

An aerial photograph of a dark asphalt road that curves through a green, grassy hillside. The road has white dashed lines on its edges. The sky is blue with some light clouds.

## “Touch Mapping” Can Be Key To Improving Your Behavior Toward Your Customers

by:  
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Recognizing and understanding a problem is half the battle. So why do so many people think they can actually improve customer experiences without doing that half of the work?

From my experiences both as an executive and at the helm of consulting firms, I know that the foundation for any sustained returns from improvements in customer experiences is a thorough understanding of what it is like to try to do business with you. Do you really—honestly—have a pulse on how you treat different customers?

The best companies began to invest heavily in customer experience mapping in the last two years. These are the companies being benchmarked by our clients for their success with customer initiatives. Customer experience mapping is sometimes referred to as “Touch Mapping” after the tool that captures and manages a full view of your customers’ experiences. These maps are typically delivered in a combination of a database, visual wall charts and customer scenarios. They should always present recommendations for changing the behaviors of your company and its partners that will actually matter to customers. The insights are nothing short of unnerving and exhilarating all at once.

A vice president of marketing on his way into his office at one of the largest automotive companies walks by a 10-foot-long wall chart that he said explains 80 percent of what his company had been confused about for years. It is displayed proudly. Groups will congregate around a section of the map in animated dialogue. This company has achieved phenomenal efficiencies in marketing spend on direct advertising, cooperative marketing with dealers, and online experiences. They have generated unplanned incremental revenue gains from new data and insights on leases, customer life cycles and customer profiles. The VP told me, “The touch map allowed us to finally hear what customers have been telling us for years. We never listened. We never understood before.”

The senior vice president of marketing at one of the world’s largest high technology companies had my firm fill a room with touch maps, customer scenario charts and customer profiles for its key experts and touch point decision-makers at the company from around the world. Our task was to create the vision and platform to drive customer-valued improvements. The results were major adjustments to the following branding and brand personas, employee communications and employee engagement with the company’s products and services.

The activity also led the company to preserve profits because it led to focused behavior changes with the most valuable customers. And it made the business case when the company generated nearly three times the revenue from operations that previously were looked to only for product innovation aimed at growth.

The database populated for these touch maps houses the selected customer, company and partner data required to generate actionable experience insights. Elements mapped can include customer and product life cycles, employee representatives' interactions with your customers, marketing touches (direct and indirect), customer service and support, customer expectations and responses, shopping and sales conversions.

The processes for collecting and using customer data—where it comes into the company and where it is used (or often not used), redundant or even inappropriate—are mapped behind touch-points to customers. These processes include the planning and operational activities of marketing, sales and service. Partner processes often are included, as well, depending on the industry. Insights point to company or partner inefficiencies, opportunities and “dissatisfiers” that once addressed are both most valued by your customers and have attractive returns for your company.



Without getting to customer-touches, there really can not be sustained returns or advantage in CRM or marketing performance. The bottom line is that companies have to change their behavior for customers to perceive a difference that they will value over the competition. And that happens only by generating insight from your customers. The companies utilizing customer experience mapping leverage this tool of the CRM era to find, build the business case and go after superior results.

### Customer Experience Mapping Enables:

- ❖ Incremental Revenue
- ❖ Increased Efficiency
- ❖ Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty
- ❖ Customer Interaction Strategy
- ❖ Sales, Marketing & Service Assessment
- ❖ Disciplined Process Mapping & Design
- ❖ CRM & Marketing Technology Requirements
- ❖ Customer Data Strategy



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Today, everyone is searching for greater returns on the investments they have made in their customer relationship, customer service, sales and marketing technologies. Those investments were uniformly made without the foundational work that grounds, analyzes and generates insights for where value can be created for shareholders. That search will prove fruitless and disappointing without utilizing customer experience mapping tools that bring customer insight clearly to the center of investments.

Shareholders won't see value if customers don't.

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Lane Michel leads Quaero's focus on marketing performance management. He and his team start, accelerate and gain maximum return on investments in marketing and customer strategies that maximize growth in customer value and shareholder returns. Michel has driven thought leadership and speaks on topic areas that include MPM, CRM, Return on CustomerSM and 1to1 Marketing from Peppers & Rogers Group; eCommerce and personalization; and the new role of sales, marketing and service. Before joining Quaero, Michel was senior partner with Peppers & Rogers Group for seven years. Earlier, he worked at Hewlett-Packard for 15 years. His last role was as corporate marketing director. He has an MBA from Santa Clara University and a bachelor of science in high technology management from San Jose State University. Michel resides in Saratoga, California, and can be reached at [lane@quaero.com](mailto:lane@quaero.com) or (408) 366-1468.

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