

# CX SERVICE DESIGN

Designing experiences that create emotional attachment and drive brand growth

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**AUTHOR**

Helen Bywater-Smith

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GAME CHANGERS



Customer Experience teams are typically focused on measuring and managing customer feedback. But they should also be leading the business in human-centric design approaches, to ensure that experiences are built on true customer understanding, create emotional attachment and drive competitor differentiation.

When designed well, great customer experiences, deliver on your brand promise across touchpoints and create memories which drive the 'right' behaviours and lead to desired business outcomes: increased retention, share of spend, advocacy and operational efficiency, leading to a Return on CX Investment: ROCXI.<sup>1</sup>

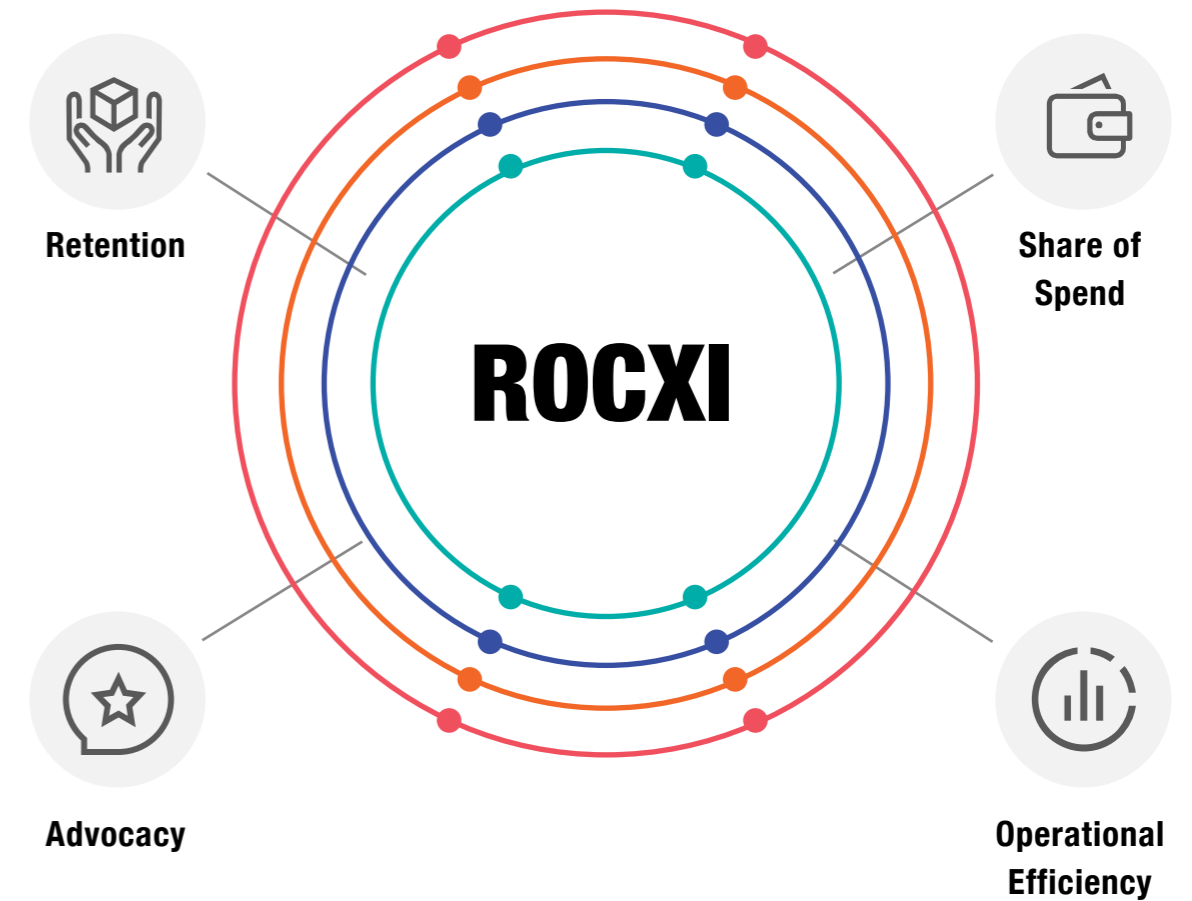
**In this paper, we share best practice experience and service design guidelines on how to design customer experiences that drive business success.**



As you read the guidelines in this paper, we recommend that you think about a specific journey or experience that you would like to design, refresh or repair, to improve your relationship with your customers. Perhaps you need to enhance the contact centre experience, create a more experiential retail environment, or design an easier onboarding journey...? Think of the next 10 minutes' read as a 'mini CX design clinic', where we will explore best practice frameworks and principles around service design and consider how they might apply to your specific experience design challenges.



**Figure 1** Delivering a Return on CX Investment: ROCXI



- Retention**  
Customers are retained and at-risk customers are recovered
- Share of Spend**  
Customers choose you more often
- Advocacy**  
Customers share their positive experiences with others
- Operational Efficiency**  
Customers are served in a quality-driven, cost-effective way

Source: Ipsos

# THE POWER OF EMPATHY

We live in volatile times that are influencing customers' expectations, needs and opinions. Understanding and empathising with customers, and the context of 'their world', needs to be at the heart of experience design.

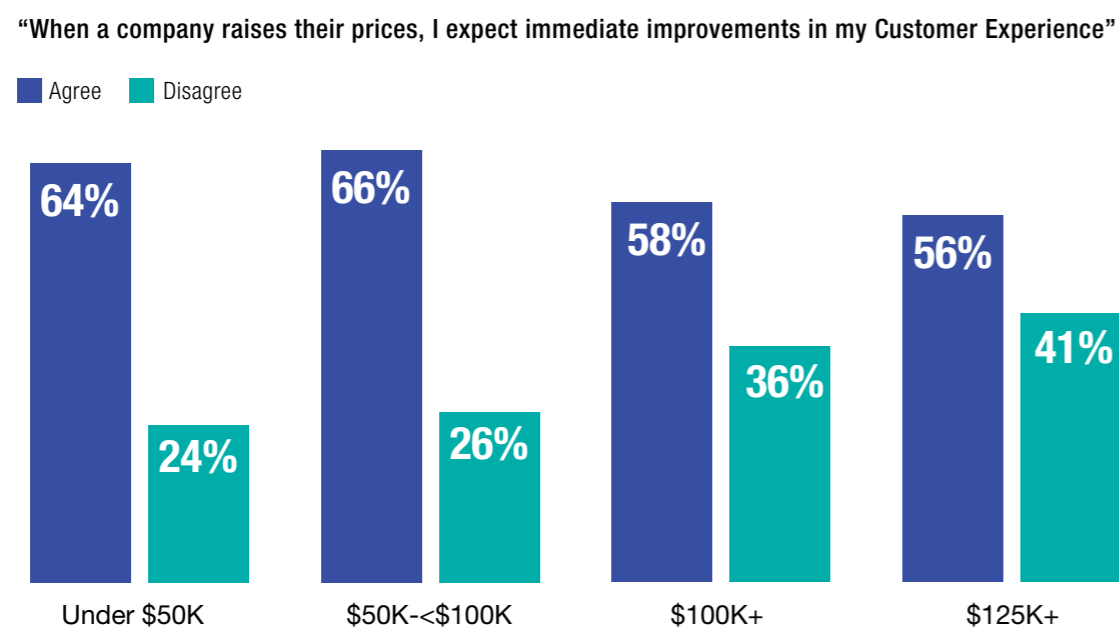
Customers are being regularly exposed to new touchpoints and channels.<sup>2</sup> These new experiences are influencing and recalibrating customers' expectations of how brands should be servicing them. 'Liquid expectations' are in play, with an experience in one sector informing expectations of another. For example, your experience of ordering a pizza, tracking the preparation and delivery process on an app, may inform the way you would like to track the progress of your car service. An avid online gamer may come to expect companies to deliver help and support through the metaverse.

Our current social and political environment is also impacting customers' needs and expectations of their Customer Experience. We are witnessing increased vulnerability across customer groups, including an increase in customers struggling financially and a rise in mental health challenges.

Through our research, we see the rising cost of products and services is increasing customers' expectations of the experience delivery.<sup>3</sup>

**Now, perhaps more than ever before, there is a real need to build empathy into your businesses, and design experiences that are built on both customers' functional and emotional needs.**

Figure 2 How inflation affects Customer Experience expectations split by household income (US)



Source: Ipsos R&D

# THE FORCES OF CX AS A DESIGN FRAMEWORK

From our Ipsos R&D we know that well designed customer experiences create more emotional attachment with customers.<sup>4</sup> And customers who are more emotionally attached are:

- Far more likely to express a preference towards the brand than if they were just functionally satisfied
- Much more likely to recommend the brand
- Significantly more likely to stay with the brand in the future
- More likely to be forgiving.

The Forces of Customer Experience is a framework that identifies strong predictors of

emotional attachment and relationship strength. Focusing on them enables brands to refocus Customer Experience design, measurement and management to address what truly matters.

In the case of experience/service design, the Forces of CX can be employed to understand your customers' emotional needs, how your experience is delivering against these needs, and to inspire improved (re)design of that experience across customer journeys.

There are six key dimensions in the CX Forces framework:

Figure 3 The Forces of Customer Experience



Source: Ipsos R&D

## TO BRING THE SIX KEY DIMENSIONS TO LIFE, HERE ARE SOME EXAMPLES:



**Control** – is helping customers feel that they are in the driving seat; making them feel confident, focused, responsible and in charge. An example here, especially pertinent in these times, is a utility company enabling customers to see exactly how much they are spending by means of an app.



**Fair Treatment** – means customers feel that there is a fair exchange in their relationship with you, for example, a subscription that allows for the commitment to be easily 'paused' for a month.



**Certainty** – is about customers feeling that things are clear, transparent, and working as expected. For example, when ordering a product online, knowing the time of day it will arrive, within an hour window, to ensure you are in to receive it.



**Status** – is making customers feel special. A bank sending flowers and a new home welcoming gift voucher when customers choose them for their mortgage is such an example.



**Belonging** – is about that sense of shared values; of a company having purpose, beyond the commercials. Giving customers the option to give back to society, for example, an optician enabling you to recycle your used glasses and ensuring they will be used for people in vulnerable circumstances is 'Belonging' in action.



**Enjoyment** – takes different shapes in different sectors. Ultimately, this is about bringing customers a sense of freedom, increasing pleasure by removing hassle; making them feel more relaxed and that they are being taken care of. Upbeat and friendly frontline staff bring energy and positivity which can directly impact enjoyment levels.



## THE BARRIERS TO DESIGNING GREAT EXPERIENCES

But delivering great experiences is not easy ... Key barriers to great Customer Experience design in organisations include:

### 1: Siloed teams

Teams that are responsible for designing, communicating and delivering Customer Experience often sit in silos. They don't come together as a group and understand the implications of the decisions each has on the customer journey, nor how the brand promise can be brought to life across the end-to-end experience. Designing great end-to-end experiences are not one team's responsibility, they are everyone's responsibility.

### 2: Lack of C-suite support

The C-suite may have a lack of appreciation of the importance of implementing a human-centric approach to designing experiences. They may rely on internal hypotheses only, and go immediately to prototyping new designs based on internal knowledge.

### 3: Lack of empathy

Collecting quantitative customer data alone, and not grounding this in a deeper qualitative understanding of the customer's world in which your experience is delivered, will not give teams an empathetic appreciation of customer needs, pain points and opportunities to improve.

**Ipsos CX Service Design addresses all of these barriers. CX Service Design is a holistic and human-centric approach to designing new, or improving, customer experiences. It applies established design thinking-led processes and creative, yet practical, approaches to ensure that customer experiences are designed to deliver the brand promise across all touchpoints and meet both the functional and emotional needs of customers, and the teams delivering the experience.**



Think back to that experience that you would like to enhance. Where and how would you like to strengthen the relationship with your customers? What Forces of CX are at play here, and what steps do you need to take to identify and dial up those that really matter?

## THE KEY COMPONENTS OF AN EXPERIENCE

Designing customer experiences is like producing a theatre show or TV programme. The customer only sees what's in front of them, what they interact with, but there's a whole world behind the scenes that enables the creation of the experience. You need to take every aspect of the experience into account; dissect it into different parts to ensure all facets work cohesively to meet customer needs, deliver the brand promise and drive positive customer interactions.

Taking the analogy of a theatre production, let's imagine a branded car dealership service experience:

- **'Front stage' refers to everything with which a customer directly interacts.** This includes everything they see, hear, do, sense, and feel. In a car service experience this would include: the booking stage through the website, app or over the phone; dropping the car off for the service, interacting with the reception staff, the waiting area, the coffee machine; all the way through to the information they receive after the service has been completed.

- **'Back stage' is everything that goes on behind the scenes and supports the front stage interactions.** These are the teams in place, the systems, technology, and processes set up to enable the delivery of the experience to meet and, indeed in some cases, exceed customer expectations. Again, using the car service experience, this might include IT and User Experience teams who design the booking process, Learning and Development who trains the frontline teams, the Operations teams who manage the dealerships and service centres, Marketing and Branding who might design the waiting experience, and, of course, the car engineers who take the car through the service.

### CASE STUDY: DESIGNING A NEW CLASS OF TRAIN TRAVEL



A train company identified a white space opportunity to create a differentiated experience for customers; a

new class of train travel, to sit between the first and standard classes. This new option would provide some of the perks of first, without the full expense. A human-centric service design approach was used through this study.

Initially, stakeholder and employee workshops collected the hypotheses for the redesign, and the design constraints to be considered.

Customer workshops were used to map the ideal experience of this new service across the

end-to-end journey. We conducted semiotic excursions, travelling on our clients' and competitors' luxury services to understand how a new 'standard premium' experience could be executed across the service. The insight was brought to life through personas and customer journey maps, and workshopped with the cross-functional group to design the new experience. This was prototyped and tested in quantitative research to finalise the design. Finally, service blueprinting workshops brought the client team together again, to map out what they would need to change across the journey to deliver this new experience.

The new class has now been rolled out successfully, creating a differentiated experience and meeting previously unmet customer needs.

The customer only sees what's in front of them, what they interact with, but there's a whole world behind the scenes that enables the creation of the experience.”



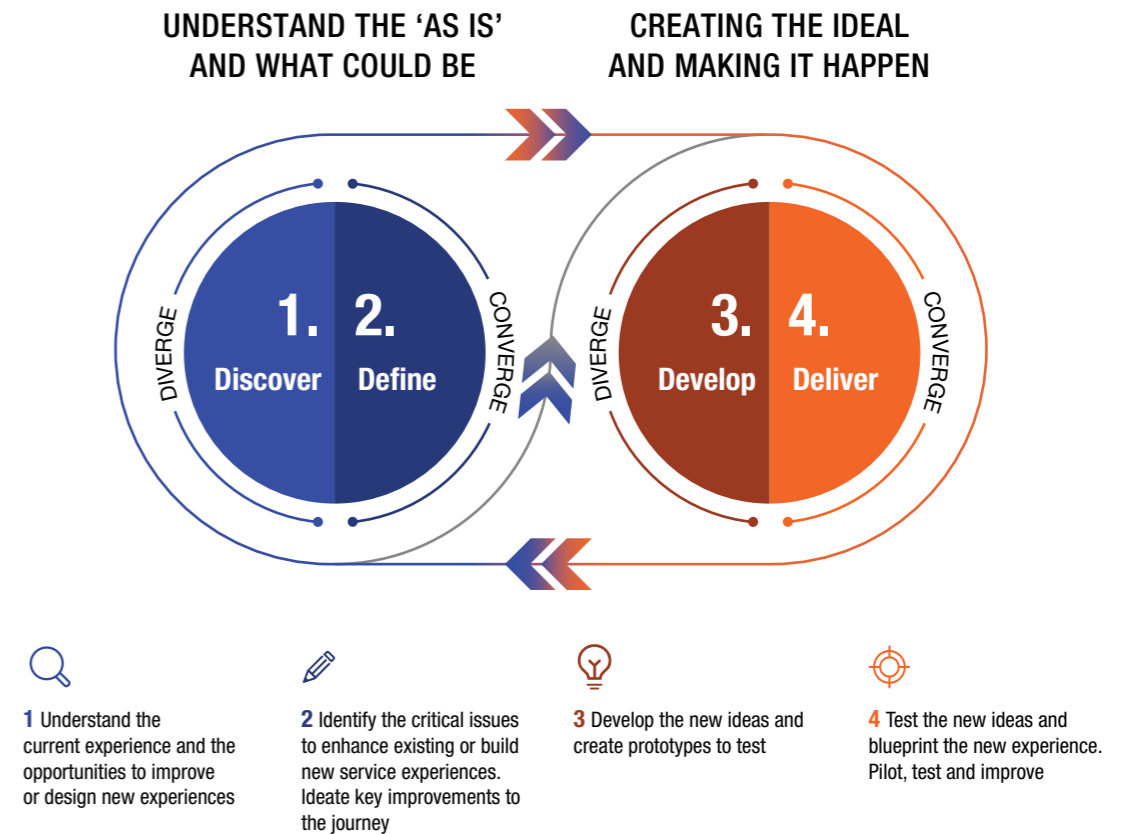


## CASE STUDY: DIGITALISATION OF B2B PROCESS

Our client, a department who provides information to facilitate the sale of property and land, commissioned Ipsos to understand the current experience, with the vision to create a new optimised digital process. The project started with customer journey mapping of the end-to-end process, through the eyes of solicitors and conveyancers, to understand their needs, pain points and where process optimisation could take place. Based on this understanding, a wire frame prototype of a new website, to enable more accurate, efficient and cost-

effective processing of the information, was tested back with the users to understand the usability and user experience of this solution; to ensure that it met their needs and solved the pain points identified in the earlier stage. Higher fidelity versions were further tested in user experience interviews. After final improvements were made, the new digital journey has been rolled out across the country, and has led to a significantly improved experience for the B2B and end consumer, driving desired business outcomes.

Figure 4 Service design approach



Source: Based on the British Design Council Double Diamond framework

The service design approach is based on the Double Diamond framework created by the British Design Council.<sup>5</sup> It's an iterative process where four stages inform and build on each other. It's not a strict linear process, as you may move from Discover to Define and then identify a need to go back and Discover again.

The stages flow back and forth, but start with deep immersive customer understanding to map the reality of the 'as is' current experience and to identify key issues and improvements to be made,

then move to ideating many potential possible solutions which are prioritised and prototyped. These are then tested back with customers to ensure the new solutions meet both the needs of the end customers and the teams delivering the experiences. Before launching, ensure that a clear blueprint of the experience is created to set the experience up for success.

In research terms, a host of approaches will be employed, depending on the project and business need.

A brief overview of each of the four stages follows:

### STAGE 1 DISCOVER:

**Understand the current experience and the opportunities to improve or design experiences.**

The starting point of any service design project is when a Customer Experience problem area is identified, or a new experience idea emerges to which an organisation would like to apply a human-centric approach.

Reflect, for a moment, on your own business and the journey you have identified as a problem for your customers that you would like to redesign, or a new idea you would like to design from scratch. What data and knowledge has led you to this point?

Ask “How Might We ...?” as you consider the need to fix your specific journey or experience.

### Step i: Identify the key teams to work on this “How Might We” question

Map the internal teams and stakeholders who play a key role in designing, managing and delivering this new experience. This could include Marketing, Branding, User Experience, Operations and frontline and back stage car servicing teams for example.

Pull this cross-silo team together and rally them around the customer journey, having that as their central focus. This cross-company group needs to work together to understand the current experience and, ultimately, (re)design that experience.

Work with the group to map what they know right now about the specific journey or experience that needs to be (re)designed; understand the internal perspective. Through the eyes of frontline teams and ethnographic observations, we map the current ‘as is’ journey and identify where the opportunities are to enhance or redesign the experience. We understand their brand ambition as a team and the memories they want to create through the experience.

### Step ii: Deep dive into the world of your customer

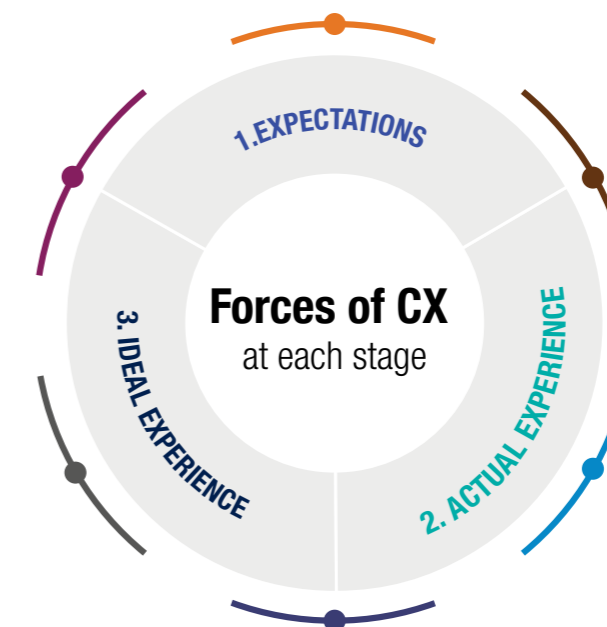
Through methods such as customer journey mapping, rich ethnography, online diary studies, observations, and user experience evaluations, we gain a deep understanding of the current Customer Experience to gain insight into their needs, how it’s working now and what needs to be improved.

Ipsos’ CX Journey framework ‘pulls apart’ the customers’ needs and expectations, compares these to the delivery of the actual experience across touchpoints, and identifies where there are pain points, gain points and critical moments. We then imagine the new experience with customers, using the Forces of CX framework to identify where and how the experience can be designed to meet their functional and relationship needs.

This provides clear direction on how to design more emotionally engaging experiences.

Through the eyes of frontline teams and ethnographic observations, we understand the current ‘as is’ journey and identify where the opportunities are to enhance or redesign the experience.”

Figure 5 Discovering via the CX Journey lens



Source: Ipsos R&D



## STAGE 2 DEFINE:

### Identify the opportunities to enhance the existing, or build new service experiences

The insight found at the Discover stage, around customer needs, pain points and critical moments, is brought to life in workshops through creative collateral to immerse the cross-functional team in the reality of the experience.

Rich journey maps, personas, stories and videos, take the team into the world of the customer, so they can clearly understand how the experience is performing and the key problems that need to be solved. Key internal delivery and stakeholder groups such as frontline, Operations and User Experience (UX) teams can then start to imagine the new experience and design customer journeys, channels and touchpoints with the customer firmly at their heart.

Again, the Forces of CX framework is used throughout this stage to ideate the new experiences and the desired emotional connection. Fresh ideas are brought in from outside of the sector – experiences which may be driving ‘liquid expectations’ in customers’ minds, to further inspire what could be.

Based on the car servicing example, a pain point identified might be around the CX Force of Control and customers not knowing how long the service will take, and how long they may need to wait. The customer may need to get back to work or take an important call.

A potential solution (already delivered by some) is the provision of a space where customers can experience the brand promise, sit comfortably, have a coffee, connect to WiFi and plug in their laptops to take business calls privately from the service centre. An additional solution might be a pizza tracker style notification on their phone to show how far along their car is in the process, so customers can carry on with their day.



## STAGE 3 DEVELOP:

### Develop the new ideas and create prototypes to test

New ideas are prioritised through creative exercises, by the collaborative group. ‘Matrices’ are used to assess ideas; to consider aspects such as how to deliver, time required to design, implement and deliver, financial requirements, human resources, and actual impact on Customer Experience. CX and UX teams design low-fidelity prototypes such as storyboards and wireframes, to test back with customers and frontline teams to ensure all parties’ needs are met, and that the new experiences evoke the intended emotions and drive the desired behaviour.

These concepts are then tested using a range of different approaches, depending on concept or purpose.

For the new car service design, a storyboard or wireframe might be created to test with customers to see whether this will meet their functional and emotional needs. Quantitative surveys may also be used to assess the impact.

## STAGE 4 DELIVER:

### Blueprint the new experience, pilot test and improve

Now the design has been chosen and finalised, the cross-functional group comes together again to blueprint the new experience.

The frontline team members, CX and UX design teams are consulted to work through how the new experience is going to be delivered and what will be required in terms of tools, systems and training, to support the delivery of this experience.





This is pulled together into a service blueprint which maps out what the customer will experience in the new service, how it will be delivered through the physical, digital and human assets, and what support the back stage teams need to provide. This acts as a plan for the business to ensure that everything is in place and set up properly for the experience to be successful.

In the car service example, several sites may be mocked up with this new experience and trialled in several different pilot locations. Quantitative interviews may take place to measure the impact on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

The assessment of the new experience would then be incorporated into the VoC programme, so the car dealership would be able to track, measure and identify areas for improvement; with the ultimate goal of improving business outcomes – of driving up retention, share of spend, advocacy and operational efficiency, to deliver that all-important Return on CX Investment (ROCXI).

**Service Design is a mindset change, a culture to embrace. Never stop trying to do better.**

## CASE STUDY: DESIGNING A NEW ONBOARDING EXPERIENCE



Our client, a utilities provider, had identified an issue through their existing Voice of Customer

(VoC) data, specifically that their onboarding journey was causing customers pain. Their design question was “How Might We ensure customers are onboarded efficiently and receive a more memorable experience?”

The project started with research among stakeholders and frontline staff to see what they thought the issues were with the current Customer Experience, and what data was informing these hypotheses. We collaborated with the client, mapping the customer journey, interviewing customers who had

recently been through the onboarding process to understand the pain points, gain points and moments that matter. The Forces of CX was used to identify the ways that the onboarding experience could really help improve the relationship with customers and meet their emotional needs. The insight was presented and workshopped with the collaborative team to develop new ideas, which were prioritised, tested and have since been launched. Customer onboarding has become so important to the organisation that a new strategic pillar of ‘establishing onboarding excellence’ has been established, to ensure continuous focus on improvement.

We are measuring the impact through the VoC programme.

## 3 TAKEAWAYS

So, beyond delivering ROCXI, what are the key takeaways when considering that experience you have in mind, that’s ripe for creating, recreating or revamping?



**1: To improve your Customer Experience you need to design experiences to communicate your brand promise across your customer journey and meet relational, emotional needs; to go beyond meeting functional needs; to drive emotional attachment.**

Every interaction a customer has with your brand, across touchpoints, is an opportunity to build emotional attachment. A deep qualitative understanding of customers’ needs and expectations, building on that delivered by quantitative data, is required, to design experiences that strengthen and lead to long-term relationships.



**2: Ipsos’ Forces of CX provides the framework to underpin the evaluation and exploration of needs, the inspiration to fuel designs, and the focus to create experiences which truly meet customers’ needs.**

The Forces of CX is a human-centric framework that ensures the design of experiences truly deliver on customers’ needs. The Forces of CX sits at the heart of our CX Service Design approach.



**3: Service design is a company effort**

When designing services, you need to rise above company silos and bring teams together to align around the customer journey. Ensuring that you have a ‘one team’ approach through the design of your experiences will mean that your new services are set up for success. Adopting a service design approach will not only positively impact your customers, but also your company culture, and ensure that the human sits at the heart of your organisation.

## IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO ...

- Learn more about CX Service Design and how to (re)design experiences to drive the right customer outcomes
- Find out about ROCXI analytics to understand how to calculate the Return on your CX Investment
- Understand how the Forces of CX can help your business
- Register interest for a Forces of CX personalised workshop for your organisation, or sector

Please get in touch with us at  
[CustomerExperience@ipsos.com](mailto:CustomerExperience@ipsos.com)

## FURTHER LISTENING

- Customer Perspective: An Ipsos podcast  
<https://www.ipsos.com/en/customer-perspective-ipsos-podcast>
- Dancing With Duality: An Ipsos podcast  
<https://soundcloud.com/user-653105303/dancing-with-duality>

## FURTHER WATCHING

- CX Service Design – Webinar  
<https://www.ipsos.com/en/webinar-cx-service-design>

## FURTHER READING

- Bridging the Brand Experience Gap – How to align brand promise and customer experience for business success  
<https://www.ipsos.com/en/bridging-brand-experience-gap>
- Dancing with Duality – Achieving brand growth in a mindful and mindless world  
<https://www.ipsos.com/en/dancing-duality>
- Mind the gap: Why what a brand promises and what it delivers matter  
<https://www.ipsos.com/en/mind-gap-why-what-brand-promises-and-what-it-delivers-matter>
- Service with a Smile? – Delivering customer experience in the face of mask wearing  
<https://www.ipsos.com/en/service-smile>
- Service with a Smile? Latin America edition  
<https://www.ipsos.com/en/service-smile-latin-america-edition>
- The Key To Your CX Success – Finding the right customer experience KPI for your business  
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# CX SERVICE DESIGN

Designing experiences that create emotional attachment and drive brand growth

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## AUTHOR

**Helen Bywater-Smith**, Global Head of CX Service Design

## CONTRIBUTORS

**Jean-Francois Damais**, Global Chief Research Officer - CX

**Helen Wilson**, Global Chief Experience Officer - CX and Channel Performance

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