

The background of the entire slide is a soft-focus photograph of numerous paper flowers. These flowers are made from folded paper in various colors including yellow, purple, teal, and orange. They are scattered throughout the frame, some in sharp focus and others blurred, creating a sense of depth and movement.

Customer centricity by design

Livework studio on Customer Centricity
Marzia Aricò & Angela Mancini

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Foreword

Customer centricity is one of the top 5 strategic imperatives for organisations of all types and sizes. Volumes have been written about the tangible, measurable benefits of becoming customer centric, in professional publications as well as academic papers.

While many organisations have some form of “customer centricity” on their agenda, most have failed to achieve true and lasting customer orientation. Efforts might start as grass-roots continuous improvement initiatives, maybe evolve into a transformation programme, or even a permanent department. But the most successful organisations know it is much more than that - it needs to be somehow woven into everything you do and how you do everything. And the journey will likely disrupt norms and demand that fundamental ways of working are reconsidered

So, becoming and remaining customer centric is no small task. The good news is that there are many ways to progress towards customer centricity - all of them have merit and can drive success if well executed. Based on years of proof in practice, we believe that the best way is “by design.” Design always starts from a deep understanding of the human experience (being that the customer or the employee) grounded in research. It forces an iterative approach that enables to test, learn and pivot quickly, and because it engages and excites stakeholders along the way through tangible artefacts.

This whitepaper is a collection of articles and insights that together summarise our approach to customer centricity, by design and some of the challenges you might encounter in these endeavours. We hope it gives you some ideas about how to get started and / or how to re-invigorate your own customer-oriented improvement work.

Enjoy reading,
Marzia Aricò & Angela Mancini

Article

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Know your Services

Your organisation provides services. No matter what industry you are in. Whether you sell mortgage packages to customers, trainers that need to be shipped to consumers, elevators that need to be installed and maintained, or healthcare to patients. No matter what you sell, you are providing a service to individuals or companies.

Those services exist already although they may have not been thought through or consciously “designed.” They might be good or in need of improvement. There are a few simple things that service organisations should be able to do.

1. **Having a clear and shared view of what customers are trying to get done.** Not just an internal view of what your organisation is trying to do, but a true representation of what customers outside of your organisation are trying to achieve. You should have a plain English list of the services your organisation provides and a clear map of how customers interact with those services and at what stage.
2. **Knowing how these services are performing for customers and for the business.** That requires the ability to track service performance with real, selected, meaningful data. Data can be both qualitative and quantitative.
3. **Solving for customers’ whole journey.** Not just for a slice of the journey owned by a specific department or team. That means that you understand where the journey begins and ends for customers and have cross functional teams working together to improve services for people outside the organisation. Those teams should not be arranged product by product, or technology by technology, but service by service.



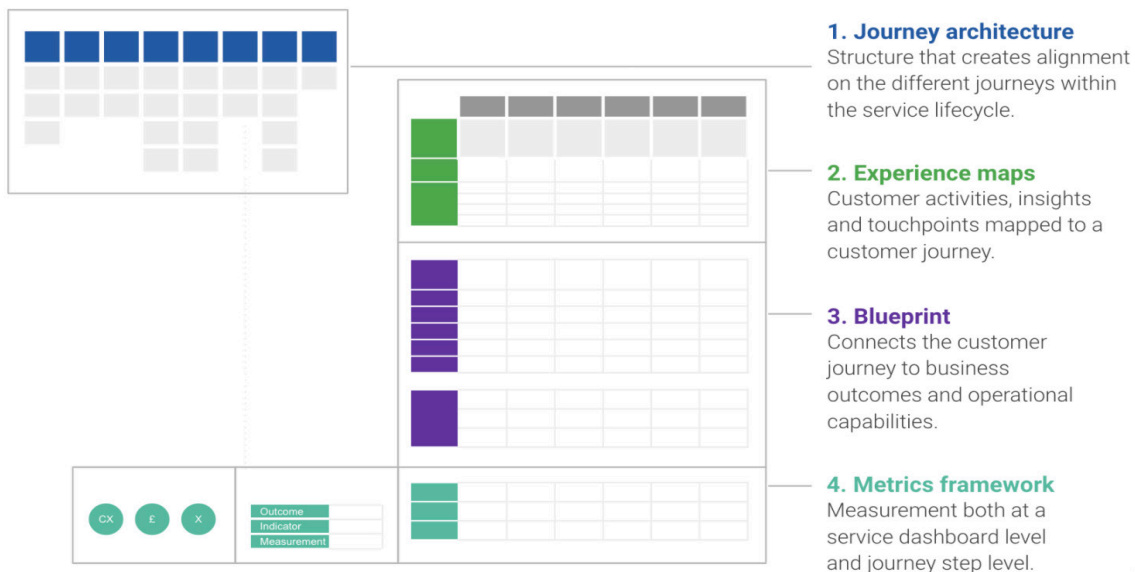
4. **Talk about the customer outcomes you are trying to achieve.** Those outcomes should be clearly articulated and measurable. You should have a list of a few metrics attached to those selected outcomes that you can track over time and that can signal whether you are achieving those outcomes, or not.
5. **Articulating how much it costs to run those services.** And the value that those services bring to the firm. You should be able to show how work in your current portfolio relates to reducing costs or increasing revenue.

Can your organisation do that? I bet that some of these things you are already doing, for the rest you are still figuring out how to get there.

Good news is that you are not alone. It is hard, it takes time, these are things that are counterintuitive to the way organisations have historically been set up. Design can help in this transition.

A few things you want to make sure to have in place

- **Map it out.** You don't need to map everything at once. Choose a slice, a line of business, a specific service, something people value and care about, start from there. Make sure to show the interconnections, the overlaps, it is usually mind blowing for people to see their role/work into context and how it affects the bigger picture.
- **Define the client outcomes you are trying to achieve.** Do it collaboratively, engage customers and employees in the process so that your key stakeholders are comfortable with that list.
- **Measure outcomes.** Find meaningful metrics to connect to those selected outcomes. You'll need partnerships in place for that, with data analytics for example. Mock it up, you don't need a live feed straight away.



This is an illustration of how we structure services at livework. The first layer - Journey Architecture - represents the higher level of abstraction. It's a summary of all the services you offer as an organisation, written in plain english, from a client perspective. The more you drill down, the more granular the story gets. Adding a view of specific service experiences, how they are connected to business outcomes and what is needed to deliver from an organisational perspective. Finally, the metrics framework gives a snapshot of the outcomes you are going after, indicators that can signal whether you are achieving that outcome or not, and key data points that you can monitor for that purpose.



Mock up of an outcomes and metrics dashboard. It enables a view of what outcomes customers value and how well you are performing against them, connecting that performance to business and operational metrics, such as cost or efficiency. A consistent and transparent way of monitoring service performance, and therefore prioritise tactical and strategic efforts.

- **Show how that view can be used for different purposes.** A good example is how to prioritise your investment portfolio.
- **Pick a key service in your portfolio and run a project for service improvement.** Put together a cross functional team for it. Set up a minimum viable governance model to govern that service improvement over time.

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The building blocks of customer centricity

In October 2020 we launched a customer centricity maturity assessment tool. This article will help you understand the framework and insights upon which that tool is built.

Our customer centricity framework

If customer centricity is your goal, service design should be a central part of your plan to achieve that. It is well known that design can help create desirable products and great customer experiences. Working with clients for over 19 years, we have also seen how critical service design is to the achievement of customer oriented organisations and cultures. In the past three years we have developed, tested and iterated a model to distill the essential building blocks required to move organisations towards a customer logic.

Cultivating a customer logic requires new capabilities and mindset shifts. It demands a fundamental rethinking of organisational structure, planning processes, ways of working and incentive systems. Our framework assembles these components into building blocks that together drive customer centricity. At the core of the framework is design, as we see it as a critical factor often missing in other maturity models. But design is also not the full solution. It relies on plug in collaboration with other domains. Just as you can't construct a building with one brick, you can't

Building blocks of customer centricity

Vision & Strategy	Customer Centric Mindset	Design Operating Model	Design Excellence	Insights & Measurement	Implementation
Vision and mission	Senior sponsorship	Core design team	Design principles	Metrics framework	Continuous improvement (small)
Strategy and roadmap	Communication and engagement	Design placement	Design process	Continuous insight	Project portfolio selection
Case for change	HR strategy	Design governance	Design tools and methods	Service experience dashboards	Change delivery (large)

The components of Livework's customer centricity maturity model.

build a customer logic with one block. Success lies in the coordinated activation and interconnection of all building blocks.

- 1. Customer vision and strategy:** The journey starts with a clear vision of the experience your organisation wants to deliver to its customers. You should clearly outline why change is needed, anchoring your case with a description of benefits to be gained and value to be created. Having a clear strategy and a roadmap explaining how and when you will go about change will help you integrate your plans with other strategic change plans. Eventually, the customer centricity strategy should become the "lead chapter" in your strategy book.

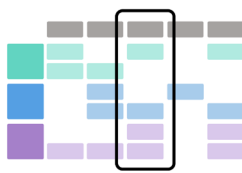
Sponsors' endorsement should become clear through the projects they fund, the language they use and the success stories they tell.

Culture is reinforced through stories. You'll need a few very well crafted stories that describe the value of this way of working for different pockets of the organisation. These stories will likely be created by compelling customer insight and successful customer experience improvement efforts. They will become the backbone of your communication and engagement efforts and, as such, must appeal to key stakeholders – why should they care about this and how does it help them achieve their (likely functionally oriented) objectives?

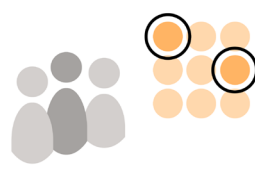
Customer centricity strategy



This programme aims to embed customer-centric mindsets and practices far and wide in our organisation.



By creating an end-to-end visual map of our services enriched with metrics and insights, introducing new governance models to monitor and systemically improve the health of our services.



To change how we prioritise decisions and improvements, and measure the impact of investments – so we get more out of our technology change spend.

And ultimately improve our customer and employee experience.

Example of a vision statement for a customer-centricity programme.

- 2. Customer centric mindset:** This component is all about culture, which is one of the most difficult things to shift. You'll need senior sponsorship: at least one senior leader who truly believes in the importance of adopting a customer perspective and vocalises its value for the business. A transformation of this kind cannot happen solely through a bottom-up approach.

Finally, there will be implications to some HR practices. You may have to define new roles, team structures, or train and upskill the current workforce. You will probably have to define new incentive structures that encourage cross-silo working, where outcomes are customer based rather than functionally based.

Imagine a world where...



Senior Leaders can...

Measure customer experience in a meaningful way.

Pinpoint issues and dependencies.



Operations can...

Access customer journeys including preliminary data and insights.

Know how you are performing for customers and employees.



Technology can...

Access better requirements for development.

Quantify tech investments in a meaningful way.



Design can...

Move design upstream.

Play a strategic role in prioritisation.

Example definition of benefits for some key audiences.

- 3. Design operating model:** You will need to define who is responsible for the design of the customer experience – “end-to-end” and “front-to-back”. The operating model should delineate who is in the design team(s), how they are positioned in the organisation, and how these people interact with other units. This last point is particularly important, as organisations tend to be arranged around functions and/or products rather than services. The design of services requires multiple functions (e.g. design, data analytics, process modelling, CX & propositions, operations, digital and IT) to work together to monitor and improve the customer experience. However, you'll soon learn that people are not incentivised, and therefore not interested, in working in such a way. This is probably the hardest of all goals to achieve: defining a model that incentivises people across the organisation to collaborate, contributing to the complete end-to-end customer experience rather than only their portion of it.

When defining the design operating model, consider specifically how and where it plugs into the wider company structure and models. You may find it helpful to think about:

- **Organisational Structure** – Where in the organisation does design sit? For example, is it part of the change function, operations, strategy? Each of these functions plays by slightly different rules and is funded in

different ways – design will play the rules and contribute to the goals of the function within which it sits.

- **Influence** – At which stage in decision making is design involved? Does design have a say in setting strategic direction? Choosing investment priorities?
- **Collaboration** – How does the design function collaborate with other functions e.g. data analytics, process modeling, proposition development, operations, digital teams? Do they set priorities together? Do they collaborate regularly or only via project work?
- **Commissioning & funding** – How does design work get funded? How are design-led projects commissioned and by whom? What is the engagement model of the design function within the organisation?
- **Governance** – Who is responsible for monitoring the health of the customer experiences and/or services? Who are the ultimate decision makers deciding priorities? What are the mechanisms to drive decision making? How will you incentivise people to collaborate for the benefit of the end-to-end experience?
- **Capabilities** – What are the key skills our designers need? What skills and capabilities are required in the wider organisation in order to work in a more customer centric way?

4. **Design excellence:** A transformation of this kind doesn't simply require design, it requires good design. Too often organisations at the beginning of this journey hire a team of inexperienced designers who aren't versed in what it takes to bring the customer to the core of organisational decision making. Unfortunately, the team often fails to create a standard for design outcomes. Strong design leadership is critical. Great design leaders know the stakeholders, politics, objectives, challenges, propositions and overall business architecture of the organisation they serve. They should be great story tellers and experienced change agents with strong leadership and influencing skills.

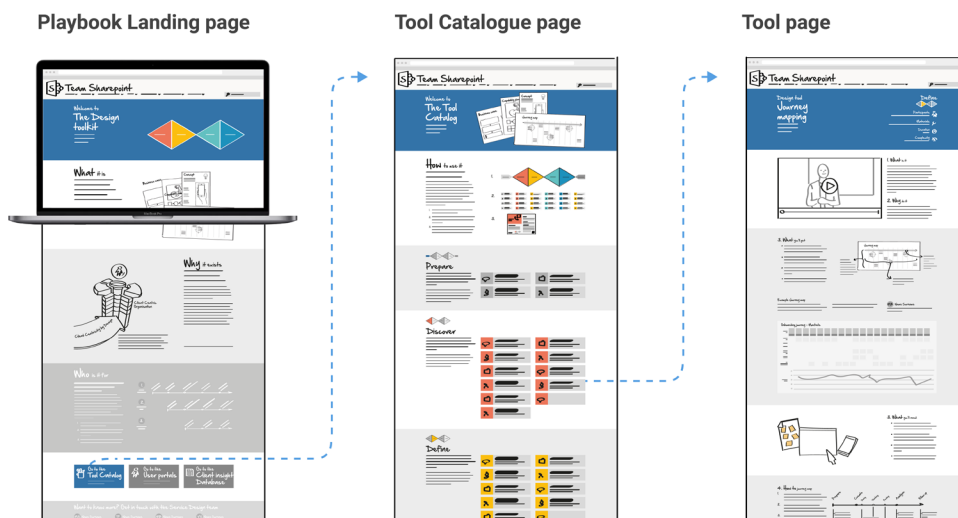
The design excellence pillar starts with principles that will guide any design work. It also outlines a clear design process tailored to the organisation's needs and ways of working, and a library of reusable standards. Together these tools and shared artefacts ensure that there is one agreed, best practice way of doing things which helps ensure consistent, high-quality outcomes.

5. **Insights and measurement:** Customer data and insights are fundamental to facilitate informed, customer centric design and decision making. Qualitative and quantitative customer data and insights should therefore exist in a centralised location,

enabling anyone in the organisation to access them. Alongside data, one of the key building blocks in this pillar is a metrics framework that outlines the customer, business, and operational outcomes you are trying to achieve and the metrics you will use to measure against them. Customer experience dashboards and other digital tools will also enable you to assess outcomes and monitor the health of your services. See an example in our Know your services article.

6. **Implementation:** An organisation's ability to effectively deliver change programmes and projects is critical to customer centricity. This is because you will need to continually iterate, and sometimes transform your services as customer needs, market conditions and technology capabilities evolve. You'll need to keep the customer voice close at hand, at all times. Customer experience and service design artefacts should be embedded throughout your change delivery process – from the idea stage all the way through to implementation. This pillar also considers how you choose the right projects in the first place – how loud is the voice of the customer in your prioritisation process?

Design playbook overview



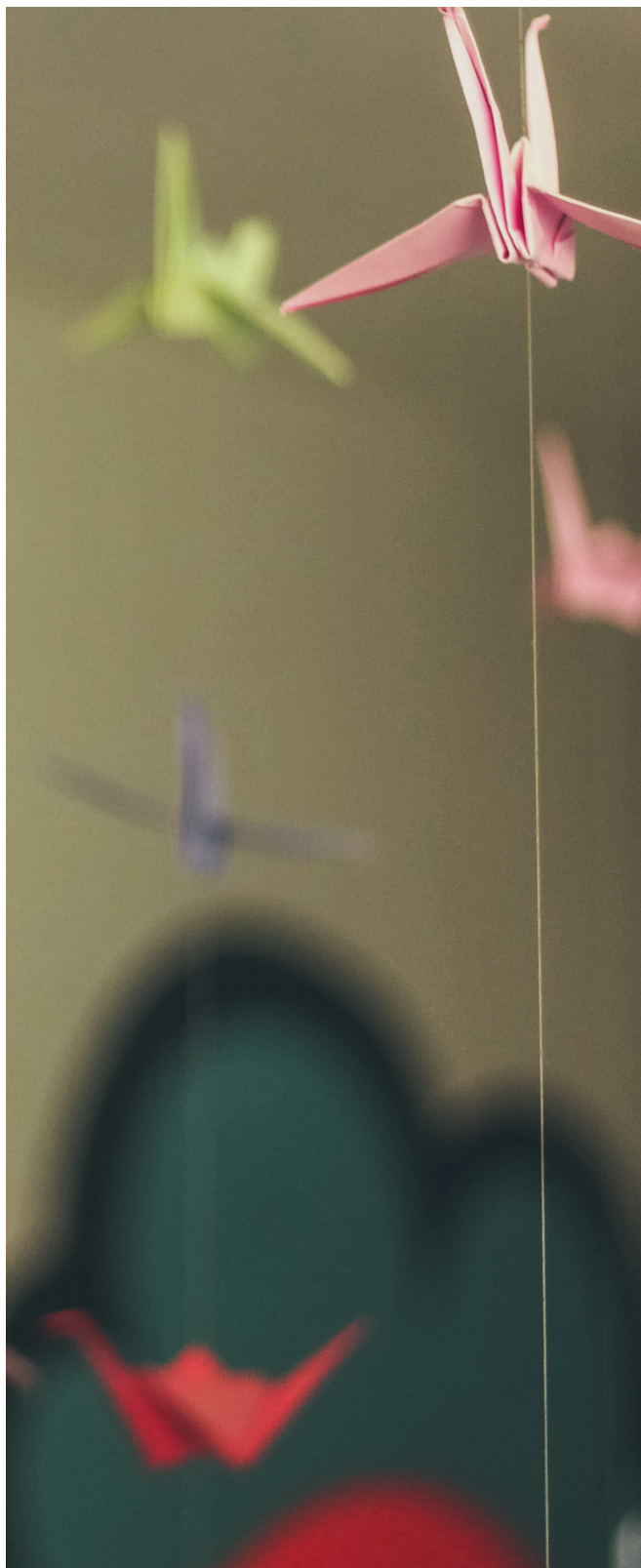
Example of a Design Playbook, built in Sharepoint. The playbook includes all key design tools and methods, an explanation for each, and examples that show how to use them in practice.

Customer centricity in practice

Many organisations don't have a single, shared articulation of all the services or journeys that they provide for their customers. And often they don't understand how those services plumb into their operational layers to deliver value; nor how the delivery of those services feels for their employees.

Our customer centricity approach will help you understand these top level imperatives. It outlines the key building blocks you need to consider as you move towards a customer oriented logic. The assessment tool can help you pinpoint the areas that need more focus in your organisation and give you some ideas about where to start.

Customer centricity is a way of life, a culture, an approach to running your organisation. It's not a team, a project or a programme, although it usually starts as one of these. It's about activating and unleashing the power (in a coordinated way) of the whole organisation towards a common purpose. It is therefore not quick or easy – as are most transformations – but if done well, worth the effort. To get started, you must understand clearly what you are trying to achieve, have ways to measure that, and get ready for the long haul.



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How to become customer centric by design

Organisations of all types are touting “customer centricity” as their overarching strategic imperative. But few organisations have truly achieved this goal. Why? Because it is hard! To be customer centric requires a fundamental shift in mindsets, measurements and daily practices across the organisation. How can you transform large, complex, siloed organisations to operate in a customer and employee centric way?

While there is an abundance of published advice about “the things that must be done”, there is very little written about how to move from this abstract strategic intent into the tangible, practical changes required to make it happen in a sustainable way. We believe that our approach, which incorporates the key principles and practices of service design, offers a compelling solution. This short article explains how.

WHY DO WE STILL HAVE COMPANIES THAT DRIVE THEIR CUSTOMERS CRAZY AND ORGANISATIONS THAT ALIENATE AND FRUSTRATE THEIR EMPLOYEES?

The false promise of technology fixing it all

The large investments in technology that have characterised the strategy of many service and product organisations in the last few decades, have partly failed to deliver on the expected outcomes. The promise of technology delivering efficiency, alignment and speed has not materialised into efficient, fast, and relevant organisations. The reason is very simple, organisations are made up of humans and technology. And the human factor has for too long not been taken into its rightful consideration. There is a renewed understanding that in order to enable efficient and relevant organisations, the customer and the employee's perspectives need to find a central role in processes of prioritisation and development.

The customer logic

This concept is not new. Both practice and academia have recognised and addressed the need for customer and employee centricity for the last 50 years at least [2]. So, why isn't it happening? Why do we still have companies that drive their customers crazy and organisations that alienate and frustrate their employees? Many of today's legacy organisations were built in an industrial era where the dominant logic was the one of the product. Driven by efficiency, decreasing margins, and the belief that technology is the key driver of innovation, these organisations have developed strict control mechanisms where models like the stage gate have been given free rein. Customer centricity represents an alternative logic, that can be seen as competing with existing dominant logics

A comparison of the Product-centric and Customer-centric approaches



Product-centric



Customer-centric

Basic philosophy	Sell products; we'll sell to whoever will buy	Serve customers; all decisions start with the customer and opportunities for advantage
Business orientation	Transaction-oriented	Relationship-oriented
Product positioning	Highlight product features and advantages	Highlight product's benefits in terms of meeting individual customer needs
Organizational structure	Product profit centers, product managers, product sales team	Customer segment centers, customer relationship managers, customer segment sales team
Organizational focus	Internally focused, new product development, new account development, market share growth; customer relations are issues for the marketing department	Externally focused, customer relationship development, profitability through customer loyalty; employees are customer advocates
Performance metrics	Number of new products, profitability per product, market share by product/ subbrands	Share of wallet of customers, customer satisfaction, customer lifetime value, customer equity
Management criteria	Portfolio of products	Portfolio of customers
Selling approach	How many customers can we sell this product to?	

Comparing a product and a customer centric approach (Shah et al., 2006, p.115)

(although we believe they can co-exist in harmony). The customer logic is driven by customer experience and the belief that a deep understanding of the people you serve is the most important driver of innovation. Iteration is at the core of this logic. The customer logic does not just offer an alternative model of competitiveness. It offers an alternative set of values and beliefs that challenges the very core of people's understanding of what is a legitimate way of operating. Some would call this a cultural shift.

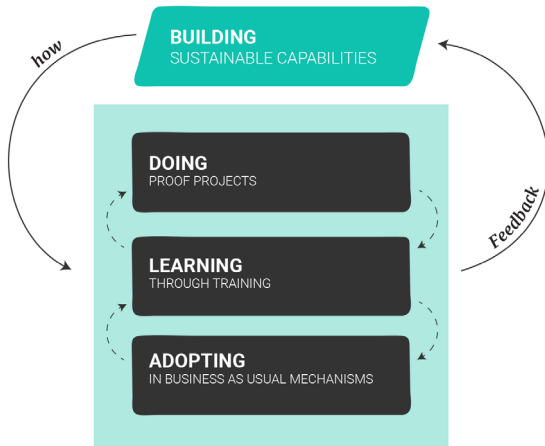
Build, Do, Learn, Adopt. Start the cycle again reaching an increasingly wider audience.

If you decide to use design as a medium to establish customer and employee centricity in the organisation, in our experience there are five things you'll have to do:

- **Build** sustainable design capabilities: This covers the infrastructure to enable the organisation to use design, including ways of organising, processes and ways of working. It encompasses multiple key elements such as a clearly defined business case for customer centricity and design, an operating model for design, as well as the definition of new metrics.
- **Do** projects: Prove the value of design in practice as soon as possible. Especially at the beginning, it's important to choose the right projects to start with.

Small enough to run fast, visible enough to be noticed, concerning stakeholders that are willing to contribute and participate.

- **Learn** through training: Everyone should have a basic understanding of design thinking but different audiences need to reach different levels of knowledge. For example, decision makers need to understand the value of customer centricity and its potential impact on the organisation. Internal clients need to understand how to employ design within their context for immediate results.
- **Adopt** into business as usual mechanisms: Enable new ways of working in pockets of the organisation. For example, new ways to prioritize change. Build on and augment existing practices, do not try to replace them. Do not create a new silo; it probably won't work.
- **Iterate** in cycles: Start with a small audience of people you trust, show value and grow your reach, cycle by cycle. Avoid trying to boil the ocean.



A design approach to customer and employee centricity

Design helps through artefacts and stories

The introduction of customer logic in an organisational environment inevitably challenges the status quo. This tension becomes tangible and visible in the way people prioritise projects, (do not) align around goals and objectives, (do not) collaborate for product and service development, to name a few. This is where design comes to play. Design is a powerful medium to support not only the introduction of a customer logic but also its diffusion and adoption. It does so through two key outputs: visual artefacts and sticky stories.

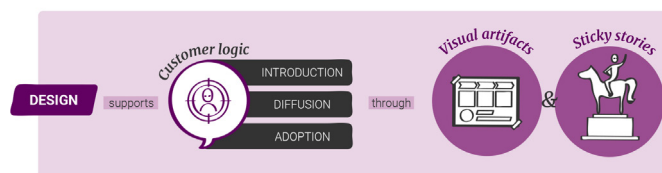
Visual artefacts are for example customer journeys, blueprints, storyboard scenarios and prototypes. Artefacts are necessary to 'getting things done' in organisations [1]. They are boundary objects meaning that they are defined enough to be recognisable as the same objects by different audiences, yet flexible enough that each audience can use them according to their own needs. They offer a common visual language that avoids any misinterpretation. They allow a shared representation of knowledge among people carrying different values, as well as facilitate knowledge transformation.

Stories are short simplified narratives representing an idea or a real experience. Stories have the power to bring individuals' as well as the organisation's imagination to life in seconds. A good story is sticky, once told it will get a life of its own, passing from person to person, reaching corners of the organisation you might not otherwise reach. Both design artefacts and stories allow processes of translation, to establish a shared language, coordination and alignment between fundamentally different perspectives.

8 common pitfalls

We have reflected on the collective experiences of our clients and see 8 common pitfalls when trying to drive customer centricity by design:

1. **Unrealistic pace** – trying to go too fast, creating complexity, driving confusion and wasting money
2. **Wrong early bets** – choosing the wrong proof projects, not showing early benefits, creating cynics around you
3. **Blurry accountability** – confusion over who has ultimate call on priorities or design decisions; stepping on another department's "turf"
4. **Losing sponsorship** – leaders may shift over time, you should always have a fresh business case at hand, you might need to sell this again... and again
5. **Change congestion** – inability to recognise other existing and competing change initiatives creating competition for funding and resources
6. **Value articulation** – difficulty isolating benefits resulting directly from the design approach, especially hard to compare the value vs. "other approaches"
7. **Cultural discomfort** – failure, uncertainty, iteration & chaos are usually not acceptable, needs to be acknowledged and managed
8. **Failing to articulate who the customer is** – failing to achieve a clear and shared understanding of who the customer is and how the ecosystem players relate to each other



Design enables the introduction, diffusion and adoption of the customer logic through artefacts and stories.

Recognising design legacies

At the core of this journey there must be the recognition that you are not entering the organisation introducing design for the first time. People “design” in your organisation all the time. You might consider that kind of design not to be “good design”, yet it does exist. Organisations are full of design legacies that need to be recognised and leveraged [3]. The dominant product logic has its own design rules and truths. Shifting from one logic to the other will take time. The two logics can find a balance and coexist successfully for a long time. Respecting the existing and building on it is the true key to success.

Nine women can't make a baby in a month

Becoming customer and employee centric is possible. We have seen many large, complex, siloed organisations achieve this goal. Design can certainly help you in this process and boost your chances of success. It's important to recognise, however, that this is a marathon not a sprint, and needs to be strategised as such. Shifting towards a customer logic challenges the core set of values and beliefs that drive people's behaviour. It also calls into question well-established processes, systems and ways of working that define the very core of an organisation. Give it time and space to breathe, and have a plan to scale, because value is maximised through more pervasive adoption. Design is a team sport – drive adoption through participation, not by building an army of designers. Be patient and steady in your approach, be bold when needed and proud of all the small achievements you'll collect on the way.

“

By 2020, poor customer experiences will destroy 30% of digital business projects [4].

GOASDUFF, L. (2019) IS YOUR ORGANIZATION CUSTOMER CENTRIC? GARTNER

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2. Shah, D., Rust, R., Parasuraman, A., Staelin, R., & Day, G. (2006) The Path to Customer Centricity. *Journal of Service Research*, 9 (2), 113-124

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CX Playbook: A standardised approach for practicing customer-centricity

Having a sharp focus on customer experience (CX) is known to be a good path to business success, no matter what approach you choose for your product development and innovation. And yet, undertaking a CX transformation project from within an organisation is often far from straight forward.

Too often, teams struggle with little or no understanding of their customer needs or knowing how to effectively use customer insights to develop new, agile solutions.

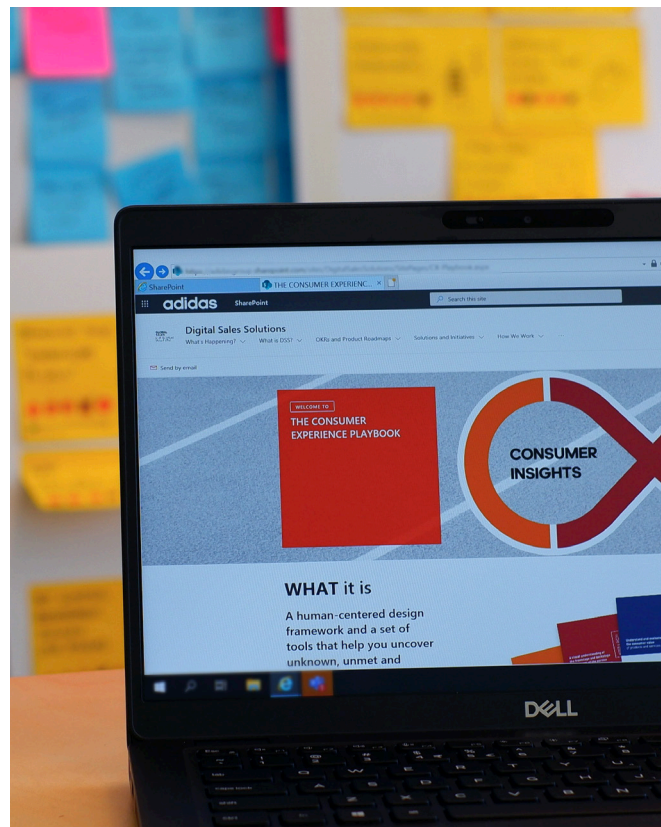
Over the past few years, we have been supporting adidas to put the customer first in their Agile transformation. To succeed, we knew we had to anchor and coordinate a multi-tier approach to CX that tackles change at a deeper level of the organisational culture, its processes and structures.

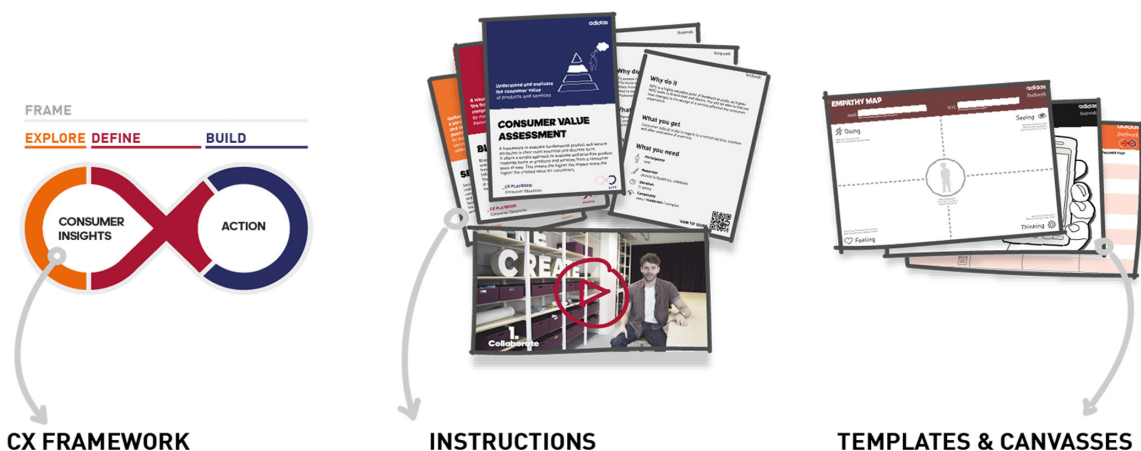
One of our responses to this challenge was the creation of the adidas CX Playbook: a standardised toolkit, designed to enable teams to uncover unknown and unmet customer needs and integrate those insights in the development of (new) services, roadmaps and strategy.

Challenge

Scaling a CX approach and practice outwards and upwards in the organisation

Since our work with adidas began, a key challenge was to root a customer-centric mindset within the organisation. After prototyping and piloting CX improvements and activities across various teams, we realised that in order





We created a CX Playbook to help adidas move from customer Insights into Action while supporting a customer-centric culture across teams.

to embed a CX practice successfully, we had to start by translating what customer-centricity involves for a range of employees. For example, for product owners, business analysts or entire product development teams, we addressed questions like: How does CX provide value to individual employees and how could they align their agile work with customer insights on a daily basis?

Besides introducing a clear CX practice, we developed the necessary infrastructures that enable teams to create valuable customer experiences and improve the way they organise and prioritise their work in the long run. This resulted not only in defining an operating model and CX value metrics but a single-source toolbase that describes the way of doing CX in the organisation in a standardised and interconnected way: the CX Playbook.

Approach

Leveraging human-centred design to standardise design methods and tools for product and cross-functional teams

Using a mix of hands-on coaching, service and organisational design, the CX Playbook outlines a multi-phase methodology for creating an ideal customer experience. We started with the CX framework – a high-level design process teams ought to consider when designing for their customers. We went on to prototype a set of supporting tools (including video instructions and templates) that teams could use throughout their

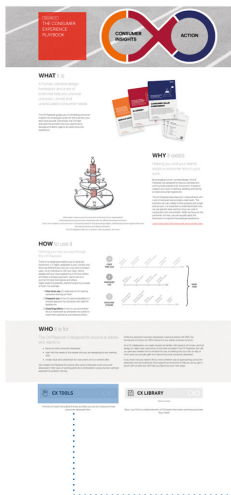
agile development process – moving from collecting and generating consumer insights into creating value propositions and iterative prototyping based on consumer feedback.

As a handbook and guide to CX, it had to provide teams with a set of practical tools and templates to practice with. By aiming to ensure that this could be used by a wide variety of teams and individuals alike, we designed the playbook with agility and scalability in mind – including self-directed digital DIY instructions, introduction sessions and hands-on coaching support.

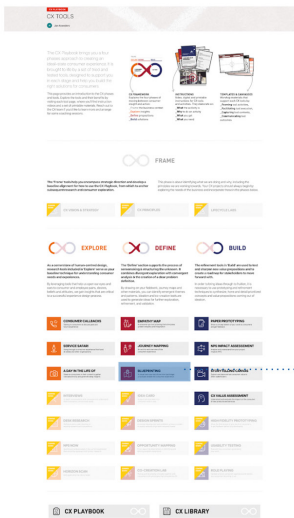
I STUMBLED UPON THE CX PLAYBOOK WHEN BROWSING THROUGH SHAREPOINT. IT IS A REALLY INVITING AND INSPIRING COLLECTION OF TOOLS THAT MAKES IT EASY FOR ME AS A 'CX NEWBIE' TO GET STARTED.

EMPLOYEE, ADIDAS

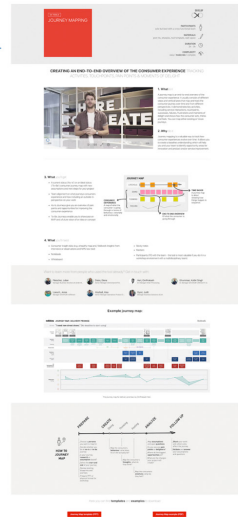
1. Playbook Landing page



2. Tool catalogue page



3. Tool instruction page



A variety of contents are included in the CX Playbook to support adidas staff in learning about and practicing CX.

Outcome

Empower employees to embark on their own CX journey

The CX Playbook, as it is implemented today, consists of a landing page, CX introductions and background, a tool catalogue and individual tool pages brought to life by testimonials and case studies. It supports employees in sensing and seizing customer-focused opportunities and is easily accessible on the adidas intranet. It also tailors to different audiences – from first time explorers, to regular users and CX natives that have the potential to upskill others.

Comprised, these tools articulate the activities that need to be undertaken to develop and execute against an ideal customer experience. However, there is no single way of using the CX Playbook: instead, it is designed to remain highly adaptable to different contexts and departments. At its core, it encourages staff to create better and context specific tools, as they define and embark on their own consumer-led transformative journeys.

Article

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Webinar takeaways: driving customer centricity by design

On November 12th 2020, Livework hosted the first in a series of webinars titled “Driving Customer Centricity by Design.” As the name implies, the aim is to share insights into what it takes to orient organisations around their customers — using design as an enabler.

This comes off the back of launching our very own Customer Centricity Tool, which was created with the purpose of allowing organisations to assess how close they truly are to their customers.

Drawing on a wealth of client relationships, built over nearly 20 years in the industry, this first webinar tapped into stories from practice of two very different guest speakers: Peter Brook – Global Senior Director Omnichannel at adidas – and Thomas Foster – Global Head of Service Design at JP Morgan Asset and Wealth Management. Peter’s focus at adidas is to connect consumers with products through their omnichannel ambition — linking e-commerce with the retail experience and more. As he puts it, “At the heart of omnichannel is the idea of serving our consumer.” Tom centers his service design work at JPMorgan around

conducting ‘first-class business in a first-class way’, a mission statement first expressed by J. P. Morgan Jr. (a former leader of the firm). In Tom’s own interpretation, “First class business in a first-class way must mean first-class services.”

The session was led by Liveworkers Marzia Arico – Director of Design – and Jan Koenders – Senior Service Designer – who oriented the conversation around three main themes of customer centricity:

- 1. Creating a cultural shift**
- 2. Showing value to key stakeholders**
- 3. Learning from your mistakes**



Tackling the cultural shift

The conversation began by looking at how an organisation should tackle the cultural shift of customer orientation, as it is a fundamental pillar in its success. Tom pointed out that although employees in JPMorgan embody different roles and interests, “everybody genuinely believes in delivering a first-class service”. This is especially important to remember when tapping into the motivations of senior management and gaining their support. Although already challenging, organisations should strive to go beyond just talking about the “voice of the customer” and start making decisions off the back of it.

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DON'T WAIT FOR A CULTURAL CHANGE TO HAPPEN BEFORE TRYING TO DRIVE AN OUTCOME.

PETER BROOK, ADIDAS

Peter built on this by affirming that while drawing on the base motivations of an organisation and acting on them is crucial, it should also be proactive — “don't wait for a cultural change to happen before trying to drive an outcome.” Adding to this, he noted that being customer-focused is “a combined effort of both top-down and bottom-up.” In the end, creating the desired cultural shift appears to come from making things tangible to stakeholders on all levels. This is, ultimately, what builds the necessary mindset.

Articulating value to top management

The next question tackled how to articulate value to these stakeholders, looking in particular at the biggest drivers for the C-Suite. Having a story, however small, that creates relatability is fundamental, explains Peter; “not to get drowned in that individual case, but to use it as an example to build trust and empowerment.” For example, use metrics to buy alignment.

This shows that although an organisation might optimise at different stages of a customer journey, it is rarely done as a whole. However, by changing the conversation with metrics and measures in this way, it can drive customer centricity at

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WE NEED SOME OVERARCHING MEASURES THAT BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER, SO THAT WE CAN MEASURE TO WHAT EXTENT WE'RE DELIVERING A FIRST-CLASS SERVICE.

THOMAS FOSTER, JPM

every rung of the organisation. To do this effectively “don't go too fast or too slow, embed what you've got,” says Peter and whether that's fast or slow “you need to go together” adds Tom.

Lessons learned along the way

The webinar rounded out with an exchange of “lessons learned”, more specifically, what mistakes each speaker has made and other things that they feel have worked well. “Not spending enough time doing,” states Tom, talking about the importance of having both a strategy in place for customer centricity and putting it in action. Although it may seem as if there are 1,000 paths for doing so, having practical things — like a map of the services at the highest level of the organisation or a checklist to evaluate where the organisation is going — can help draft the path forward. It is also fundamental to speak to senior leaders about the direction that they would like to go in. More on this in our article [Know your services](#).

For Peter, choosing where to put the effort comes from measuring success in relation to customer centricity. Asking how customer centric the organisation feels, formal metrics (like NPS and KPIs), and the usability of solutions are key. Adding that “mistakes are how you learn [...] if you don't succeed, you learn.” This speaks to the fact that organisations like adidas and JP Morgan are always growing by giving their staff the freedom and safety to try new things — knowing that, if you misstep, you've learnt something in the process. In a difficult journey like the one towards becoming customer centric, that's how you get there. There is no magic bullet, you need to take chances and pivot to see what works. More on this in our article [CX playbook at adidas](#).

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Staying focused on the customer in times of COVID-19

As we find ourselves in the middle of unprecedented times going through a global pandemic, we might be quick to assume that the priorities of building and sustaining a successful business have changed. But in fact many of our clients have realised that keeping their customer at the centre of their work is vital in times like these.

With our help, adidas was able to leverage best practice from the service design industry. Together, we re-designed key business operations to become more customer-focused and identified new and improved ways for adidas employees to engage and help their customers in these difficult times.

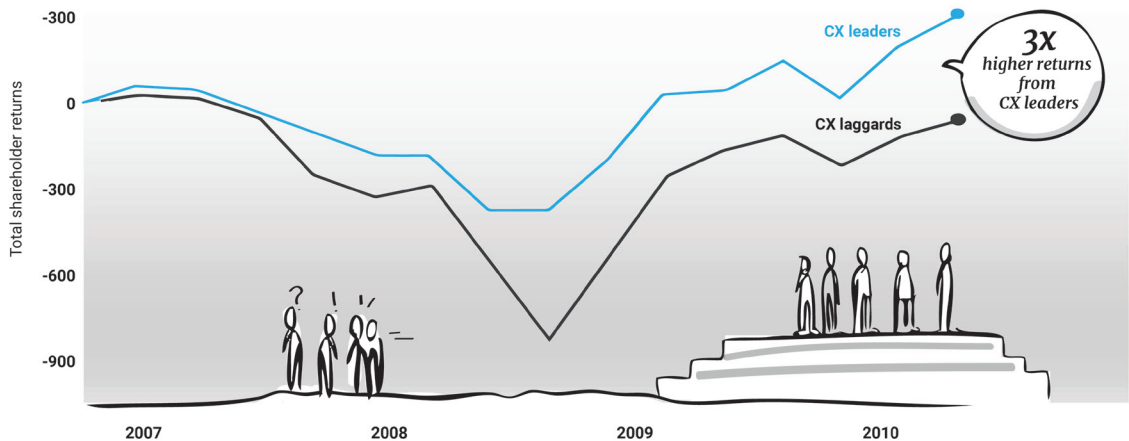
Business resilience and customer-centricity in the face of crisis

The COVID-19 lockdown has had a profound impact on the way people live and consume. These rapid shifts in our human behaviours have important implications for retail organisations. We see an increased urgency for retailers to refocus on direct-to-customer strategies, pivot to digital-first solutions while doubling down on Ecommerce and prioritise high cost-saving initiatives despite the potential negative impact on customer experience. In some cases, CX efforts have faded into the background, although the lessons learned from the financial crisis clearly indicate that CX-focused organisations develop to be more resilient, able to withstand severe operational disruptions.

In the face of crisis, Covid taught us that business context is, and will remain, uncertain. And so our challenge was to help adidas maximise their organisational resilience and use CX to better navigate these uncertain times.



Customer experience leaders are more resilient during recessionary periods

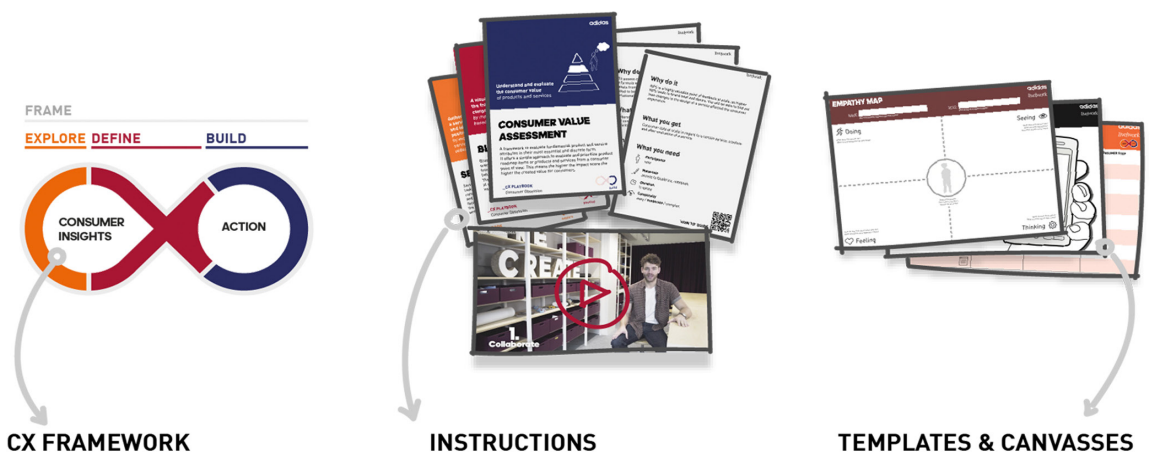


Analysis of the financial crisis shows that CX focussed organisations experienced shallower downturn, were more resilient, and achieved 3x the total shareholder returns on the long term, compared to market average. Reference: Forrester Customer Experience Performance Index (2007–09)

From CX as a 'nice-to-have' to CX as a crucial development step

For adidas to realise the importance of why they needed to stay focused on their end-consumer, we experimented with new and remote ways of keeping customers at the centre of their agile ways of working. We supported key product area teams (from digital returns to payment services) to understand that, now more than ever before, they had to align their product development closely with their customer needs, instead of relying on business assumptions and hypotheses alone.

Using a set of standardised CX tools (that we developed and implemented earlier this year) we enabled teams to take a pragmatic approach to CX. We involved them in remote journey mapping, blueprinting and co-creation workshops and were able to debunk common CX misconceptions of it being a 'time-consuming process conflicting with business priorities' or a 'nice-to-have'. Instead, we demonstrated the business value of CX through improving operational efficiencies and co-creating customer value propositions that directly impacted uplift in sales.



We created a CX Playbook to help adidas move from customer Insights into Action while supporting a customer-centric culture across teams.

Thank you for reading!

If you have any thoughts, questions, or something that you would like to share with us, please get in touch.



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