touch points he or she is exposed to your brand, has an opportunity to form an impression, make an assessment, or have any number of large or small experiences. The consumer decision-making process is highly influenced by your brand touch-points.

Whether they make a purchase or not these touch points create a brand experience for the consumer. Every time a consumer interacts with your brand, there is an opportunity to bolster your relationship. If the interaction is ineffective, flawed, inconsistent or unsound it can weaken or undermine other efforts to establish good will. Understanding brand touch points and choosing suitable ones sends a message to your customers about what values your company holds in high esteem. This is particularly important in a competitive market.

Every touch point is an opportunity to demonstrate that you put the customer first, that the client or patron is at the center of everything that you do. This is called using a customer centric approach. The ultimate reward of creating your own customer-centric strategy is loyalty, retention, and referrals. Happy customers stay with your brand. Every entrepreneur knows it is more cost-effective to keep a customer than attempt to acquire a new one.

Brand Touch Points

It is important to uphold the integrity of the brand via every touch point.



The very first encounter or touch point is formed when a consumer is exposed to a brand. That is the starting point of a customer journey. Your marketing strategy encompasses multiple components that interact with each other to create value before purchase has happened and guide the consumer along this journey to choose your product or service. Your customer service program, follow-up support, and continual availability are also touch points that keep the consumer happy.

Customer Journey Map

To identify your touch points create a Customer Journey Map. This is a visual representation of the steps, activities and situations a customer goes through in making a decision to choose your brand. You need to understand consumer needs, emotions, and details of all the places and times they might come into contact with your brand – and then you need to analyze that data and structure it in a meaningful way.

To create a journey map you can utilize mapping tools online. Here is our list of core touch points as a guideline, but please do not let them limit you:

Customer Journey Map - Core Touch Points		
Pre-purchase:	During Purchase:	After Purchase
Social media Internet search Website Blog Testimonials Ratings and reviews Word of mouth Family, friends, coworkers Advertising Marketing Public relations Community involvement Sponsorships Media coverage Public speaking Industry groups Seminars Press releases	Product packaging/display Store/office/booth In-store experience Venue layout Website Staff or sales team Employee greeting Catalogue Promotions Phone Point of sale material Brand messaging Signage Atmospherics Customer Service Ease of check-out	Training Billing Delivery drivers Bank and credit card statements Forms and documents Transactional emails Post purchase marketing Personalization and review Loyalty schemes Customer satisfaction Follow-up Service Warranty On-site support Off-site help centre Thank you cards Enlisting consumer expertise/feedback

You must keep in mind that each of these touch points can have a lots of sub-touch points. There are so many ways for a consumer to experience your brand. For example, advertising could include several media delivering different messages at any one time, several times a day. Each banner pointing to your business, signage outside your location, the size of the parking lot, every bit of point of sale material inside your location, and each human interaction the customer sees or engages in is a touch point. Touch points can vary a lot depending on your business and your marketing strategy.

Because there are so many ways for customers to experience your brand, figuring out all of your touch points may seem daunting. Yet, it is a critical strategy for your success.

Your list should be quite extensive. Keep in mind that one Customer Journey Map may not fit all consumers or all types of products. If you are offering more than one product or service and they fulfill different needs, you may have to work through this exercise by creating different maps.

► From Touch Points to Touches – the Surprise and the Magic

While each touch point offers value, most are one-dimensional or static, lacking the emotional power and tactile experience of stimulating all five senses: sight, sound, scent, taste, touch. Each moment you interact with customers, in any way at all, is a moment for your customers to quickly learn how sincerely you value their business. You do that through your customer service when your customers interact with a human being. Let's look at an added touch. One that is human and interactive, but has a unique element that makes you stand out. Let's look at an example to illustrate.

The customer excitedly opens the package that has just arrived. It has arrived when expected and is exactly what she ordered. Other goodies fall out.

- Warranty card – to reinforce her decision to buy and overcome buyer remorse.
- Testimonials card – to build trust.
- Thank you note – to show appreciation for her purchase
- Brochure – to cross-sell other products
- Ambassador package – two referral cards to stimulate her to tell others
- An invoice – to show transparency
- “We love our customers” sticker attached to the invoice – to more love and appreciation.
- Personal packing sticker, in the shape of a heart – to shift her interaction with a nameless employee to a real person.
- The surprise – among this assortment of touch point goodies, a handful of brand name candies spill out onto her desk. Entirely unexpected, a friendly experience, designed to surprise her and make her feel good.



The company made her feel special. The hearts and thank you were great in displaying appreciation, but the candies added that special layer of human experience, surprised her while appealing to several of her senses – in a sweeping moment she is unlikely to forget, and will be one of their best ambassadors.

First-time buyers present ideal opportunities to build loyalty. Don't forget to let them know you appreciate their business, welcome them aboard, and upon the first year anniversary of their first purchase congratulate them.

Now we ask you – is there a sweet surprise in your touch? People get excited by free stuff. Your aim is to make your customer feel special, get her or him emotionally involved in your brand by showing you care.

► Touches that are Human and Interactive and Cost Nothing

Think of it as a “neighbourly touch” – a thoughtful gift that is a different kind of thank you. Apart from what you do for customers on a daily basis, what can you give customers that is unique to your brand, or you personally? In a small town, friends do kind things for each other with no expectation of return. What can you do to go the extra mile to show personal connections matter? You may not be able to dog sit, but maybe you can offer to pick up a customer whose car has broken down; if you don’t normally deliver, you can make an exception; maybe you can share some home-made goodies, seeds from your garden, or books you’ve read.

Here are other ideas that might inspire you to be creative about your neighbourly touch:

- Learn something share it – when you are really good at something, it is easy to forget just how much wisdom you can share. Educating customers is a rewarding way to say thank you.
- Form partnerships with other businesses to deliver something unique – offer a free seminar, hosting an educational or entertaining event. Be creative.
- Notice when customers go above and beyond – have you ever spoken to a customer on the phone that was exceptionally kind, courteous and attentive? Hold onto that fuzzy feeling and thank them. You might also be making their day better, too.

**MAKE A CUSTOMER'S DAY
JUST A LITTLE BIT BETTER
BY GOING THE EXTRA MILE**

- Share their stories – depending on the kind of business you operate, you may need permissions. Case studies are a great business development tool, but they’re also a great way to show a customer that they are a headliner for your brand.
- Happy birthday – your business may have that type of information. Use it to add a personal touch, email, phone call, or card.
- Ask your customers to retell their favorite stories, and listen well.
- Let them be right, even if you think they’re not.
- Ask your customers’ advice on something important to show you value his or her opinion.
- Be sincere in asking them how they are. The listen actively as long as they want to speak.

► Touches can be the Wise Investment

Your touch points have such a powerful yet complicated impact on your customer's journey. Apart from loyalty programs, customer appreciation days, discounts, contests, giveaways, and free coffee develop your own ideas of touches that you can invest in.

Here are some examples:

- Think of the kids – the quickest way to a parent's heart is something that can occupy or distract their young children. This is why businesses create play areas and give away free popcorn.
- Sponsor locals – put your name on a banners, boards and uniforms to show you support your community.
- Create a charitable giving program – people love doing business with businesses that do good. Donate a portion of your proceeds to a good cause. Can you identify causes close to your customers? Partner with local schools. Ask customers to fill out surveys and make a donation to a cause for every survey completed.
- If you are in a service business you can track customer service dates. One or two weeks in advance of what should be the next regular service check you could send a note along with a token of appreciation that relates to the business you are in.
- Share some schwag – stick your logo on some stuffed animals, beer koozies, USB drives, phone chargers, etc. It may sound corny or self-promotional, but people love getting free stuff. If that something makes them think of you, then that's positive engagement, and worth investing in.
- Long-time buyers are great for referrals. Occasionally show them you appreciate their loyalty. Go to them. If you know where your customer works send or deliver something to them in appreciation. A basket of goodies will grab their attention and in an office, it doesn't hurt to get the attention of their coworkers at the same time. Try to make sure it is something they like and always include a personalized note.
- Samples, free trials, test drives – these may be promotional and offer something of value, but the side benefit is you are asking customers to do you a favour. You are telling them you trust their judgement which has enormous side benefits.
- Free upgrades – when you add a new service or upgrade a product, consider giving it away to your best customers.
- The best relationships are mutual. If your customers manage their own businesses, ventures, or side gigs, support them any time you can. Highlight their work on social media, refer customers to them, support a cause they champion, host events together, cooperate in a marketing campaign.

► First Exposure to Post Purchase – Touch Point and Touch Opportunities

Worried about missing touch points? Put yourself in the customer's shoes and revisit the journey map. Walk yourself step-by-step through the customer's journey for each touch point. Think of it as an evolving story involving customers' needs and emotions which are also evolving as they experience each touch point. How does your product or service fit into that story? Where do you go and how do you get there? You could accomplish the task of identifying touch points by asking customers to walk you through their experience with your brand.

Be careful not to lose sight of the big picture, always look at the entire customer journey from first exposure to post-purchase. Revisit the map from time to time or as you receive feedback. It is a good way to identify opportunities to add or enhance touch points?

If your business is brand new and you're just getting started, these are the areas to focus on.

- Envision yourself as the customer from the moment they are faced with one of the possibility of having a need that needs to be fulfilled or a problem that needs to be solved.
- The customer embarks on a journey of discovery to locate a product or business that will solve that problem or fulfilled a need.
- There is a need to make a purchase decision. Think about what customers will want to know before they buy from you and also how they buy.



- They will have an encounter with the business upon making the purchase.
- They are likely to have an encounter after purchase. What follow-up information will they need before they buy again.

No detail is too small to consider a touch point. Take a bank or credit card statements as an example. They serve as touch points for your brand. What do customers see when they read your business name in their transaction list? If they see an unfamiliar charge with a confusing description and have to call their bank to find out that it is your business, that's a touch point you'd rather not have.

► Pre-Purchase Brand Touch Points are Crucial

The process for the consumer starts when he or she recognizes that they have a need for a product or a service. It is at this point of realization that pre-purchase touch-points are crucial, because this is the stage where the consumer actively searches for information about a certain product. During the pre-purchase stage, effective touch points capture the attention of the consumer, provoke the consumer to relate to the brand and instill the belief that the brand has their interests at heart. Although you may not be able to precisely direct the touch-points to their finger tips or eyeballs at this stage, you can try to make sure your brand information is readily accessible via several avenues the consumer might utilize.

Once buyers are exposed to a brand they rely on three things before deciding to buy:

- 1) Their first impressions of the brand, which immediately summon up previous feelings, memories and imagery.
- 2) They feel a connection to the brand.
- 3) They trust the brand.

That is why it is important to build a strong brand strategy combined with compelling brand story. Your brand is the face of your business and one of your most valuable assets. A brand is any identifying symbol, mark, logo, slogan, name, or word that distinguish your business or product from others. A combination of one or more of those elements can be cleverly utilized to create your brand identity and set your business apart from other similar businesses. A good brand clearly represents your business, helps you stand out from your competition, engenders trust in the consumer and motivate him or her to take action.

Analyze each touch point to ensure it upholds the integrity of your brand. You may have to consult with a focus group, potential or existing customers to gain different and honest perspectives on that point.

When customers come across each touch point, they should be able to easily identify you amongst the masses, allowing them to draw closer to you and decide to trust you. These are the questions you need to be able to answer for each touch point:

- Does it fit with my brand strategy and brand identity?
- Is it different to my competitor's touch points?
- Will it attract new customers?
- Will it move my existing customers to act?
- Will my customers be left with a positive first impression of my brand after interacting with this touch point?
- Once they see my brand and this touch point what questions might they ask?
- How can I answer those questions at this touch point?



► **During Purchase Brand Touch Points**

In the “during purchase” stage, brand touch-points become the difference between a consumer’s decision *to* buy or *not to* buy. Touch points here are more direct. Take atmospherics in your store or office for example. Atmospherics directly activate the consumer’s senses on many levels: scents, visual appearance, music and the ability to touch products. Your staff are the physical and human representation of your brand. That is why their product knowledgeable, interpersonal skills and training are critical touch points in order for the customer to have a sense of trust in the brand at decision-making time.

► **Post Purchase Touch Points**

Effective integrity based post-purchase touch points nurture the brand-customer relationship, ensure customer retention and bring in good referrals to increase your customer base – customer satisfaction surveys, product warranties, post-purchase customer service and support, loyalty programs, billing processes – help consumers to remain trusting of the brand and demonstrate post-purchase care. Your availability or human oriented contact after a sale says a lot to the customer, showing he or she was not just a quick opportunity to make a sale. Prized customers recommend the brand to others. Adding a personal touch or surprise just makes the buying experience more memorable.

► **Unexpected Touch Points**

Think about unexpected touch points, which can be positive and negative. Employees can create unexpected touch points with customers or family and friends when they speak about their work or the company. Dissatisfied or satisfied customers can communicate between themselves, post reviews on social media, and have a huge affect on the reputation of your business. Unexpected touch points are out of your control, but are most certainly influenced by your business practices. Your decisions influence the decisions and behaviors of employees and consumers in regards to pre-purchase, in store and post-purchase experiences.

Customer Expectations

Knowing your touch points is just the start. To create the best experience or to improve customer satisfaction, you need to make sure each touch point on your list leads to a good customer experience (CX), and that the journey as a whole delivers on every customer's expectations.

To ensure you are delivering, you can gather customer feedback face-to-face, through surveys, or at various touch points. Each touch point on your Customer Journey Map presents an opportunity to ask for customer feedback. How you do that as a small business owner working alone or with a small number of employees may differ from an organization that dedicates a team to CX.

► What we Learned about Small Business Owners and Measuring Customer Experience (CX)

Small business owners are likely to work alone in understanding and implementing CX in their organization. They are often in regular touch with their customers and cite customer interviews as the most reliable source of customer feedback. What we learned is that the majority, about 70% of small business owners, spend little time leading efforts to improve the customer experience, even though their company goals are closely tied to CX. That is certainly a concern for businesses that are reliant on the customer experience for survival, but not surprising given that small business owners wear so many hats.

Measuring and scrutinizing CX is time-consuming. It is also a great opportunity for you to create another touch point and to give your customer another great consumer experience to gain an advantage to stand out from the competitors.

If you are a small business with a lot of clients you may find it difficult and time-consuming to conduct personal interviews and put those insights to use. Interviews are valuable. However, as your business grows that method should be paired with other scalable methods (surveys as an example) to collect customer insights fast and share that information with other key stakeholders that come aboard in any capacity to serve your clients. If you are an entrepreneur you should consider implementing other strategies for gathering feedback at other touch points.

► Act upon Insights

Of course, whatever you learn you have to act upon. That may require tweaking a website, making signage more visible, educating other staff on product knowledge, or being more responsive to customer needs. Employing more than one method to gain insight from your customers will help you develop good CX practices for all touch points, and give you opportunities to identify trouble spots and work out the kinks. Remember that feedback is also identifying which touch point generates clicks, sales, and referrals.

**Use the insights from customers to take decisive action
to enhance each phase of the customer experience.**

► What we Know about a Team-Oriented Approach to CX

Driving an exceptional customer experience needs to be a team effort across all the different levels of your organization. Every person – even those you may not consider as a point of contact – has the ability to make a positive impact on customer relations.

You employ people to focus on things like product development, marketing, sales, or customer support. Even if there are only a few people fulfilling these roles, everyone needs to understand how customers feel about the product, service, or your brand. Everyone has a role improving the customer experience. Even when a person is not interacting directly with your customer, what they think and do or how quickly or effectively they respond with other employees has an effect that filters down to other departments or people that your customers do deal with. When each person better understands how clients feel throughout the entire customer experience and what that means to the organization as a whole or their job, they are better able to also identify with the common goal of delivering the same high level of service, contribute more meaningfully to drive and deliver exceptional CX.

As your business grows, the need to pay attention to CX becomes more acute. There is a tendency for businesses to rely on an automated approach to gathering feedback. You may have to consider building a team dedicated to the customer experience.

You want scalable processes to find out which touch points work best in generating sales and loyal customers. In gathering intelligence, you want to ask the right questions, gather and share customer insights so everyone in your organization is empowered to understand and take action to improve the customer experience. Surveys are excellent. Technology is fast and efficient. But, do not ignore the value of more personal contact to fuel exceptional touch experiences.

You also want to consider that touch points are important for reaching consumers who are not ready to buy yet. They may need to in the future and you want to remain on their radar. Current customers that you want to be repeat clients also fall into this category. Do not ignore your first time buyers. Your CX team has to be keen on how to pace your social media, email, and advertising touch points so these people do not forget who you are, but at the same time do not feel inundated or hounded.

First and foremost, all the feedback in the world will not grow your business. It is how you use the insights you get from customers to take action in enhancing each phase of customer experience.

► Simple Guideline for Effective Branding for CX

Be consistent in your messaging. Choose a logo, a tagline, and a color scheme and stick with them. Create a simple written message that is easy to convey across several touch points and can easily be identified with your brand. People remember visual.

Be positive. Turn any neutral or negative touch points on social media into positives. Show your commitment to customer satisfaction and communication skills in their best light. Remember that these situations are touch points for the customer involved as well everyone who is following along. This is an opportunity to impress potential consumers.

Track your touch points to see what generates clicks, sales, and referrals and do more of that. Refine or eliminate touch points that don't yield positive results so you're not wasting time and money on low-return processes.

Market your touch points to increase sales. Once you identify which touch points give you the most traction and results invest time or resources in marketing them. Keep monitoring touch points because anyone of them can change a or be used differently.

Keep Tweaking

Even though your business thrives and your current customer touch points are working for you, changes can occur. Change is inevitable. New technology arrives, competitors pop up, the younger generation becomes consumers, etc. You may need to tune into new trends or needs or ways of satisfying those needs. Likely your customer is, too.

What does change mean for your business? What can you do? The answer is be proactive so you can quickly and smoothly move with the change, go beyond it to keep your customer's perception of you positive, innovative, and exciting.

- Be proactive in learning more about your current customers and nurturing that relationship.
- Find out where your potential customers may be, if they have a relationship with your brand, and how best to cultivate that relationship.
- Be on top of your online presence, tweak your brand touch points to keep creating the best customer experience, and develop new brand touch points to reach your current and developing client base.
- This includes your store-front or office and the tone of voice in how you greet customers, everything that sets the tone for your business and you can build upon to enhance the consumer brand experience. It may mean updating your online presence or perhaps using new ways to reach your customers.

Whatever the reason, you need to keep tweaking your brand touch points in order to create the best customer experience possible.

And, identify simple ways to surprise your clients with love.

Inspired and Committed, We Celebrate Your Journey

At Corro, we believe in the power of people. We are inspired to expand humanity's capacity for wisdom, compassion, and courage.

In our commitment to helping you achieve long-term personal development and use your organizational platform for positive impact, we celebrate the journey of lifelong learning while fostering an all-inclusive community driven environment of meaning, personal connection, and fun.

Corro is not just a Work Space – Our Aim is Helping the Community Thrive through People Success