



COMMITTED
TO SERVICE
EXCELLENCE



Customer- centric Culture



Advisory Services



4 Steps to Achieve Cultural Change

Success in modern business, especially after the pandemic, means having a customer-centric culture that puts the customer first and focuses on their experience.

90% of companies that are good at collecting data on customer experience (CX) and employee experience (EX) and using those insights in the right way showed better profits and revenue growth than competitors, according to a study of 125 companies.

All industries are putting more emphasis on customer experience, as it's clear that it provides continuous benefit. In addition, the companies that are not succeeding in this area face considerable risk. Customers themselves are demanding a customer-centric approach. They expect more from companies and are quick to switch to competitors when they are unhappy with a brand experience. Customers expect a good experience and know that one is possible in today's world.

Even when there is an understanding that being customer-obsessed is worthwhile, the execution of this goal is not always so clear-cut. Overall, companies often incorporate some customer-centric ideas without making them key components of company culture going forward. The following guide covers barriers standing in the way, while highlighting four steps to transform company culture into a customer-centric one.

Barriers to a Customer-focused Company Culture

Companies may face challenges that limit change, which means that a focus on customers can only go so far.

Common barriers include a current culture that blocks change, a limited view of customer experience, the lack of leadership or initiative, and temporary changes without a long-term focus.



COMMITTED
TO SERVICE
EXCELLENCE



Current Culture:

The current culture may get in the way of creating change.

For example, messages to focus on customers may not match up with other communication to employees, or they may not have the support and resources they need to carry out change.

Employee Experience Strategy:

Methods need to go beyond customer experience initiatives to also see the way leadership and employees are impacting customers.

Above all, employee experience has a direct impact on customer experience.

Ownership in Customer Service:

It's not enough to have initiatives that are piecemeal and inconsistent.

Instead, initiatives need to connect and work together throughout the company.

There needs to be true leadership with coordination, as well as a long-term, thought-out strategy.

4 Steps to Developing a Customer-centric Culture

We recommend a four-tiered approach to developing a company culture that is focused on customers first and foremost, yet also addresses employees and leadership. This culture should include both a top-down and bottom-up approach at the same time. This means having formal leadership approaches that work in tandem with informal methods carried out by employees as they see fit. To change company culture, it's essential to emphasize the right changes and take steps to ensure they create long-term, lasting change.

Here is our four-step plan:

- Assess the current culture and ideal
- Perform a gap analysis of the ideal culture
- Ensure cultural alignment
- Create a culture of accountability



STEP 1

Current
Culture and
Ideal



EXCELLENCE
SINCE 1976



Assess the Current Culture and Ideal

The first step is to determine the company's current culture and come to a consensus on an ideal culture that's focused on customers. Ask leaders throughout the company about what they think a best-case company culture looks like. Whether a decision-maker takes many opinions and reaches a consensus or there is a team approach to discussing and compromising, the leadership team needs to come up with a united vision of the culture they seek for their company.

It is helpful to create definitions and traits to associate with the desired company culture.

In addition, surveys, focus groups or other types of inquiries should be made of employees to get a sense of the current culture. Leadership can also contribute opinions, yet other employees have a sense of the culture on the ground and in direct relation to customers. Leadership may also want to ask employees for their ideas on an ideal culture that's customer-centric. This data collection phase should determine which current traits of the company are working and which are not working towards creating

that culture that is in line with the customer's best interests. It may be necessary to break down traits within various sections and departments of the company.

An assessment should consider how traits are reflected through employee behaviors. The ideal culture can focus on traits that will then guide employee behaviors to gain the best results. Companies should come up with processes that focus on customer needs and desires, and then determine which traits and behaviors would fulfill those. The bottom-up actions need to work with the top-down processes.

STEP 2

Gap Analysis





Perform a Gap Analysis of the Ideal Culture

Often, companies and leaders talk about values and traits that do not actually happen in real life or on a daily basis. It is essential to look at the ideal culture or the culture that is recommended on paper and then see how that lines up with the real culture.

It's possible to see the difference by noticing the gap between what leaders say they want to see and what employees report they experience on the ground.

Part of this process is to see which areas line up and which ones do not.

Also, determine employee engagement, organizational performance and other metrics as they apply. This collected information can help to show when there is a failure of the company's desired culture to play out through performance.

However, it's also important to consider the barriers that may be standing in the way of carrying out an ideal culture.

Are employees facing mixed messages?

Do they not have the time or resources to carry out the desired actions?

See whether the problems lie with willingness or with not having what is needed to perform the desired traits and behaviors.

STEP 3

Cultural Alignment





Ensure Cultural Alignment

Leadership buy-in is essential for changing company culture. In addition, leadership needs to be committed to this change. This stage of the process should include leaders in creating an action plan. The goal is to determine the procedure for changing culture and developing traits and behaviors to fit it.

The methods vary by company and its current culture and barriers to change. To move forward, some companies need to better communicate their ideal culture.

Other companies need performance metrics for

employees to meet that focus on the desired company culture. Others need to remove barriers that are preventing employees from carrying out expected behaviors.

During this stage, it's not important to focus on the current situation and get stuck there. Instead, the focus should be on deciding the goal point and how quickly the company wants to reach it. Then, leadership can develop a road map that leads from the current starting point to the end point.

The key to creating customer-focused change is leadership, which provides formal processes and sets expectations.

Leadership can put specific top-down enablers into place that support and reinforce the right behaviors, including:

- Operating Model: Create an organizational structure that encourages and supports customers as the main focus.
- People Insights: Provide insights on a regular basis that guide and support employees to take customer-centric actions.
- People Processes Technology: Implement tools that allow all employees to put customers first.
- Rewarding Excellence: Recognize and reward employee traits and behaviors that create a great customer experience.

STEP 4

Culture of Accountability





Create a Culture of Accountability

It's best to manage expectations and not expect change too quickly. Recognize that real cultural change requires time and consistency before it becomes commonly accepted and adapted. Company culture changes often take three to five years to truly take hold.

What's important is to work on taking steps forward continuously over time. Leadership should ensure consistent progress by tracking performance metrics and creating a system of accountability.

Continuing to keep an eye on company culture metrics is the main process for organizations to carry out. Using tools to monitor and measure success in certain culture-based goals will show how the company is doing with its cultural gap and with problem areas it needs to address.

Metrics show if the adjustments that are being made are working.

It's helpful to look at culture metrics as well as others, such as key performance indicators and employee engagement. Other helpful tactics are customer and employee listening.

All of these methods of monitoring show progress and also give consistent feedback for adjusting course as needed. Monitoring helps employees to see how their actions are impacting customers and business indicators. Positive feedback encourages them to continue with the right actions.

Monitoring should look at all aspects of providing a great customer experience to see if there are gaps or problems in the entire system.

In addition to monitoring employee behaviors, leadership also needs to see if employees are supported through the right technology, adequate staffing and other necessary resources. Toward this end, measure data on as many points as possible and look at the entire picture.

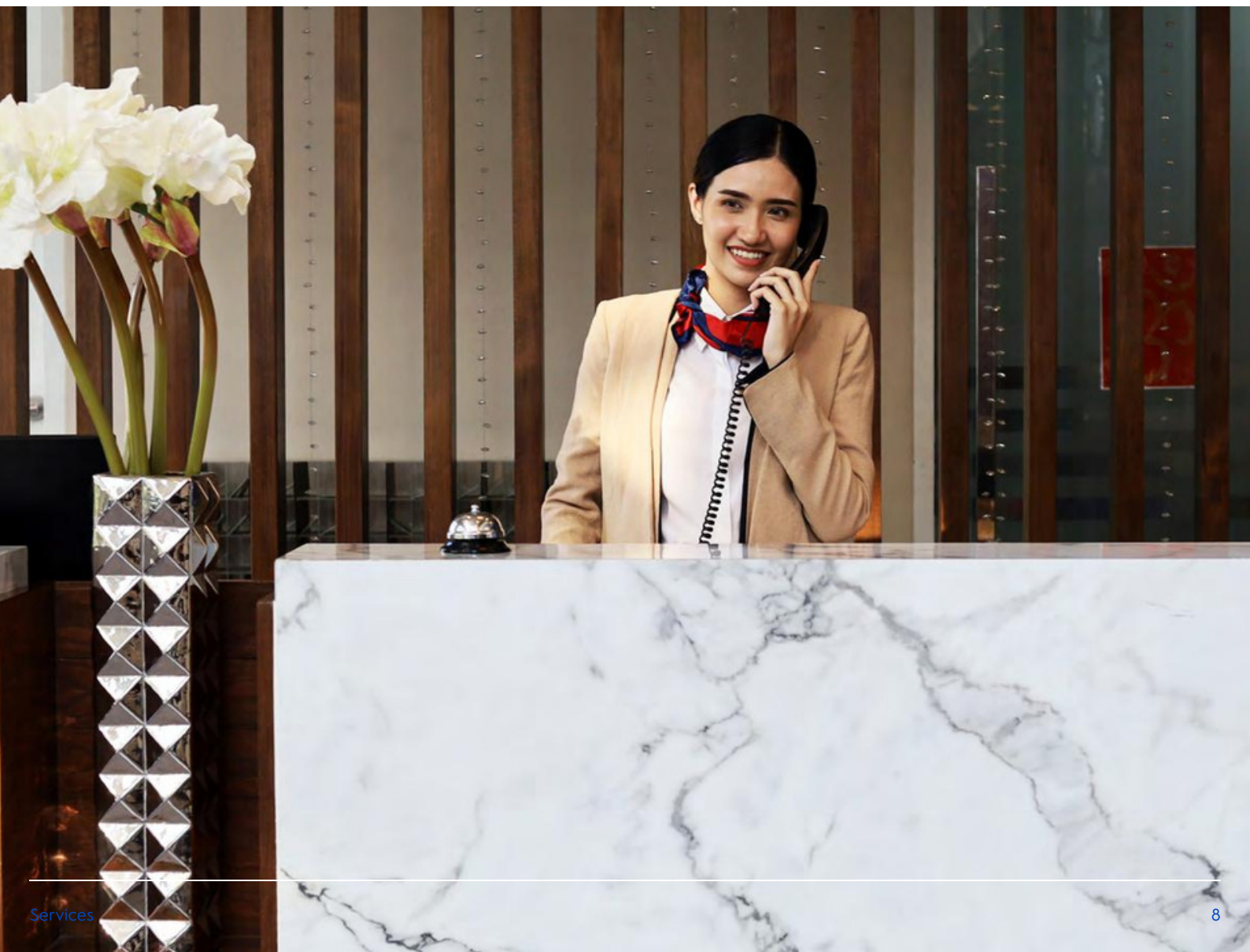
Continuing to monitor and improve is known as return on experience (ROX). A ROX system looks at operational data as well as experience to see the entire customer journey.

It looks at the system from a top-down and bottom-up perspective, as well as through formal and informal processes and behaviors. Overall, it shows current culture that works and where there are gaps that need improvement.

Move Toward a Customer- Focused Culture

Using a customer-centric approach to business helps companies attract customers and keep them as loyal supporters of the brand. To achieve a positive customer experience, companies should view the customer journey in a holistic way. It's important to look at all aspects of the company, from leadership to employee experience to how all aspects of the system work together.

It's important to look at how all processes and behaviors throughout the company are impacting customers. This helps to create a customer-centric culture that is also good for business.



COMMITTED
TO SERVICE
EXCELLENCE

Ready to explore EXCELLENCE further?

Does your company need
help implementing a culture
that's focused on
customers?

We educate and train your
teams to deliver a customer
experience that inspires
people, surpasses their
expectations and brings
them back to your business
time and again.

[Get Personalized
Advice](#)

