

JOURNEY TO CUSTOMER ENTHUSIASM

Many potential touchpoints with customers are not used to best effect. If companies recognize these opportunities, they can create individual experiences that generate real enthusiasm.

INTEREST

PHASE 1: Strong arguments influence decisions

The first contact is crucial for how we form images. When customers initially become interested in a product, they are unusually receptive and highly impressionable. This is when providers should offer their “business card”: quality, expertise, individualized attention, and product transparency—all aspects that the customer assesses from an emotional standpoint. When their interest takes them to the verge of a decision, they need strong arguments and assurance to actually make it.

PURCHASE

PHASE 2: Taking the extra step for loyalty

Potential customers have a positive attitude right up to their purchase. Now it is important to make sure they do not experience any disappointment or frustration! Non-availability, delays, errors, or poor service will cloud their buying experience. Customers may question whether they have chosen the “right” company, and find fault. It makes no difference, by the way, whether they are private customers or business clients—both groups respond in a similar fashion.

OWNERSHIP

PHASE 3: Positive impressions become lasting experiences

Customers feel affirmed in their purchasing decisions when their products or services fulfill their initial promise over an extended period of time. Companies that continue to provide a discreet level of service throughout the ownership phase reinforce the positive experience of ownership. That includes easy availability plus a prompt and accommodating response to requests, complaints, or maintenance. This should be based on an efficient, intelligent customer management system.

REPEAT PURCHASE

PHASE 4: Loyal customers are the best recommendation

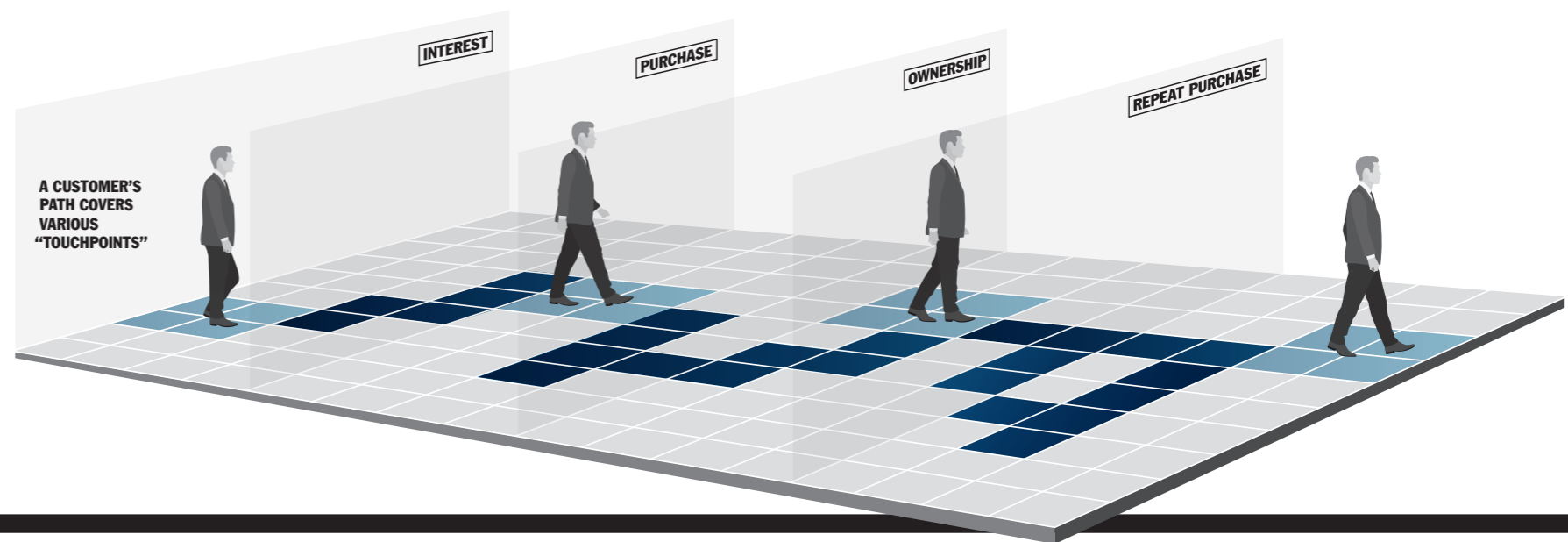
Customers make an assessment during the ownership phase. This is when they decide whether to remain loyal to the company and the product. Ideally, they become enthusiastic regular customers who recommend the company to their respective pools of potential new customers. If their assessment includes drawbacks, competitors can step in. The customers are then receptive to seemingly better or lower-priced alternatives. It pays to invest in customer service.

One of the buzzwords in marketing and sales is “acquisition.” Budgets are provided relatively easily for this purpose. But what about pre-existing clients? How can first-time buyers be turned into enthusiastic regular customers? In ideal cases, the latter will even do some of the acquisition of new customers themselves by recommending products or services—with high credibility and at no cost.

New studies by Porsche Consulting reveal that many companies could make much better use of their “customer capital.” They often allow their attention to customers and service to slack off in the critical phases following a purchase. Yet the best opportunities are found precisely in the field of after-sales. “Managers are amazed at how many unused touchpoints we find when we analyze their customer relations in detail,” says David Blecher, head of the Service Excellence division at Porsche Consulting. The greatest potential for achieving noticeably higher levels of customer satisfaction and follow-up business lies in comprehensive management of touchpoints. The aim here is to coordinate the different steps from initial contact to warranty service in such a way that customers always have an individual experience.

Modern technologies can generate seamless documentation and therefore also individual customer profiles. A “customer journey manager” can track these interactions and define best-practice measures for each step. Individual touchpoints are used most effectively when the information acquired flows in seamless and targeted ways into shaping subsequent interactions. Key indices such as recommendation rates and repeat purchase probabilities/time points can be defined very precisely with the help of complex algorithms. Marketing and sales are not the only areas responsible for unique customer experiences. IT, finance, and operations are also called upon to contribute. Often this requires a new organizational structure or even a new, customer-oriented business model.

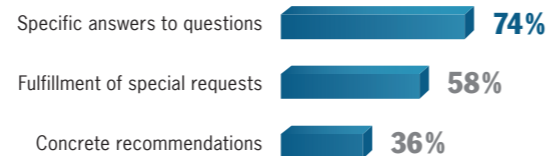
Each phase contains a large number of potential touchpoints that allow companies to interact either directly or indirectly with customers. Targeted management of these interactions helps create seamless transitions and in turn a consistently positive experience. Examples of touchpoints include product availability checks at branch office websites as well as direct customer contact in-store or at pop-up stores.



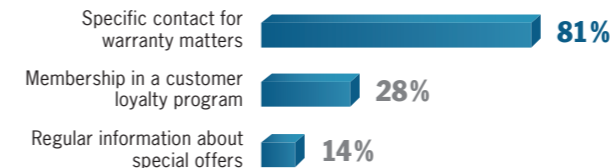
WHAT CUSTOMERS DESIRE BEFORE THEIR PURCHASE



WHAT CUSTOMERS VALUE WHEN SEEKING ADVICE



WHAT CUSTOMERS DESIRE AFTER THEIR PURCHASE



WHAT CUSTOMERS DISLIKE ABOUT RETURNS



Survey/graphics: © Porsche Consulting | Basis: survey commissioned by Porsche Consulting GmbH and performed by Forsa market research institute (December 2015). To collect data on customer satisfaction, a total of 1,013 persons 25+ years of age living in private German households were surveyed by phone (multi-stage stratified random sampling).