

The customer-obsessed marketing strategy playbook

Your template to create a successful marketing strategy that delights at every opportunity

We'll show you how to start actively listening to your customers so you can win more of their business



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Introduction and Foreword

Businesses that actively listen to their customers, experience 1.6 times more growth than those that don't.¹

If that's the kind of claim that grabs your attention, you're in the right place. We're going to show you how you can start grabbing the attention of your customers, clients, and other key stakeholders by actively listening to them. Perhaps more importantly, we'll give you some of the tools you need to develop a customer-focussed strategy that will help you transform your marketing, win more business, and increase longer-term loyalty.

We want this guide to be both informative and actionable. So, you'll find carefully selected models and templates that will show you how you can start making real progress – all with the aim of helping you outpace your competitors. The guide will explain how your business can start putting structures and processes in place that will make listening to customers feel like second nature. It will also show you how the insights you glean from customer feedback can be made actionable, and how becoming truly customer centric can power your business forward.

There's no end to what your customers could teach you. But only if you're paying attention. Otherwise, you're missing out on invaluable insights that could help drive improvements across your whole business. Plus, if you're not paying attention to what your customers are saying, you can be sure that someone else is.

Whether this guide helps you instil more customer centricity into your business and marketing activities, or helps you reimagine some of your existing strategies, we're confident you will find something of value.

Kerry Leighton-Bailey
Chief Product & Marketing Officer



¹ <https://www.gartner.com/en/digital-markets/insights/customer-centric-marketing>

Becoming truly customer centric

How confident are you that each and every customer interaction could earn your business 5-stars?

Are you a *top-down* or a *bottom-up* kind of business where your strategy and planning are concerned? The former tends to set goals based on what it wants to sell, then builds plans to find enough customers. The latter seeks to understand what customers want, then adapts its offer accordingly. There are pros and cons for both approaches and it's likely that your business will use a combination of each at different stages of its development.

What really sets the bottom-up approach apart is the drive and determination to keep learning from the customer. That's something every business could do more of. Even one of the biggest global brands, Amazon, still puts that kind of customer centricity high on its list of priorities.²

When you stop thinking solely of your business goals and start asking what will make a real difference to the customer, great things can happen.

This might mean embracing some potentially uncomfortable changes – like being prepared to listen to critical (or even downright negative) feedback.

Frameworks and models

For this guide, we've selected a framework known as SOSTAC. The name is based on six marketing fundamentals, [defined by PR Smith Marketing in the 1990s](#): situation, objectives, strategy, tactics, action and control. Think of this as the structure of your strategy, which will outline everything you need to do in order to deliver on the needs of your customers and the needs of your business.

We'll summarise the main points for you here before taking you through each in more detail.

² <https://www.aboutamazon.com/news/workplace/an-insider-look-at-amazons-culture-and-processes>

1

Situation: where are you now?

According to PR Smith, the Situation Analysis section is the biggest part of your plan by far. The more time and energy you invest here, the better your outcomes are likely to be. You'll be researching your customers, competitors, your own business and much more.

If you're producing an actual plan to present or share, it might be a good idea to put most of your reference material in an appendix at the end, so you can get to the good stuff quickly.

2

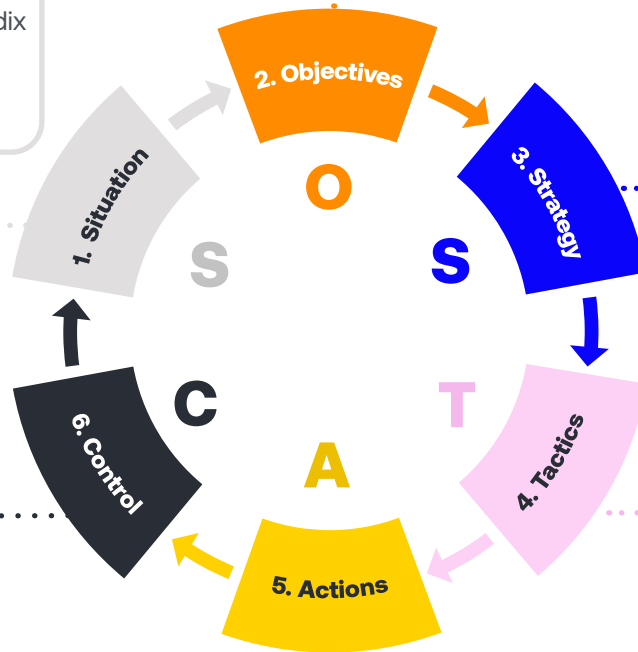
Objectives: where do you want to be?

Think about the overarching mission and vision of the organisation you work for. Consider the more granular measures of success too – like sales figures, margins, cost per sale and so on. You're going to include them all in here.

3

Strategy: how do you get there?

This is arguably the most vital part of your plan. It needs to be to-the-point and it needs to be right. Think of this as your direction of travel – set off wrong and you'll be heading toward the wrong destination.



6

Control – how will you measure your progress?

Just because something can be measured, doesn't mean it's a key indicator of your success. Focus on measuring only what needs to be improved – because that's fundamentally where your KPIs are concerned.

You have to know what matters most and put the right structures in place to measure your progress.

5

Action – how will you bring your tactics to life?

If your execution isn't up to scratch all your hard work could come to nothing. It won't matter how great the initial idea was if you don't get it in front of the right people at the right time and in the right manner. Think passion! Think excellence! Think about the difference it makes when everyone gets behind what you're trying to achieve.

4

Tactics: what are the steps you'll take?

Tactics are the individual actions you need to take to execute the strategy and deliver the objective. Your tactics will contain a mix of activities that are specific to your needs. You are likely to include some of the following: your online presence, your pricing structures, your promotional activities, and customer service delivery.



1. Situation

If you've ever tried reading a map, you'll know how important it is to understand where you are before you can plan your next move.

Situation Analysis is how you develop reliable insights into your market, customers and competitors. It should also be used to evaluate your organisational resilience and preparedness. Investing time here will pay dividends later. Cutting corners on your Situation Analysis, no matter how tempting it is to push ahead, is a false economy.

You won't just be looking at the threats and opportunities outside your organisation, you'll be assessing whether your business is capable of delivering what has been asked of it.

Familiar tools like a SWOT analysis will help you gather some of the important information you need, especially when getting started. Going further will help you squeeze every last drop of potential value from your Situation Analysis. For example, you could consider carrying out a TOWS analysis.³

Although superficially similar to a SWOT, the TOWS approach encourages you to connect the dots between strength and opportunity, and between weaknesses and threats. By doing that, you'll end up with a more comprehensive view of your current state and the next steps you need to take.

The templates in our guide will take you through the most important questions and considerations. You may find that not everything feels relevant to your business – that's okay, you can mix and match elements to find a balance that works for you. But we encourage you to think carefully before rejecting anything out of hand and to be wary of sticking only to those things that feel safe and comfortable.

³ <https://www.mindtools.com/augstul/the-tows-matrix>

Making a start with your Situation Analysis

This might feel like an enormous undertaking. That's why we're providing higher-level summaries of the things you need to know with more detailed breakdowns of how to make progress. This table captures the key elements of the kind of thorough analysis you need to conduct.

Summary table

Internal analysis		Customer analysis		Competitor analysis		Market analysis	
Mission, vision and goals	<i>Can you articulate them?</i>	Segment your target customers	<i>Who are they? Be detailed and be specific.</i>	Who are they?	<i>Including those that aren't like-for-like competitors.</i>	Overall strength	<i>Growing, shrinking or static? And why?</i>
Workforce and skills	<i>Right people, right skills, right capabilities.</i>	Behaviour patterns	<i>What are they saying and doing?</i>	What are they known for?	<i>Fame? Fortune? What have they got in their favour?</i>	Who else is here?	<i>The big hitters and the upstarts.</i>
Marketing objectives	<i>Are these properly aligned with the business needs?</i>	Are you meeting their needs effectively?	<i>Are you helping to overcome their pain points or challenges?</i>	Share of voice considerations	<i>Are they getting rave reviews?</i>	PEST	<i>Political, economic, social and technological influences.</i>
Channels and presence	<i>Do you show the best version of yourself in all the right places?</i>	Opportunities	<i>Where are the quick wins that will offer the greatest return on your marketing investments?</i>	In-market behaviour	<i>What are they saying and doing?</i>	Supply chains	<i>How unbreakable are they?</i>

Exercises you can try today

1. Evaluate your own organisation and marketing

How effective is your marketing function at amplifying the vision, purpose, or goals of the wider business? Here are two routes to gaining some insights. These exercises are best repeated at set intervals (monthly or quarterly) so you can start to identify trends.

Keep in mind:

What's going well and why? What needs improvement? Can you learn from the things you are excelling at and use that as a way to make the necessary improvements in other areas?

Try this:

A: Either on your own or in a small group, take stock of your business objectives, mission and values, and how effectively they're being relayed by your marketing.

The key thing you need to remember with this exercise is that you need to dig deep and think critically. Make sure you look at everything from the customers' perspective. Are you meeting their needs? Are you helping solve a problem? Are you driving the business forward?

If you identify activities that are not actively serving those joint purposes, they could be taking valuable time and resources away from your efforts to be a customer-obsessed business. Placing customers at the centre of your business and creating a culture that consistently delivers superior value, will help you to gain a competitive advantage, foster customer loyalty, and out perform your rivals.

Using a table like the one below, copy your chosen goal or attribute and talk about whether it's a good fit. Also, look for evidence of these goals and attributes being quoted, echoed, or discussed in customer reviews.

	Stated by the business	Your appraisal/review	Customer evidence
Mission			
Values			
Goals			

B: You wouldn't expect a restaurant to guess what you want to eat. So, don't waste time trying to guess what your customers' needs are. Carry out a critical assessment of your marketing effectiveness, based on the 4 Cs of marketing developed by Bob Lauterborn.⁴ After all, you can only deliver value to your customers when you truly understand what value looks like through their eyes.

		Your strengths	Could do better
Customer Wants and needs	Identify customers' wants and needs, and whether your product/ service meets them. Will it meet future needs of customers?		
Cost To satisfy	What are they paying? How price-sensitive are they? Do they feel they're getting value for money? What is the cost to satisfy their needs?		
Convenience To buy	Review your current purchase channels (online/offline) and critically assess the effectiveness of them in the purchase process. Is there conflict? Are there changes in consumers' preferred channels?		
Communication A dialogue, not just advertising	Assess the effectiveness of channel selection and suitability for customers. Are you providing spaces for your customers to talk to you? Are you listening and acting accordingly?		

⁴ <https://stevens-tate.com/articles/introducing-the-4c-marketing-model-and-why-you-should-follow-it/>

2. Customer journey analysis

No two customer journeys are identical. Some buyers are already engaged, active, and informed. They want the fastest, easiest route to placing that all-important order. Remember: if they know what they want, your role is to focus on Physical Availability – i.e., you need to help them get it.

Others may be seeking more support in the form of product details and human interaction.

Physical Availability

Physical Availability is an idea developed by Byron Sharp in his book [How Brands Grow](#). It makes an important point, which may sound both simple and obvious: you can't buy something if it isn't available. Even if your product is available, no one can buy it if they can't find it.

In a retail store, that might mean an end-of-aisle position, or eye-level on a shelf. In a B2B setting, it might mean ensuring the awareness stage of your buyer journey leads to a frictionless route through to additional, relevant information.

Keep in mind:

By analysing the journey your customers take, you'll start to understand the relative strengths and weaknesses in your current customer journey. How easy are you making things for buyers? What are their thoughts, feelings, and needs? Are you meeting those needs at every stage? What's stopping them from purchasing?

We've got lots of additional resources about journey mapping on the [Feefo website](#), to help you dig really deep into this key activity. That includes identifying all the elements you need to record when detailing your customer journey map.⁵

Try this:

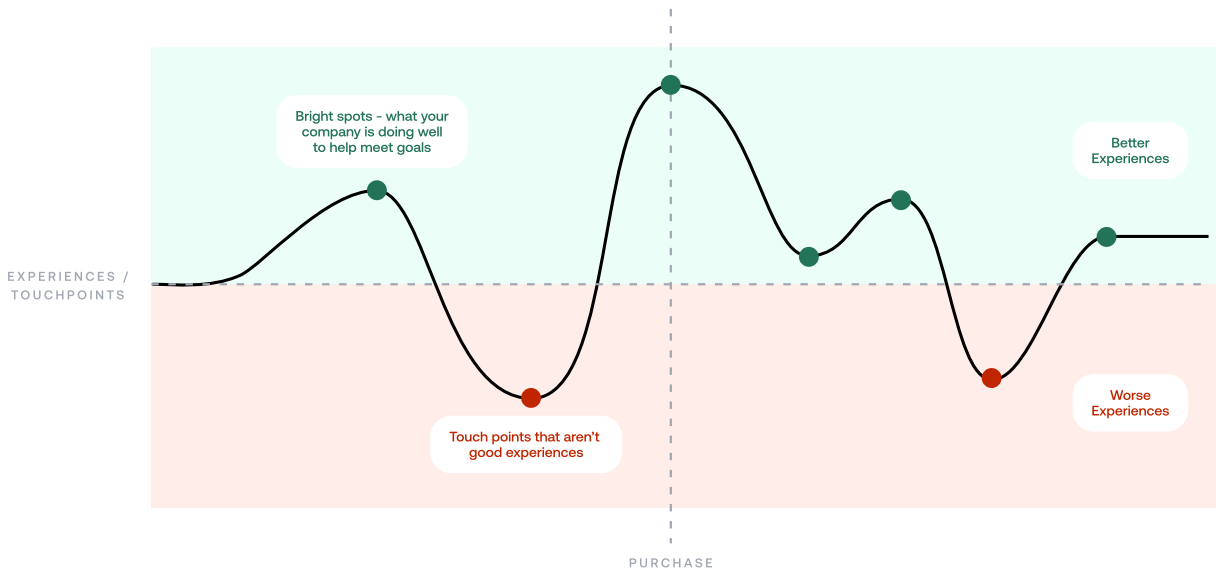
Start by drawing an X-Y axis.

Your vertical axis should be Quality of Customer Experience, from excellent at the top all the way down to awful at the bottom.

Your horizontal axis acts as a timeline that maps the chronology of the customer journey.

⁵ <https://www.feefo.com/uk/business/resources/customer-acquisition/customer-journey-mapping-guide>

The mid-point on that horizontal line indicates when a purchase takes place. So, everything to the left of the point is *pre-purchase* and everything to the right of it is *post-purchase*.



Pre-purchase: Typically, this is the responsibility of your marketing activity – raising awareness, generating interest and desire, and moving customers to the point of purchase.

At its heart, this part of the journey is all about making promises to the customer to hook them and keep them hooked.

Post-purchase: Customer touchpoints here are all about making good on the promises made in the pre-purchase phase. That could be anything from simple automated processes like sending an email with the order confirmation, through to delivery.

Above the horizontal line, you'll record any bright spots you find: the things you're doing well.

Below it, you'll record those touchpoints that aren't good experiences for your customers.



Feefo Success Tip

Once you have identified all your customer touchpoints, cross-reference them with your customer reviews and feedback scores. That will help you understand which of those touchpoints are working well and which are not.

No reviews to analyse? No problem! If you're a business with a higher volume of customers, run a feedback survey. If you have a smaller number of customers and larger deal-sizes, speak with a recently converted customer and find out what they think.

3. Feedback assessments

What are customers talking about when they're commenting on or reviewing your business and your competitors? These are useful benchmarking questions to help you understand the right next steps to make, and to measure your progress over time.

Keep in mind:

Customer preferences can be both relative and subjective. Don't allow yourself to get too comfortable with the things that are going well – there's always room for improvement. Also, don't dismiss criticism and don't take it personally – if a customer has a legitimate reason to point out failings in your service, it's your job to listen and then fix things. That's what lies at the heart of being a customer centric business.

Try this:

A: Visit three competitor websites and create word clouds for each based on the following:

- Customer reviews
- The About Us section of their website
- Their corporate mission and vision statement

B: Now, do the same for your business. This exercise will help you to understand:

- The prevalence of customer reviews: how many are there, how easy are they to find, and how legitimate they appear to be – this information will reveal itself as you work through it.
- An approximate sentiment assessment of customer feedback – and how that maps onto your business and your competitors: who's hot and who's not?
- The extent to which your business and your key competitors are saying similar or different things – even in a commoditised market, you should be looking to stand out from the crowd.

4. Competitor Analysis

No single business is uniformly and consistently excellent at everything it does. That's not how the world works. Even those competitors you sometimes find yourself envying or admiring have their own struggles.

Keep in mind:

Even when you're convinced you've done as much as you can to deliver the optimal customer experience, things can still go awry. It is inevitable that some of your competitors will be doing some things better than you – that's great because that's where you can learn.

Try this:

Here's a quick and easy way to check out your competitors, by analysing some of their key attributes and how you stack up against them. Give marks out of 10 based on the information from your customer research or interviews, existing reviews and feedback to ensure objectivity.

When you're recording your observations, think about where your competitors are doing better than you and use that as a way to highlight opportunities for improvements you can make.

	Your business	Competitor 1	Competitor 2	Competitor 3	Competitor 4
Attribute 1	/10	/10	/10	/10	/10
Attribute 2	/10	/10	/10	/10	/10
Attribute 3	/10	/10	/10	/10	/10
Attribute 4	/10	/10	/10	/10	/10
Observations:					



Feefo Success Tip

Remember: stick to *relevant* attributes. We recommend running customer interviews and surveys, or analysing your customer reviews. You need to understand what really matters to your customers when they are at or approaching the point of purchase. Use that insight to benchmark yourself against your competition. There is little point analysing and measuring things that have a negligible effect on customer behaviour.



2. Objectives

In the previous section we referred to the importance of knowing where you are when attempting to read a map. You can think of objectives as the next logical piece of information – knowing where you want to get to.

Perhaps your overall business goal (as decided by the board, CEO or MD) is to increase profits by a given percentage. Think of your objectives as the steps you need to increase the profitability of sales, which might also involve improving customer retention and growing the lifetime value of your customers. To be effective, your marketing objectives must align with the overarching corporate goals. That way, not only will you be more likely to help the business succeed, but everyone can see how the work they're doing contributes to the success of the business too.

Keep it real

Whether you're new to setting objectives or an old hand, the **SMART** framework can help you stay focused on delivering solid but realistic results.

Specific

The more specific your objective is, the more likely you are to achieve it. Think about what needs to be accomplished, who will be on the team (plus their roles and responsibilities) and how you can break things into smaller steps.

Measurable

You might want an increase in customer satisfaction, for example. But how will you actually measure it? Can you even measure it reliably at all? And if you can, what level of increase represents success? You will also need an

accurate assessment of your current rates of customer satisfaction to act as a benchmark against which to measure your progress.

Achievable

Don't become a hostage to fortune and don't let your ambition be the thing that trips you up. Ensure you have the time, resources and support needed to be successful. Review your objectives to make them more achievable with given skills, resources, competencies at your disposal. Or build a business case for more support.

Relevant

Sometimes the R in SMART is used to reference Realistic. But we think that's something you will have considered when making sure your objective is Achievable. Here, we're talking about being Relevant. Thinking about relevance helps you to be certain you are putting your energies into the right thing. Keeping people busy is not enough – make sure your actions are furthering the business goals.

Timely

Some goals will be short-term. Others will be long-term. The key thing to remember is that there needs to be a term involved – a period of time during which progress can be measured and an end point where overall success can be evaluated.



Feefo Success Tip

Set your sights on the right objective

Example: upselling

Let's imagine a scenario where the board has decided the big priority is to increase profits. The question is, what are you going to do to support that?

Your first move is to define the right marketing objective to deliver the outcome they need.

There aren't many levers to pull where improving margins is concerned. You need to minimise costs and maximise revenues, at its simplest. Getting customers to pay more is a great way for marketing functions to demonstrate clear and effective business value. But how do you turn that into an achievable objective?

Let's assume you have decided that as it's more cost-effective to upsell to existing customers than to acquire new ones, you are going to deliver some campaigns aimed at existing customers. We'll also assume that this is in addition to your ongoing customer acquisition work, not instead of it.

A core part of your imagined plan is getting existing customers to upgrade to a product that offers them greater value. So, highlighting the value in upgrading to premium levels of product or service is something else you need to add to your list.

From here, you can create an objective that says: Improve customer retention rates by x% and thereby reduce the cost-per-sale by y%.

Or one that says: Reposition our top three/five/ten products as offering greater value when customers subscribe to the premium version and convert x% of existing customers to the premium level.

Your template for setting objectives

The RACE model, which was created by Dr Dave Chaffey, is a great framework for developing your marketing objectives.⁶ Not only will it help you create marketing objectives that work for your business, it will also help you keep the customer journey front of mind.



⁶ <https://www.davechaffey.com/digital-marketing-glossary/race-marketing-planning-model/>

Corporate Goal:	
Insert one of your business goals here as a guide	
Marketing Objectives:	
Reach	<p>Build awareness and visibility of your brand, products and services on other websites and in offline media: i.e., growing your reach.</p> <p>Your aim is to create multiple customer/prospect interactions using a combination of paid, owned and earned media touchpoints, plus search, social media, content and email marketing.</p>
Act	<p>This is all about encouraging customers/prospects to take action: i.e., the next step on the customer journey.</p> <p>You want them to subscribe to a newsletter, podcast, or video series. It could also mean sharing interesting content with their networks or downloading some of your product information.</p>
Convert	<p>In many ways, this is what a lot of marketing boils down to: i.e., the goal of converting a prospect into a customer.</p> <p>Whether online or offline, direct or via a partner, getting the conversion to work is vital. It can also be the point when the slightest difficulty or friction surrounding the transaction ruins the sale.</p>
Engage	<p>You need to build long-term customer relationships: i.e., keep them coming back for more.</p> <p>A long-term engagement plan will develop loyalty and transform a first-time buyer into a repeat customer. Your social channels, website content and regular customer communications will all play a part here.</p>



3. Strategy

You've identified a need to transition your business to be more value-based and customer-obsessed. That's why you're reading this eBook, after all.

There are some very good reasons for this kind of transition. For example, a great customer experience brings rewards. According to a PwC survey of 15,000 people from 12 countries:

"The payoffs for valued, great experiences are tangible: up to a 16% price premium on products and services, plus increased loyalty. In return, among U.S. consumers, there's a sharp increase in willingness to give up personal data: 63% say they'd share more information with a company that offers a great experience."⁷

What's being described here is a genuine Value Exchange in action and it demonstrates exactly why you need to become the kind of organisation that puts the customer first. There is an opportunity here to drive growth and differentiate yourself by building a customer-obsessed business.

But how do you achieve this?

The McKinsey Decision Making Journey Framework helps you instil customer centricity in everything you do.

This model recognises that the buying journey is rarely linear; most customers are not flipped from passive to active by a single action. From holidays to HR software systems, from car insurance to cloud computing, buyers are carrying out their own research, and the number of interactions they will have with your business is going to increase.

But – and this is crucial – although you shouldn't expect every interaction to trigger a sale, the customer does expect them all to be high quality and valuable.

Get this right and the customer stays with you while researching and evaluating, right through to purchase and beyond. Plus, they are likely to spend more with you if they feel that you understand them and that it's worth their while getting to know you.

Value Exchange

A principle of mutual benefit. A way of expressing that every party gets something from a relationship. What each gets might be different, but is of value to them.

⁷ <https://www.pwc.com/us/en/advisory-services/publications/consumer-intelligence-series/pwc-consumer-intelligence-series-customer-experience.pdf>

The following framework will help you to create your own bespoke loyalty loop.



The Loyalty Loop

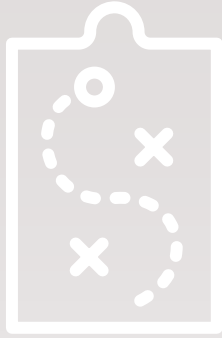
Start by listing out the four main steps of the journey for your customers: consideration, evaluation, purchase, post-purchase. This framework will help you think about how they relate to your strategy and what you need to do maximise your impact.

Phase	What it means	Strategy application
Consideration	Consumer considers an initial set of brands based on perceptions.	Develop a strong brand reputation.
Evaluation	This is the point in the journey where the customer might be searching for reviews, or seeking advice from friends/family.	Build positive online sentiment and improve the customer journey.
Purchase	Sale takes place.	Improve value proposition and customer experience.
Post-purchase	Consumer may check what others have said about the product and may leave a review.	Encourage ongoing customer advocacy.

When you're working with this framework, think about what your strategy needs to achieve to help the business on its way to becoming a truly customer-obsessed organisation. For example:

- Develop a strong brand reputation.
- Build positive online sentiment and improve the customer journey.
- Improve value proposition and customer experience.
- Encourage ongoing customer advocacy.

Now on to Tactics, where we'll outline just how you can do this.



4. Tactics

Tactics are the individual actions you will take in pursuit of your strategy.

Let's stick with the idea that your strategy is to always put the customer first, in order to help the business with its goal of attracting more of the kind of customers who will spend more money.

If you want to become a customer centric business, one thing you can be sure of is that you need listen to your customers. Your objective is to become obsessed with understanding what customers like and what they don't like.

You can – and should – go further than that. For example, you need to make sure your employees' actions are based on meeting customers' needs and exceeding their expectations. A great place to start is defining the actions you need to take to ensure you are in lockstep with what your customers are saying.

This table is the ideal framework to help you develop tactics that sync with being a customer centric business. It relates everything back to the four key phases of the customer journey, helping you stay on track to deliver results.

Phase	Strategy application	Your potential actions and tactics
Consideration	Develop a strong brand reputation.	<p>Build awareness</p> <p>Drive presence and strengthen your brand perception</p> <p>Define your channels – be where your customers expect to find you.</p> <p>Use the right mix of promotional tools – SEO, display banners, social presence.</p> <p>Get the message right – tailor what you need to say so that it lands well with your target audience.</p>
Evaluation	Build positive online sentiment and improve the customer journey.	<p>Word of mouth rules</p> <p>Social proof is a powerful weapon in your armoury. People are ad-weary and ad-wary, everyone is used to being marketed at. Most of us want to know if people like us have had a positive experience with a business. Word of mouth is still one of the most powerful influences on purchasing patterns. In short, people trust the words of shoppers like them.</p> <p>Display previous customers' experiences</p> <p>What are your customers saying about buying from you?</p> <p>Great reviews are a valuable source of positive PR – so make sure you are helping spread the word.</p> <p>The importance of housekeeping</p> <p>Everything on your website needs to be up to date and working. Dead links and incorrect information are like kryptonite to customer confidence.</p>
Purchase	Improve value proposition and customer experience.	<p>What it all boils down to</p> <p>At this stage, you can't let anything get in the way of the customer making that all important purchase. Don't let anything put them off.</p> <p>You need to be as easy to buy from as you possibly can.</p> <p>The marketer's role is to remove points of friction. Here, you need to define how you will fulfil your customers' want to buy.</p> <p>Make sure your promotions and ads click through to pages that contain relevant information: discount codes need to work and emails with offers must have working links.</p> <p>Try not to promote out of sale items – we know it's great to sell out and it can happen suddenly, but anything that you can do to avoid disappointing a customer is worth doing.</p>
Post-purchase	Encourage ongoing customer advocacy.	<p>Retention and advocacy activities to build relationships and encourage repeat sales</p> <p>For customers, the best engagement strategies are the ones they don't even notice. They feel like they're listened to and valued.</p> <p>For businesses, the best engagement strategies are the ones that mean repeat sales.</p> <p>Now, picture the effect of blending those two.</p> <p>Don't just collect feedback, demonstrate that you've listened and acted.</p> <p>Give customers a reason to want to hear more about you, to follow your social presence, to download your content, and to feel part of your inner circle.</p>



5. Action

The pace of change and the degree of pressure facing businesses shows no sign of relenting. Staying ahead of the pack means keeping up with your customers – here’s how you can really start to deliver on everything we’ve discussed above!

Elsewhere in this guide, we refer to the importance of keeping your promises to the customer and how promises can affect your customer journey. Keeping your promises matters here as well. Customer centricity isn’t something you can pay lip-service to. You need to do more than just listen – **you need to actively listen.**

That calls for frameworks that capture what your customers are saying day in, day out and loop their feedback straight to the business. You have to do more than offer feedback forms or social media pages for people to air their views.

This needs to be everyone’s priority – from the frontline to the boardroom.

Prioritise:

- Making customer feedback an integral part of your business strategy
 - How will you capture it and act on it at the highest level?
- Making your customers’ voices heard
 - Do you have the in-house technical skills, or should you partner with a specialist?

- The need to trust the data and insights you capture
 - How will you make sure feedback is coming from genuine customers?

Next, create a step-by-step plan outlining the actions needed to bring your tactics to life. This may involve assigning responsibilities to specific team members, setting timelines, and allocating resources. With that may come the need for training and communication. Customer centricity only works if it exists throughout an organisation. The CEO needs to believe in it. The most junior person in the business needs to understand how they relate to it.

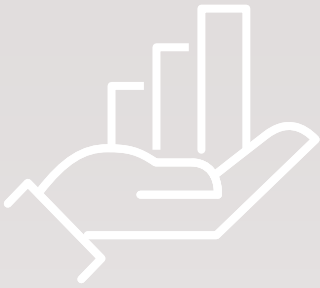
You may need to run workshops for your internal teams to explain how you are connecting the strategic vision for the business with listening to customers. That will help everyone appreciate how customer feedback can create a better, more enjoyable, and more successful working environment.

It helps to know where your priorities lie, of course. This action/priority matrix will help you to do just that.

- Start by listing out the tasks you need to undertake to build a customer feedback framework.
- Go back to your list of potential actions and tactics from the previous section and add those to your list.
- Give each a score for how easy they are to deploy and how much value they could deliver.
- Number each axis 1-to-10 and work out where each task sits on your matrix.
- Then plot your tasks so that you get a quick, visual guide to potential quick wins, high value priorities and maybe even spot the actions you can deprioritise for now.

Action priority matrix





6. Control

Choosing metrics

When it comes to having a positive effect on your business, some metrics are easier to work with than others. Footfall to a physical store and social media engagement, for example, clearly have a role to play in the life of multichannel retailers. But likes and shares are not purchases, in much the same way that people leaving a store empty-handed aren't actually customers.

It can be more helpful to think about things like conversion rate, cost per lead, or the cost to acquire net new customers. The key is to understand what information you need to know. Then go looking for it.

There's an old story about a king whose city was overrun with rats. The king issued a decree that every citizen should be rewarded for killing rats – all they needed to do was show up at the castle with dead rodents and they'd be paid one coin per rat.

Weeks later, the king had paid out a small fortune, yet the rats were still a problem.

The reason? Wily citizens were breeding captive rats and cashing in on the king's misdirected efforts.

The moral of the story is that you should be careful your actions are not incentivising unhelpful behaviour. Nowhere is this more likely than when it comes to deciding what to measure.

Here is a list of questions and criteria to keep in mind when planning which metrics to use so that your coffers remain full, and rats are the last thing on your mind:

- **Suitability** – Does it give the information you need?
- **Acceptability** – To marketing areas and shareholders
- **Feasibility** – Can it be actioned and communicated?
- **Resources** – Are you able to do it? Is it practical?
- **Actionable** – Can it be influenced by your actions?
- **Focussed** – Are you measuring the most important and critical areas?

Metrics and KPI template:

Level	Description	Measure
Strategic	Related to overall performance of the organisation	Revenue, brand perception, shareholder value, market share
Tactical	Short-term measures to assess and improve areas	Customer satisfaction, loyalty rates
Operational	Related to individual marketing activity undertaken	Review response rates, website conversion rate, unique visits, footfall

Creating a routine feedback loop

Regular monitoring and evaluation are vital. Reviews offer valuable insight into what's working and what isn't. Remember – if you're not paying attention to your customers, you can be certain someone else will be.

Define the key areas of customer feedback you need to evaluate and develop a regular schedule for monitoring your effectiveness.

Is the volume of reviews falling? Is the balance of sentiment where you need it to be? If you identify a change, investigate it immediately – the root cause of a drop in reviews might not always be obvious.

7. Delight your customers at every opportunity

Customer feedback can and should become the bedrock of your product development, sales, marketing and so much more. Done well, the right reviews strategy helps you put the customer first, uncover valuable insights and outperform your competitors.

Collecting customer reviews can look like an exercise in winning as many five-star plaudits as possible. If that's all you do, you're not only missing the point, you're missing out on some of the most important advice that's freely available to you – direct customer feedback. And if that feedback challenges your views, forces you to think and act differently, to make improvements you hadn't even considered – it might just be at its most valuable.

Keep asking yourself how much you're doing to ensure each of those touchpoints is an example of excellent customer experience. Because when each step is being executed exceptionally, your customers will feel valued.

And when they feel it, they're going to want to tell everyone about it.



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