Customer Obsession
Turning ambition into action
Having a healthy customer obsession matters.

There is a lot of talk about customer obsession, and for good reason.

Both Deloitte and PwC have found that CEOs and CMOs have the customer as their number one priority.

Organisations that focus on the customer are up to 60% more profitable than those that don’t.

And yet, for all the talk about ‘customer’, our suspicion was that large, complex organisations were struggling to take action.

So we decided to ask them.
Seventy-five marketing professionals from large organisations contributed to our research that looked to answer the question ‘what gets in the way of becoming more customer obsessed?’
It seems that despite all the noise, all the transformation projects and all the well intentioned initiatives, both customers and practitioners are just not feeling the change.

So rather than add to the theory of ‘customer-centricity’ (we hate that term) we decided to bring together the results of our research with some practical tips from those at the coalface of customer obsession.

The following pages are filled with ideas for you to bring into your teams and organisation. If nothing else we hope it starts some interesting conversations and helps you begin to foster a healthy customer obsession.
What stops you becoming more customer obsessed? It turns out, quite a lot.

**Systems**
- Short-termism
- No burning platform
- Technology
- Governance
- Information

**Data**
- Central
- Bureaucracy
- Responsibility
- Historical

**Culture**
- Intelligence

**Insight**
- Analytics
- Ownership
- Legacy systems

**Silos**
- Business model
Limited customer understanding is a major challenge for the organisations we surveyed.

- **38%** Do not conduct regular customer research.
- **32%** Have no common definition of customers.
- **30%** Don’t know why their customers continue to use them.

- **60%** Have no way of mapping customer journeys.
Process, structure and technology challenges limit organisations’ customer capabilities.

60% Don’t allow access to customer insight.

37% Occasionally make investment decisions using customer insight.

64% Believe their structure rarely benefits their customers.

50% Don’t have the systems and processes to support great customer experiences.
People and culture challenges further compound the journey towards customer obsession.

48% Don’t know who is responsible for the customer experience.

46% Sometimes collaborate on customer challenges.

64% Are rarely rewarded for improving the customer experience.

51% Believe they are not consistent customer communicators.
It was clear from our research that people felt powerless. Being customer obsessed is seen as too hard, too big a challenge, requires expensive IT solutions or is someone else’s problem. We don’t agree. We believe there are some practical solutions that can be put in place – right now – that can make a difference to your customers, and to your organisation.
We have brought together a number of practical tips to address the bigger issues from our research.

1. Customer understanding
2. Customer infrastructure
3. Customer culture
1 Practical tips to develop customer understanding

Customer journey mapping
Have you walked in the shoes of your customers? From before they knew your organisation existed through to being a loyal advocate of the business? Work out what they need to know, feel and do at each stage of that journey with you and take actions based on those needs.

Communications audit
What is the total communications landscape your customers experience over a period of time? Make it visual and put it all up on a wall. What does it say about your organisation? Does it tell a consistent story? Where are the gaps/overlaps/ine consistencies? Where can you improve?

Insight audit
What do you know about your customers? What would you love to know? Who in your organisation might hold the insight you need? What are the key pieces of insight that would enable you and your team to be better at what you do? Be clear about what is just noise and what really matters.
Connect with customer teams
Customer facing teams are a fountain of knowledge and a brilliant reality check. Spend time with them – sit on the phones, go out on sales calls. Find out what they know and experience the challenges they see customers face every day.

Invite your customers in
Invite customers into your business. Ask what matters to them, what they enjoy about working with you and where they would like to see you improve. This doesn’t need to be a formal or complex programme. A small customer panel, workshop, or informal customer presentation can deliver unique insights.

Common approach to segmentation
Do you understand how your customers are similar and how they are different? Do you understand how they behave and what motivates them? If not, then it is time to find out. Segmentation can be done simply (i.e. on commercial value) or far more complex (pen portraits based on behaviours and attitudes). The importance is to develop an approach that works for your organisation and then use this approach consistently across the business.
2 Practical tips to create customer infrastructure

Process mapping
Minimise silo challenges and internal politics by using the language of ‘process’. Understand and document the processes you are responsible for and how these processes interact with other parts of the business. Use these process maps to help build the case for change where it is needed.

Measure and report
Why are you doing what you are doing? Why does it matter? What is the impact it will have on your customers, and on your business? Start simple and find ways to understand the impact you are having. Share the results with others and begin to understand how the results impact on your customer, other teams and wider business objectives.
**Wash up sessions**
What did you learn from a particular activity? Not just the external impact but how did you work together as a team? What process improvements would you recommend if you had to do it again? How can what you learn help others in your organisation? How could you improve customer outcomes?

**Capture usable customer data**
What customer data do you capture? What for? Often organisations capture data madly without the ability, time or resources to analyse and use it. Ask ‘what will this tell us?’ and ‘how can we take action from this?’ as ways of assessing what is important.

**Process to translate data into insight**
Is your customer data providing you with clear and actionable insights? If not, why not? What needs to be put in place to do this? A cross-functional insight team can work well to distil and share the key insights people need to understand and act upon. One short and compelling version of the truth is more powerful than a 100 page research deck.

**Invest appropriately**
Invest where it matters. If you aren’t clear what you are trying to achieve, the impact it will have on your customers and on your business, or how you will measure its success – then question it.
3 Practical tips for nurturing a customer obsessed culture

Share customer stories
Storytelling works. People remember stories – good and bad. How can you tell your customer stories in a way that will be memorable to people both inside and outside your organisation? Words, pictures, pen portraits, moving image – find a way that ensures customer stories become part of your organisation’s history.

Work exchange
Job swaps help to build empathy and understanding in the business and break down silos. Get curious! Which teams have you always wondered ‘what do they do?’ Find out. A pair of fresh eyes can also bring ideas and better ways of working together on customer challenges.
Reward on customer success
Recognise when individuals and teams do something great for customers. Consistent public and private acknowledgement of a job well done for customers will help to reinforce a customer obsessed culture.

Customer focused onboarding
Capitalise on the enthusiasm and momentum that new starters bring to the business. Immerse them in your customer’s world. Get them to meet customers and customer facing teams from day one. They can act as powerful customer champions provided they have the knowledge and remit to do so.

Customer champion network
Bring together great brains (and passion) from different parts of the business to obsess about customer challenges and to develop solutions. Ensure this network has a senior sponsor. ‘Customer’ doesn’t need to be their day job – but they do need to be passionate about it and represent their interests at a senior level.
Our best advice? Start.

Don’t wait for the next transformation project. The impact of small changes adds up over time. Try, measure, learn and share.
And we can help...

The Customer Engagement team at RY exists to help our clients get closer to their customers.

We offer:

• Benchmarking
• Communications and insight audits
• Customer segmentation
• Customer journey mapping
• Customer obsession strategy and roadmap
• Creative campaign ideas
• Advertising (online and offline)
• Effective B2B communications and collateral
• Events and interactive exhibitions

If you aren’t sure where to start, we can offer a free assessment of where your organisation ranks against our research.

We love a chat (and we make a decent cup of tea!).
We’re RY, a creative consultancy.

We create **standout** communications that make a real impact.

In a noisy and complex world, we’re here to help you get noticed, understood, trusted and valued by those who matter most to you. Ultimately, we’ll help you build rewarding relationships and a resilient reputation.

How? By combining strategic insight with creative flair, we get to the heart of the matter, and touch those you need to reach. We connect you with real people.

And we help you tell one story, clearly and simply, across all you say and do.

We’ve helped multinationals and start-ups, private companies, as well as public bodies and even whole countries. We’ve been doing it for over 30 years now, determined to standout ourselves as the most inspirational agency to work with and for.

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