



 INMOMENT POINT OF VIEW

# Achieving Continuous Improvement: A Framework for Success

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Any organization that wants to leverage the true power of improving customer and employee experiences needs to build an Experience Improvement™ (XI) program that focuses on delivering business outcomes, not just tracking metrics.

This isn't to say that metrics aren't useful, of course. They can be a great way to track experience program progress. However, this perspective is attitudinal in nature and not often behavioral—in other words, brands are tracking what people say, not what they do. Additionally, metrics alone can't tell you why a trend developed the way it did, only that it has.

The key to taking an experience program beyond metrics is to move beyond monitoring customer feedback and stories and focus on the formation of actionable plans for changes informed by them. Customer narratives contain meaning that companies can use to diagnose both superficial and deep-seated problems, define remedies to those problems, positively impact the bottom line, and create more meaningful experiences. Brands can achieve all

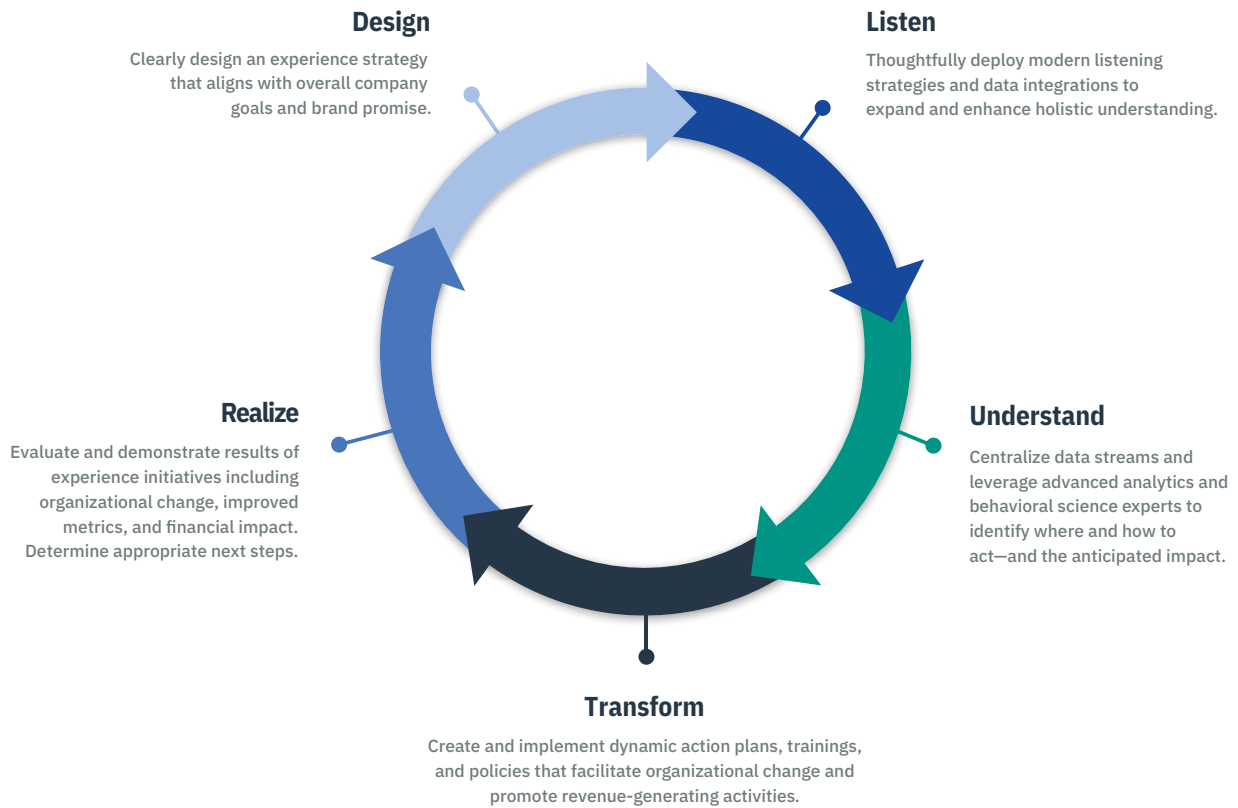
of this by sticking to a simple, five-step framework: define, listen, understand, transform, realize.

## DESIGN

*The road to true experience program success begins with clearly defining an experience strategy that aligns with overall business goals and brand promises and then designing a program purpose-built to support those goals.*

Think carefully about solving for X—what is the brand goal or objective you hope to accomplish through an experience program? Is it customer retention, client cross-sell/up-sell, or acquisition? Which customer segment is most appropriate to listen to for that goal? Objectives like these should be specific and quantifiable—don't set out to accomplish something as generic-sounding as “become more customer-centric.”

Experience practitioners should begin designing their program by ascertaining first what they are trying to accomplish, then evaluate where their brand's current



experience program efforts are at. Are they listening to the right audience? Are they asking the right questions? Is the information being gathered helping employees do their job better? What metrics are being used to measure their success? Is change happening? Organizations must assess all of their current touchpoints and journey mapping.

After creating a set of specific, quantifiable business goals, it's time to get the right stakeholders involved. Executive support is key to experience program success and by linking your business case to financial goals you've started down the right path. Keep these stakeholders involved as the program takes off, because strong governance is necessary for program success, driving strategic priorities, and encouraging employees to own their parts of the program.

Consider the following factors when linking financial goals to experience programs: desired economic outcomes and how to get there, key driver analysis, and listening tool design. Organizations often omit objectives and drivers during these considerations.

## LISTEN

***Thoughtfully deploy modern listening strategies and data integrations to expand and enhance holistic understanding.***

The second step starts with monitoring for customer feedback and stories—their needs, wants, and expectations. This can be done through a combination of direct, indirect and inferred datasets. Companies can go about this process effectively by listening to their customers in as many

ways and places as possible. This means going beyond relying solely on surveys and embracing additional methods like multimedia feedback, website feedback, social media, and call centers. Tools that allow companies to capture all of this information in real time are a must.

Organizations that use all of these methods in concert will find richer, more accurate data. More accurate data leads to quality customer intelligence that companies can use to make necessary changes to achieve positive transformation. It also helps to obtain this better, more comprehensive data from employees as well as customers, because employees are a crucial component of the brand experience and thus a valuable source of insights in their own right.



## UNDERSTAND

*Centralize data streams and leverage advanced analytics and behavioral science experts to identify where and how to act—and the anticipated impact.*

It's not enough for organizations to “just” listen to their customers, even if they find ways to listen closely. Companies must also take time to understand who these individuals are so they can better understand what they need/expect. Identifying customers allows brands to prioritize both their gathered information and any actionable intelligence to deliver a more personalized experience.

Brands can deepen their understanding of their customers with a few powerful tools. Key driver analysis and various statistical models can help shed light on what drives customer acquisition, churn, and retention. Predictive analytics and tools that can detect nuanced sentiment are great for learning what customers are searching for and to determine their next likely behavior. Ultimately, all of this enables companies to do a better job of providing for their customers.

The final step of truly understanding customers is combining all of this feedback and analytics with operational and financial metrics. These internal metrics are particularly useful for adding context to a customer's journey. Once companies have that context, they can fully understand who their customers are and how those individuals view the experiences brands provide.

## TRANSFORM

*Create and implement dynamic actions plans, trainings, and policies that facilitate organizational change and promote revenue-generating activities.*

Once organizations have listened to their customers and gained an understanding of who they are and what they need/expect, it's time to take action by making meaningful improvements and/or creating entirely new experiences. How exactly can companies begin taking action after listening to their customers and learning more about them? The first step toward taking any sort of action is sharing those learnings with other stakeholders.

Sharing the proper information with the right people can empower any organization to attain transformative success. Data democratization is key because it allows companies to tap into the collective intelligence and ideas of an entire organization.

Sharing data with stakeholders is also important for another reason—getting their perspective on how to proceed and their commitment to taking action. This operational intelligence can strengthen action plans and lead to both better execution and improved results.

It's key for companies to monitor changes' impact on experiences even as they're being implemented. This means A/B testing new ways of doing things and applying the same listening and understanding methods we discussed above to these new contexts. Closing the loop—addressing individual customer concerns and instilling a company-wide culture dedicated to improvement—is especially important during this process. Effective CX governance will take care of the rest.

## REALIZE

*Evaluate and demonstrate results of experience initiatives including organizational change, improved metrics, and financial impact while determining appropriate next steps.*

As companies are determining and implementing improvements, they should link both actions and outcomes to business and financial metrics as well as organizational and cultural changes.

The best way for companies to monetize changes is to evaluate them within the paradigm of four economic pillars. In other words, companies should always look at monetization through four lenses: customer acquisition, customer retention, cross-sell/upsell, and lowering cost to serve. Companies that utilize this model stand a far greater chance of effectively realizing improvements.

Organizational and cultural change can occur as a result of meaningful improvement, and that's not a bad thing. These things can be difficult to monetize, but they can be powerful indicators that business goals and objectives are being realized.

At the end of the day, though, companies will also have achieved a more meaningful experience for their customers and employees, which will lead to the transformative success that can carry any brand to the top of its market. This type of success can only be attained when brands move beyond metrics and toward listening to the moments that matter most to customers, understanding who they are, using the intelligence gathered to make transformational improvements, and realizing those improvements' impact on the business.

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