

How to Make the Customer Experience a Competitive Advantage for Your Business



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Introduction

With so many businesses offering similar or functionally identical products and services, finding a competitive edge in today's marketplace is extremely difficult. Differentiating by product requires significant up front investment, time to bring to market, and carries a high risk of failure. Many businesses try to take the shortcut of differentiating by price. They may see a short term win against close competitors this way, but igniting a race to the bottom creates more strategic challenges than it ever solves. And neither of these strategies reflect what customers increasingly care about most.

A dramatic change has taken place among consumers: they are increasingly prioritizing the customer experience in their purchasing decisions. And when the customer's needs are not met, they do not hesitate to act. In fact, [42% of customers](#) in the UK report switching to a competing service specifically because of bad customer service. In the U.S., the numbers are even more grim: [78% of customers](#) report abandoning a transaction or an intended purchase because of bad service.

Fact

By 2020, the customer experience will be a more important brand differentiator than price or even the product itself, according to the [Customers 2020 report](#).

The Customer Journey as a Competitive Edge

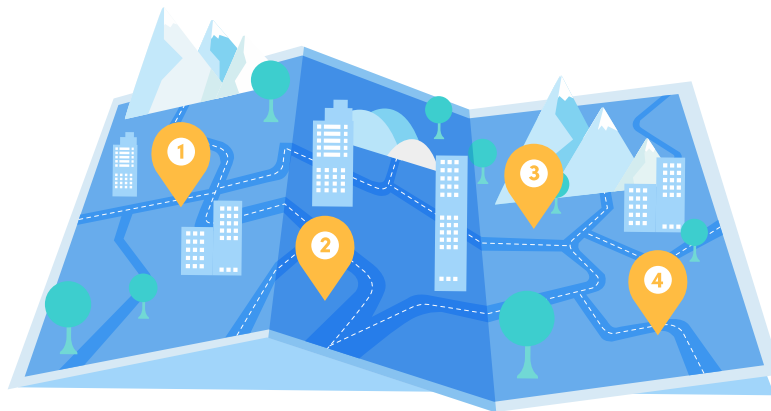
This creates a fantastic opportunity—and challenge—for business leaders. Instead of betting the farm on risky product ventures or pricing games that everyone eventually loses, savvy managers can gain durable competitive advantage by creating a customer journey that wins and retains new customers.

[Improving the customer journey](#) won't happen overnight. But when you put in the time and effort to be customer-committed—and set up the tools and processes to match—you'll see the benefits of happier customers, repeat business, and a more satisfied workforce.

In this ebook, you will learn:

- The four steps necessary to successfully launch a customer journey transformation
- Practical questions to assess what you need to know at each step
- What to do to get from one step to the next

Follow the steps below to start making the customer experience a competitive advantage.





Step 1:

Find Out What Your
Customers Really Think
About You



STEP 1

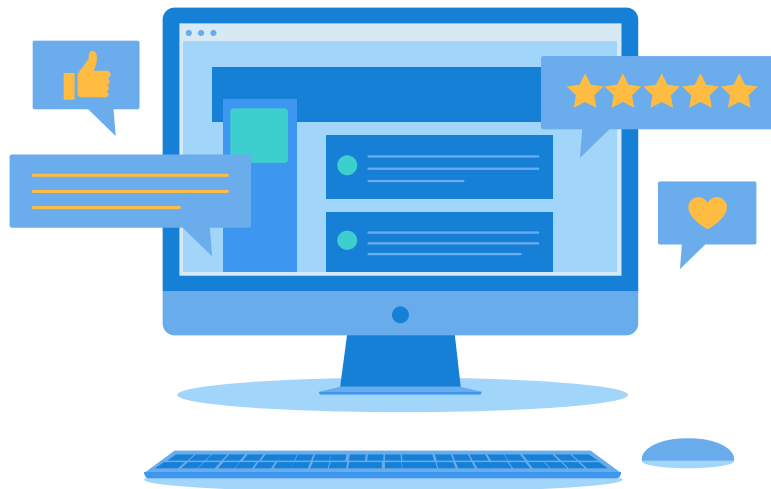
Find out what your customers really think about you

To create a journey that gives your customers what they want most, and therefore the competitive edge you need, it's vital to benchmark the current state of your customer base. Ask yourself a few questions about your customers:

- How many of your customers are satisfied and unsatisfied with your brand?
- Where do you rank among your customers' budgetary priorities for 2018?
- Do your customers see your products and services as a key part of their success, or simply a sunk cost?
- Are your customers happy to recommend your brand, or will they tell others to avoid doing business with you?
- What do they like and dislike the most about their experience with you?

Fact

Roughly half of customers who have a bad experience will take the time to write a complaint letter or email. That means to get a rough count of how many customers are actually dissatisfied with your service, you need to take your complaint count and double it. This way, you can get a sense of the scope of your challenge and set some baseline numbers around your customers' biggest pain points.



What You Can Do:

If you already collect customer feedback effectively, you are ahead of the game. Make sure that feedback is shared across relevant departments and used to create a strong plan of action. Direct customer feedback is a great tool to rally teams to action, solve problems, and celebrate wins.

If you don't currently collect customer feedback, it's easier than ever to get started! [Social listening](#)—using social media monitoring thoughtfully and correctly—can provide both quantitative and qualitative data to shape your understanding of what your customers think about you. Surveys, comment cards, and follow-up calls are all tried-and-true methods for collecting customer feedback and can be deployed simply and inexpensively.

Step 2:

Identify Your Brand
Ambassadors

STEP 2

Identify your brand ambassadors

The people who work directly with your customers are your most important brand ambassadors. Frequently, those ambassadors are the members of your mobile workforce who you selected and sent to your customer's door. Whether that door opens to a worksite, home, or office, customers expect the person who knocks to deliver what was promised and accommodate their needs and preferences.

To effectively equip and empower your mobile teams, you need to know:

- Do your mobile employees work exclusively for your brand or for multiple companies?
- Are they full-time, seasonal, or contract workers?
- What mix of skills, certifications, and competencies do they have?
- How much time do they spend getting to and from your customers versus engaging with your customers?

Fact

Commercial security firm [Area Wide Protective \(AWP\)](#) wanted to help their new mobile employees get up to speed faster and stay with the company longer, so they paired new hires with seasoned veterans during job assignments, an initiative made possible through mobile workforce management technology.

Businesses that serve customers [through contractors](#) are particularly challenged by this new emphasis on the customer journey. The further removed those brand ambassadors are from your core business, the harder it is to keep your customers happy.

By 2020, [more than 40%](#) of field service work will be performed by technicians who are not employees of the organization that owns the customer relationship, so more businesses should prepare to meet this challenge in the future.



What You Can Do:

The mobile workforce—including your contractor pool—is one of the most critical assets in your business, so make sure they have the tools to succeed. The specific needs of your mobile workers will vary based on your business, but make sure they have the ability to:

- Get schedules and job information on the go
- Access customer information so they are prepared when they arrive
- Provide task lists and job guidance so they feel confident in their work
- Capture data and feedback from the field
- Communicate seamlessly with the back office and other workers

Use this knowledge to choose a [mobile workforce management system](#) that meets the needs of your brand ambassadors.

Step 3:

Retain and Develop
Mobile Workers

STEP 3

Retain and develop mobile workers

Developments in technology and the workforce mean you are competing more fiercely to retain top talent, even for unskilled labor. Not only are you competing with local employers, but with jobs that can be done remotely for a business on the other side of the planet.

For example, the European market has seen a measurable increase in contingent workers in conjunction with the rise of the “gig” economy. The share of contingent workers in the EU [rose to 32% in 2014](#) from 27.4% in 2002, and that upward trend is expected to continue.

This means that businesses need to think critically about how easy and rewarding they are making it for mobile employees to work for them:

- How confident does your mobile team feel working with your customers?
- How long do your mobile workers stay with your company?
- Do they feel connected to the rest of the business and their colleagues?
- Are you taking their preferences and quality of work life into consideration?

Companies are [investing more](#) in their brands than ever before with an eye on attracting and retaining top talent. With a workforce that is more mobile than ever and customers that expect businesses to cater to their needs, your mobile workforce should be equipped to deliver an exceptional customer experience every time.

What You Can Do:

With competition for talent as fierce as the fight for customers, you can help keep churn rates low by giving workers a supportive daily work experience. For example, reducing travel time and paperwork are especially valuable to workers on the go and cuts costs to your business. Providing detailed and proscriptive information about customers and jobs in a readily accessible format simply makes work easier.

But perhaps the most influential step you can take is to actually incorporate your mobile workers' preferences into your decision-making for schedules and job assignments. Put yourself in the shoes of someone with a highly

variable work schedule who needs to make sure they are available at 3:30pm every other Tuesday to take a loved one to a doctor's appointment. If you can make it simple to accommodate this very human need—especially when other businesses can't or won't—that person is going to reward you with loyalty and performance.

Fulfilled, happy workers are more likely to stay with your company, so make sure your tools and processes are up-to-date to avoid frustration or stagnation. Work with your HR department to see how you can reward employees for good performance and keep your business a great place to work.

Fact

Therapists working with mobile healthcare provider [New Jersey Respiratory Associates](#) were visiting as many as eight locations daily, with new patients often being added last minute. With automation to manage, schedule, and dispatch their therapists, they were able to plan appointments up to six months in advance, giving therapists more predictability in their work life.

Step 4:

Invest in Mobile
Workforce Management

STEP 4

Invest in mobile workforce management

The pain your operations and field teams experience around scheduling, dispatch, and delivering service will be felt by the customer in the form of missed or late appointments, incomplete or inefficient service, and cumbersome paperwork.

But the customer journey doesn't end with the single service appointment. The journey continues with billing, follow-up appointments, and the ongoing relationship. Goodwill created by a successful service visit can erode if invoices are late or inaccurate, or when the customer's previously conveyed needs are lost the next time they open the door.

- Are you giving your customers a consistently positive experience?
- Have you captured each customer's specific needs in a way that ensures they don't have repeat them every time to speak to someone representing their business?
- Is everyone in your business who interfaces with customers—including billing and other back office teams—getting the information they need to deliver excellent service?
- Is scheduling and dispatch a pain point or center of excellence in your business?

What You Can Do:

[Mobile workforce management](#) gives your operations and field teams a unified system to manage workforce availability, skills, locations, and preferences against

the needs and priorities of your business and customers. Simply put, a mobile workforce management solution helps enterprises intelligently schedule, dispatch, and track resources in the field.

Teams across your business benefit from a unified, intelligent mobile workforce management system:

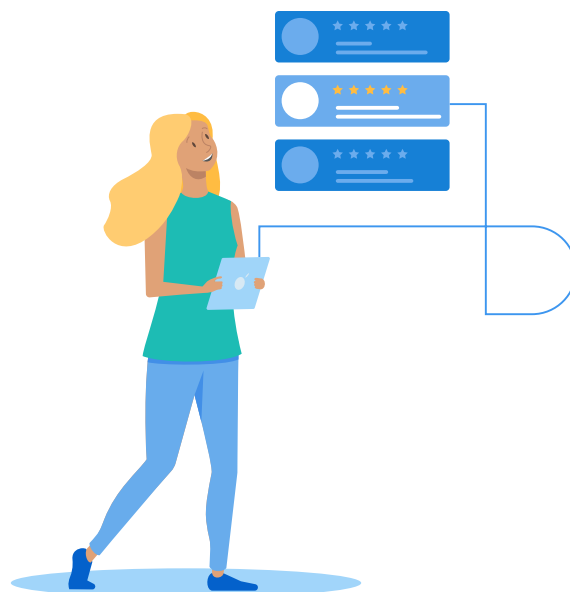
- **For operations and schedulers**, mobile workforce management simplifies matching the needs of complex jobs, worker skills, and customer preferences to create optimal service schedules. Skedulo customers, for example, have seen on average a 48% reduction in time to schedule as well as a 21% increase in resource utilization per day.
- **Mobile teams in the field** benefit from a [mobile app](#) that gives them easy access to their schedules, routes and customer information. Having a tool like this in hand makes delivering a first-class customer experience easier for your mobile workers. On average, Skedulo customers see travel time reduced by 14% and customer satisfaction increase by 8% after going live with our platform.
- **The back office**—including payroll, invoicing and HR—gets the data it needs fast when a mobile workforce management system is integrated into [Salesforce](#), [ServiceNow](#), or another system of record. One of Skedulo's largest customers, security firm Area Wide Protective (AWP), reported their invoice correction rate decreased by 41% all while delivering invoices to customers 64% faster.

As you can see, businesses that invest in a mobile workforce management solution win with faster, easier scheduling, reduced costs in the field, improved productivity, and happier customers and employees. Use our [mobile workforce management checklist](#) to help you choose the right workforce management solution for your company.

Wow your customers every day

As your business plans its investments for this year and beyond, consider how a mobile workforce management solution can help you solve problems around operational efficiency, mobile worker performance and retention, and most importantly, customer satisfaction.

Mobile workforce management solutions like [Skedulo](#) are designed to tackle this new reality of demanding customers and mobile work. Our platform was designed with the flexibility to accommodate all types of mobile workforce scenarios, including the ones that haven't been dreamed up yet. It is our belief that mobile work will continue to evolve and create new opportunities, and we want to make them work flawlessly.



Skedulo

Skedulo is the platform for intelligent mobile workforce management. Our solution helps enterprises intelligently manage, schedule, dispatch, and track resources in the field, whether they are full-time, part-time, or contract employees. With native solutions that integrate seamlessly to Salesforce and ServiceNow, and our independent platform that connects to any system of record, Skedulo offers enterprises and mid-market companies a mobile workforce management product that complements any tech stack.

Founded in 2013, headquartered in San Francisco and with offices in Australia, Asia, and the United Kingdom, Skedulo has enabled over 100 companies to seamlessly schedule and service more than 2.5 million appointments all around the globe. The company secured \$9.2 million in Series A funding in 2016, led by Costanoa Venture Capital. For more information, please visit www.skedulo.com.

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