Increase in efficiency

The Customer Journey is a matter for the boss

Customer journey management has become a strategic management task in recent years, so it's a matter for the boss. Used correctly in the context of digitalization, customer journey management can achieve substantial increases in efficiency.

TEXT
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When it comes to customer focus, customer journeys are a melting pot bringing together all disciplines and perspectives. It's striking that initiatives relating to customer journeys in daily business are usually initiated and managed by individual departments, such as marketing, sales, IT, or services. They set out, for example, to create positive customer experiences, or generate more new customers. Despite considerable initial success, however, these projects often come to nothing as they are inadequately supported. How can this be prevented?

1. Promote cross-divisional cooperation
In order to create positive customer experiences, companies have to design the customer journey holistically. In addition to purely technical elements, it's vital to coordinate contents, processes and organisational aspects. A comprehensive change project can easily result from this range of topics. However, customer journey management can only really succeed when employees work together across all departments and levels of hierarchy. Silo thinking stands in the way of success. Furthermore, the active involvement of senior management will accelerate the entire process and motivate employees.

2. Define the organisational framework
Does everyone understand things the same way? Misunderstandings often start with the terminology used within the company. When it comes to customers, touchpoints and customer journeys, different points of view reveal huge linguistic differences. IT works with personas for digital journeys, marketing addresses different types of advertising target groups, and product development relies on the segmentation used by the industry association.

Each department pursues different objectives, such as customer experience management or marketing automation. It's easy to forget that all the departments are actually interacting - or at least trying to interact - with the same customers. Tasks, competencies and responsibilities must be regulated within the company. When developing customer journeys, for example, it's important to clarify in advance:

— For which marketing processes and/or target groups should customer journeys be created?
— Where do the customer journeys begin and where do they end?
— Which off- and online touchpoints should be taken into account?

3. Establish the basis for decision-making
It is well known that only what is measured can be managed and improved. Measurable touchpoint management with a 360-degree view of (potential) customers provides objectivity and reliable decision-making. At the same time, it increases buy-in for decisions on what direction to take. So among the things that need to be clarified are:
— Who is responsible within the company for the valid, comprehensive representation of customer journeys?
— What performance targets, performance indicators and methods will be used to judge success?

4. Develop a common understanding of the customer
The internal perspective is not the same as the customer perspective. "What do you think are the ten most important touchpoints for your customers along the customer journey when they buy your product or a comparable one?"

We've been asking our customers this question about the Top 10 for years as part of touchpoint management, in order to capture the company perspective. During numerous surveys and workshops we've compiled a considerable collection of inside-out perspectives. Managing directors and specialists in marketing, sales, media, communication and services have always replied and created a list with the most important touchpoints, based more or less on gut feeling and know-how.

And the truth is: the comparison of the company perspective with the customer perspective (outside-in) is often sobering. On average, only six out of ten of the most important touchpoints for customers are correctly guessed. And up to now, the order has never been correct. The perspectives differ greatly depending on the area or department. To deal with this, the following activities are helpful:

— Create a uniform understanding of the customer within the company on the basis of validated customer journeys
— Determine which touchpoints to use to cover the customer journey optimally
— Identify pleasure points (positive customer interactions) and pain points
— Define and prioritise concrete action areas

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