How to improve the experience for NSW Government customers

A CX project can improve your customers' satisfaction, perception of value versus effort and overall connection with the NSW Government brand.

Customer Experience (CX) is the sum of all the experiences a customer has before, during and after their interactions with your organisation. This includes navigating the website, talking to customer service, reading an information leaflet and more. For NSW Government agencies, the six Customer Commitments represent known drivers of customer satisfaction and a promise to customers about what they can expect when receiving government services. This guide outlines the seven steps of a CX project, which can be used to deliver on these commitments.

1. Pre-work: Engage stakeholders to explore a customer challenge

Start with an initial 'How Might We' statement to set boundaries for exploration. At this point, don't narrow your focus too much, or hold on to your assumptions too tightly, as the next phase may unearth a more significant customer challenge. Create a stakeholder map to identity the teams you need to engage (e.g., frontline staff, comms, IT, partner organisations).

Example: How might we make it easier for first time applicants of the Working With Children Check (WWCC) to confidently complete both online and offline steps?

2. Discover: Understand your customers and their experience

Before you can improve an experience, you need to understand the current state. Review feedback and complaints data from existing channels (e.g., Google reviews and customer surveys). Conduct interviews with customers to unearth additional barriers and opportunities with your service or product.

How do I select participants to interview? It's important to design for every citizen of NSW. Aim for a mix of genders, age, income status, disabilities and location (i.e., metro, regional and remote).

Don't forget to consider 'edge cases' – those who have the most complicated path. If you design for edge cases, those in the middle of the spectrum will be satisfied, but the same cannot be said for the reverse.

How many interviews do I conduct? Six to 12 interviews will generally be enough, as long as a range of customer backgrounds are represented. One hour face-to-face interviews are ideal, but if location is an issue, phone or video interviews can work too.

What questions do I ask? Use the Five A's* to explore the end-to-end customer journey:

1. Attract: How are customers attracted to and informed of the service or product?
2. Accept: How does the customer enter into dealings with your organisation?
3. Adopt: How does the customer interact at each stage of the process?
4. Amplify: How do you leave the customer feeling at the end of the process?
5. Advance: How do you follow up with customers and extend the current relationship?

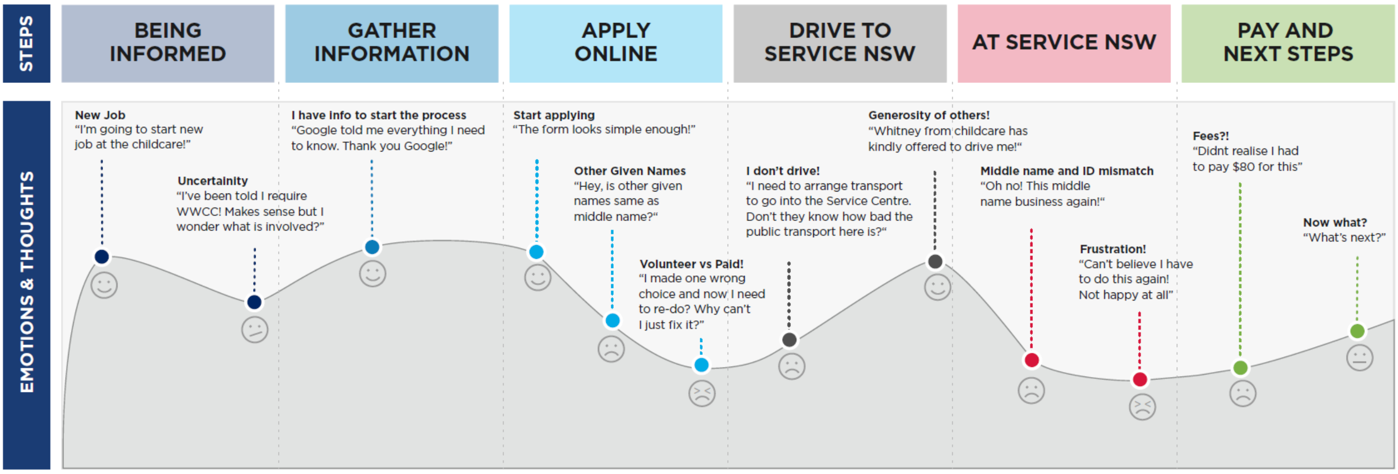
Example: How did you know you needed a WWCC for your job? How did you go about the application? Where did you look for information? Did you know it was an online and face-to-face application? How did you travel to the service centre? What were your thoughts about the fees? How did you pay?

* Qualtrics. (2020). How to design a customer experience strategy. Retrieved from: https://www.qualtrics.com/au/experience-management/customer/design-customer-experience-strategy/?rid=ip&prevsite=en&newsite=au&geo=AU&geomatch=au

NSW GOVERNMENT

How to improve customer experience

Figure 1. Customer journey map for a first time WWCC applicant



3. Define: Visualise customer stories

Convert your insights into a customer journey map (Figure 1). There are many ways to do this – use this template to get started **bit.ly/customer-journey-canvas**

4. Ideate: Brainstorm potential solutions and prioritise

Before you design solutions, revisit your 'How Might We' statement: Is it still relevant? Does it need tweaking? Once you've refined the customer challenge, present your customer journey map to the wider team and key stakeholders for group ideation on potential solutions.

5. Prototype: Create a minimum viable product

After you have prioritised potential solutions, create a prototype – a tangible form of a conceptual or theoretical idea. Your prototype can be quick and rough – it could be a paper wireframe or a mocked-up communication. The point is to avoid launching a brilliant idea which doesn't work in practice.

6. Test and iterate: Get the design right through agile processes

Now it's time to get feedback on your prototype from real customers. Know when to 'pivot' or adapt your design based on evidence. For ways to collect and validate evidence, see **bit.ly/problem-solvers-toolkit**

How many people do I test my prototype with? Aim to test your prototype with five customers. If you hear the same feedback from at least three of them, make the change and then test it again with another five customers. Two rounds of prototyping are usually enough to feel confident in your design.

What do I look for when testing my prototype? Ask customers to vocalise their experience as they go through the process so you can capture their feelings: What did they misunderstand? What were their frustrations? What worked well?

7. Scale: Launch your solution and keep monitoring

Releasing a product or service is not the end of your work. For continuous improvement, draw on customer and employee surveys (your employees are your first customer), along with operational data at each touchpoint, to assess changes in customer satisfaction and business performance.

How is customer experience measured?

There isn't a single way to measure customer experience. You need to understand your customers' needs to develop relevant metrics such as customer effort score, proportion of incomplete transactions or customer satisfaction score. Remember that even if your organisation executes well on individual touchpoint interactions, the overall experience can still disappoint so it's important to optimise customer journeys, not just touchpoints.

Need more info?
nsw.gov.au/customer-experience-unit