A Blueprint for Growth

A Blueprint to Transform Customer Understanding into Customer Growth.

The customer is, and always should be, the number one priority for a business.

However, the customer isn't always viewed in this way. Whether looking to please shareholders or blindly chasing KPIs and profit margins, somewhere along the way a number of organisations have lost sight of their most important target.

Perhaps the role of a true focus on customers hasn't been well understood as the key to business growth?

How a brand shapes our expectations – and how a company meets our expectations via their services and employees – has a deep and long-lasting impact on our mood, choices and behaviour. Every day we interact with businesses in the delivery of goods and services. When they deliver well, we create a positive mental record of the experience and a level of trust that prompts us to seek them out again in future transactions. On the flip side, when the experience is poor, our disappointment shapes a memory to avoid them in future – and to warn others to avoid them.

And while branding has traditionally received huge attention and spend, many companies are missing out on the opportunity to control the full customer experience all the way to the end. Many are continuing to provide a basic experience, increasingly being left behind by companies that do understand the benefits of digging deeper into what their customers really value and love.

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Think of a customer value proposition as the benefits delivered to customers, rather than the features of a product or service. For example, booking an Uber late at night provides transport, but its true value and the deeper emotional connection it makes with its customers is by its constant notification and tracking which provides the sense of reassurance and the peace-of-mind that you will get home safely.

Proto has been helping businesses design, enable and scale their customer service experiences for over a decade. Over that time, we have helped pave the way for workplace transformations to create a customer-centred culture and increase lifetime customer value.

Today, more than ever, we are witnessing a major shift in the social, technological and economic landscape where customer attitudes, behaviours and expectations are rapidly changing. Businesses will no longer remain competitive by delivering substandard experiences. Moreover, customers expect more than just good customer service to win their continued loyalty. They expect consistently brilliant experiences, every time. They expect to have their needs anticipated before the void of needing is even apparent.

This evolving landscape provides companies with an exciting opportunity to meet that demand, an opportunity to look ahead and inspire change that shapes the journey a customer goes on with them.

Some observations we have had working across a number of organisations:

▸ There is a shift in customer behaviour and expectations that drive a need for more personal, streamlined and efficient services.

▸ In determining what a more personalised service must look like for a particular business, it must first truly understand and empathise with their customers and the world they operate in, which they can do by developing deeper insights and empathy.

▸ Technological advancements in data analytics are providing invaluable insights into consumer behaviour, trends and ultimately what people value, however, these need to be matched with qualitative data which explains the sometimes seemingly irrational behaviour of customers.

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People can often be resistant to change, and understandably too. Change can be hard. It can disrupt the status quo and create uncertainty around what this change might affect. This rings even more true with large organisations, especially long-established companies with deeply ingrained processes, culture and traditions. The very thought of shifting to a whole new way of operating a business focused around the customer can appear a little overwhelming.

The good news is, it doesn't need to be difficult. Even though there may be challenges along the way, employees can embrace a new vision that clearly shows the benefits for the customer and for themselves.

As we shift to a focus on the customer becoming a more widely acknowledged and valuable approach to driving business growth, it becomes the catalyst for investment in new service initiatives that are long overdue, having been placed on a CX backlog that has struggled to get traction.

It's important for organisations not to see this in a negative light, but instead, as an exciting challenge and opportunity to change the way in which they design, implement and deliver their customers' services and experience.

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Brand is the promise you make, Customer Experience is the promise you keep

We're now in a hyper-competitive, hyper-connected and technology-driven business world which has raised the bar of customer expectations. The demand for more intuitive, personal and efficient experiences, as opposed to just services, is prevalent now more than ever.

However, it takes a special kind of organisation to deliver valued and unique customer experiences today. And to achieve this, businesses will need to look at interactions through the lens of the customer authentically. Organisations will need to challenge their "business as usual" mindset, in some cases re-engineer new processes, and more than likely, change the focus of the company culture.

This is because great customer experiences go hand in hand with the supporting systems and processes organisations have in place, along with their products, design and culture. Crucial to business success is consistently providing experiences that customers value. Every single employee needs to understand the customer vision and how to deliver it to achieve the desired result.

The definition of true customer-centricity for a successful business is that customers are central to every single decision. Organisations only benefit when they structure themselves in a way that inspires and supports the formation and execution of superior customer experience.

Although intentionally designing a great customer experience can be a challenging process for organisations, with the right guidance in Human Centred Design, this is achievable. Ensuring a great customer experience is more science than art. And the process to deliver it on an intentional, repeatable and scalable basis begins with Human Centred Design.

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Identify a compelling customer proposition.

Years of experience has taught us what does and doesn't work when it comes to designing, implementing and scaling the ideal customer experience.

Although a large number of organisations are undergoing a digital transformation, most have realised it's not enough in isolation. They have also come to realise that they can't develop outstanding experiences or shift to true customer-centric culture using technology alone.

Although there are many areas in which an organisation may wish to improve their performance, it's important to begin by looking through the eyes of the customer. Creating empathy with the customer lays the foundation for all that follows. From properly understanding the customer we can then learn how to create more value.

Identifying a compelling value proposition allows businesses to work smarter, not harder. Within the set budget, energy and resources at their disposal, companies learn how to do more with less by delivering great experiences for their customers and themselves alike.

So, it's not just about making the services more efficient, engaging and rewarding for the customer, but also for the business and their employees. It's a two-way street and ultimately, a win-win scenario.

At the core of this business philosophy lies our personal mission statement. As an example, we have structured our business around our mission:

> *"To help organisations both Design Outstanding Customer Experiences and Develop their own Capabilities & Culture."*

To achieve this, we must first reimagine the products, services and experiences that our clients provide, and then through a growth driven-design approach reorganise the processes and culture to deliver, scale and sustain them.

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Our Growth Driven Design approach

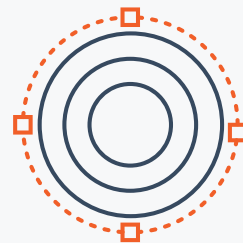Three fundamentals are at the heart of achieving and maintaining this shift.

01
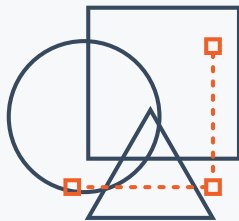
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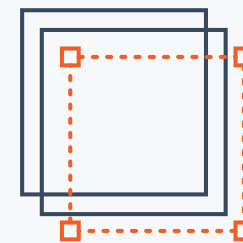
Gain the clarity you need on what challenge to solve

02

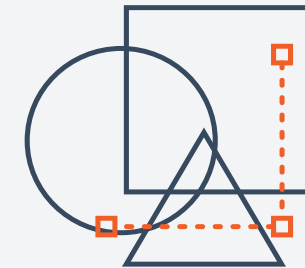**Control**

Know that every decision you make will be the right one

03

Confidence

Possess the confidence needed to execute and grow

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01 / 03

Clarity

Clearly define your biggest obstacle to growing with less effort and costs.

In order for you and your team to be inspired to drive positive change, they need to understand what problem they are solving and why it matters. By using a Structured Customer Understanding methodology you get to really understand both your customer and business needs. In far greater detail than you ever have before, it provides absolute clarity on the value case for bringing about change.

The associated challenges that businesses face:

▸ Having a clearly defined vision of what a typical customer looks like and the wider ecosystem in which they operate.

▸ Imagining what a new experience could look like.

▸ Understanding what questions to ask of the current business model and operations departments.

▸ Inability to identify all problem areas due to lack of fresh eyes/ perspective, or the siloed nature of organisations.

▸ Relying on existing research alone to reimagine a new experience.

▸ How to create a value proposition that is compelling for both the customer and the business.

**The activities and approaches that drive improvements:**

▸ **Define** the vision and strategy for the target experience and the principles of success.

▸ **Discover** what customers value using qualitative design research and draw inspiration from leaders in other sectors.

▸ **Develop** insights to build empathy for and assist you to prioritise what's most important for those you are designing for.

▸ **Design** target journeys and imagine new solutions to realise the desired customer experience.

▸ **Develop** a value case that reassures decision makers about the rationale for investment and change.

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02 / 03

Control

Feel in control of every decision you make, knowing it is the right one, because you've tested it with your staff, your customers and your market.
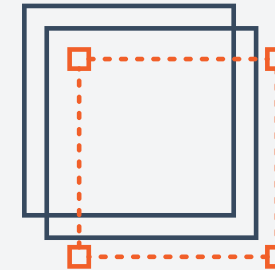
Having control and clear sight of what is required to deliver the target experience is key. What do you and your people need to know and do? How do all the initiatives interrelate to ensure you move from ideas to actions?

Having the answers ensures you can implement the changes required. You understand the roles, requirements, resources and partnerships needed to be established. You know how to design the operational requirements and implementation roadmaps. And you have the confidence that every delivery team understands their role in implementing improvements.

The associated challenges that businesses face:

▸ Encouraging the wider teams to trial new customer-centric approaches over more traditional methods.

▸ Gaining alignment across the broader teams who haven't had initial widespread exposure to customer insights and feedback.

▸ Defining the enablers by department and the roles each department play in the delivery of an improved experience.

▸ Understanding how all elements (people, policy process, etc.) work together to deliver improved outcomes.

▸ Measuring the effectiveness of the new experience both for the customer and the business itself and connecting it back to the business goals.

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03 / 03

Confidence

Create a plan that has the agreement and buy-in of your whole leadership team, and one your people are inspired to deliver.
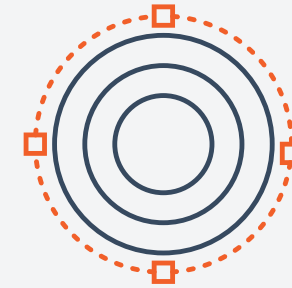
Drive business growth and achieve faster results with less effort through increased commitment and confidence. Once the direction is clear, it's time to take action. Together we create a plan having prioritised, organised and set you and your team up to deliver ensuring your growth opportunities are realised - sooner rather than later.
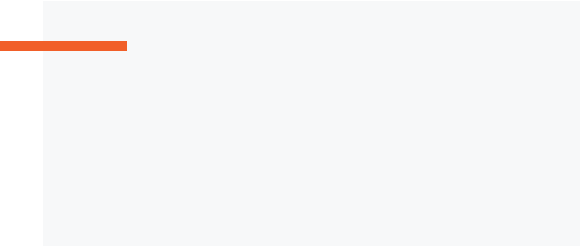
The associated challenges that businesses face:

▸ Designing relevant experiences that addresses the key customer and business challenges uncovered during the initial Design Phase.

▸ How to plan out, strategise and take actionable steps that will realise the vision in weeks and months, not quarters and years.

▸ How to test ideas with customers and determine what will work and will not.

▸ Ensuring that any investment in experience improvement aligns and build the companies brand and customer advocacy.

▸ Quantifying how any investment will add value to not only the customer but the business.

The activities and approaches that drive improvements:

▸ **Engage** stakeholders in co-developing the change plans, roles and responsibilities to realise delivery.

▸ **Trial** training resources and toolkits to prototype the right methods and resources.

▸ **Assess** the CX maturity across the business and identify objectives and areas of opportunity.

▸ **Codify** the end-to end process to integrate ways of working for new and existing employees.

▸ **Scale** the adoption of the right structure and governance to drive growth as a service.

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Moving

When you have a great experience as a customer, not much thought goes into the work behind the scenes that made it so easy and seamless. What isn't immediately obvious is the significant effort that has gone into delivering the experience. Great services and experiences don't happen by accident. They are designed, enabled and scaled with care and precision by teams of people who believe better customer outcomes lead to better business outcomes.

In a world where we now compare our experience to the last app we used, not your nearest competitor, customers demand more efficient, responsive and personal services that are seamlessly delivered across all touchpoints online or in-person.

The organisations who stay abreast of this and adapt their services to suit are the ones who will win the customers business. Those who empathise with their customers and have the courage and ambition to envision new experiences, then the willingness to change their attitude and approach to delivering services, are the ones who will ultimately succeed. Yes, it takes some effort and investment, but once you get it right, you will retain customers for life.

What's more, many organisations who have experienced the benefits of the growth-driven design approach have also realised the benefits that have come from improved internal processes and staff experiences. For organisations who are more advanced, the same CX design approach has been adapted to solve all kinds of challenges businesses face.

For a large number of other organisations, the journey is only just beginning. An increasing number of companies are realising the need for a better relationship with their customers and employees. The most powerful form of marketing is word of mouth, and the best way to instigate your customers selling your virtues is by creating memorable experiences for them to share with their friends and colleagues. In your hands, you have a Blueprint for Change.

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In 2008, Damian Kernahan and Kara Weaving, founders of Proto, identified the growing gap between the services large organisations promised and what customers received. Thus, Proto was born out of a small serviced office in the northern suburbs of Sydney to close that gap and was the first Service and Experience Design consultancy launched in Australia.

Proto uncover key customer problems and deep and robust insights to help leaders create change, transforming their culture and services into outstanding experiences that both employees and customer love and to provide pragmatic, actionable and robust solutions that they help implement into organisations with minimal disruption.

Over the years, they increased their emphasis on helping their clients increase their customer experience and Human Centred Design capability across teams to continually meet the growing needs of customers and sustain business growth. They've helped over 200 major brands and organisations clarify, gain confidence and have conviction for commercially viable business solutions that are feasible, measurable and deliver 20X+ ROI.

If you'd like to find out how they've helped businesses like yours, and how they can help you too, **get in touch to find a time to have a chat.**

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