



Unleashing the Power of a Journey Strategy

NPS Prism®
BAIN & COMPANY

How to Successfully Execute a Journey Strategy for an Exceptional Customer Experience

Customer loyalty can make or break business growth in any industry — which is why offering outstanding customer service is the main target for businesses aiming to succeed in the long term. Every interaction a customer has with your brand matters, from the initial touchpoint to the final resolution. That's where a well-executed customer journey strategy comes into play — a proactive approach designed to capitalize on each individual touchpoint, transforming everyday experiences into moments of delight for your customers.



In this guide, we'll cover how to create a journey strategy. By exploring the concept, significance, and real-life examples of a journey strategy, we'll provide you with the knowledge and insights to initiate impactful transformations.

What Is a Journey Strategy and Why Is It Important?

A journey (or episode) is an interaction an individual has with a brand, product, or service. Take the auto industry, for example.

A journey could be:

- Completing a routine service
- Buying a new car
- Signing up for the app

A journey within the grocery industry might be:

- Checking out
- Asking for help
- Making a return

Each journey is categorized by frequency and emotiveness. A highly emotive episode holds more emotion with the customer, making them more likely to remember it. Typically, emotive episodes have an outsized impact on NPS, even when they happen less frequently.



A “routine auto service” has medium-high incidence and medium-high emotiveness, meaning it occurs rather frequently and can be an emotional experience. A “fraud alert,” on the other hand, has a low incidence but very high emotiveness. The former is important because it’s a common occurrence, so if it doesn’t delight the customer, it’s likely to turn them into a detractor over a series of repeat unenjoyable experiences. The latter is important because getting a fraud alert can be highly stressful and emotional. How an experience goes often affects whether a customer wants to stay loyal to your company.



Journey strategies are crucial because they allow organizations to better understand customer experiences and **align their CX efforts accordingly**. It's essential to look at the experience just as the customer would, from beginning to end. Doing so lets you consider the individual drivers and touchpoints within that journey.

The “in store checkout” journey for the grocery industry is highly emotive. **Data shows that customers** don't care as much about wait times or technology as they do about the friendliness of employees. Trader Joe's doesn't have new tech like self-checkout, but it **has one of the highest scores** in the “in store checkout” journey. **Why?** Because they make the experience efficient, down to earth, and positive for their shoppers, leveraging their kind and helpful staff members.

Investing in tech over people doesn't necessarily mean a higher score. It truly depends on the company and brand. So teams must be on board in their customer journey analysis when it comes to rebuilding the journey and choosing the right strategies (i.e., investing in human vs. technology) to support each journey.



In the case of a “fraud alert” journey, the customer may touch many channels, including digital (an informative text), the call center (calling in to address the issue), and the bank's app (getting one's money back).

Drivers within that journey might be:

- *How accessible was digital communication?*
- *How friendly was the call center representative?*
- *How quickly was the issue resolved?*
- *How long did it take to get your money back?*
- *How transparent was the process?*

Many companies only consider overall relationship NPS (rNPS), but this approach doesn't reveal specific areas where they can improve the customer experience.

Journey strategies bridge this gap by offering a targeted approach to improving touchpoints and delivering exceptional experiences throughout the customer journey.

Uniting Your Organization for Journey Strategy Success

Implementing a refreshed journey strategy presents a valuable opportunity, especially for larger organizations. One key aspect is aligning the entire organization on the importance of specific journeys and the rationale behind their prioritization.

By involving operations, technology, in-store teams, and other stakeholders in the journey analysis right from the start, organizations can create a cross-functional working relationship that empowers the CX team to drive positive change.

This collaborative approach ensures effective execution and paves the way for significant improvements in customer experience and NPS scores.



How Should a Company Decide Which Journey(s) to Prioritize?



“The most important thing is understanding what episodes or journeys matter the most in the relationship of the customer to the brand. Through NPS Prism’s industry emotiveness and firm emotiveness analysis, we reveal which journeys are the biggest opportunities.”

— Angie Han, Head of NPS Prism® U.S. Airlines, Auto, and Grocery Products

For each journey, it’s essential to ask:

1

Is it promotor creating?

2

Is it detractor creating?

3

Is it a routine episode?

4

Is it a moment of truth?

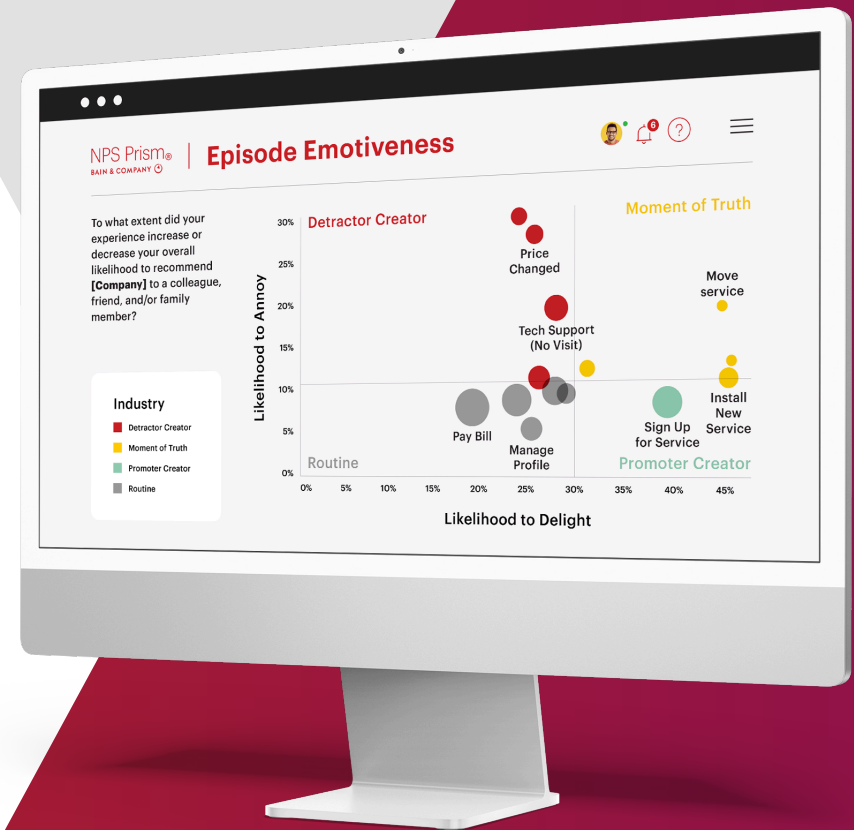
A promoter creating journey is an opportunity to delight and create loyalty. If these journeys go right, customers are likely to become promoters at the relationship level.

A detractor creating journey is an emotive moment that holds enough weight to potentially drive away customers. If these journeys go wrong (even one time), customers are likely to become detractors at the relationship level.

A routine episode happens the most frequently. It's less emotive, so it probably won't upset the customer as much as other journeys. You won't likely have any big wins here either. However, because the interaction is so frequent, it's crucial to get that interaction to the "fine" point. You can't necessarily delight a customer here, but you CAN make them annoyed.

A moment of truth can go either way, so if that journey goes wrong, customers are likely to become detractors. **If it goes right**, they're likely to become promoters.

Ideally, you want to identify the most emotional and frequent journeys because they typically have the most impact on the most customers. To do this, think about your strategic vision, where the company wants to go, and what the customer wants to do.



"If everything is important then nothing is important. NPS Prism® shows you very quickly where your gaps are so you can start from a place of saying 'let's focus on these three things.'"

— Anna Kremetz, Head of NPS Prism® U.S. Financial Service Products

Ask yourself three questions to pinpoint your highest-priority journeys:

1 What kind of company do you want to be?

If you're a digital bank like Chime, you want to focus on your digital customer experience strategy, minimizing downtime and offering an intuitive banking app for convenient account access. But if you're a wealth management company that is known for having friendly experts on the phone, you want to ensure you align your focus on where your strengths are — in your people.

Similarly, in the grocery industry, your strategy may depend on your brand positioning and customer preferences. For instance, if you're like Sam's Club, you might invest more in technologies like scan and go to make shopping more efficient and expedient for your customers. However, if your brand is more like Trader Joe's or HEB, where there's a high emphasis on the friendliness and helpfulness of employees, your strategy might lean towards investing more in your staff to make the shopping experience more enjoyable for your customers.

2 How far into the journey work are you?

If your company is lagging in all customer experience journeys, it's important to focus on the basics. Start with the journeys that occur frequently (high incidence) but with little emotion — like paying a bill or general customer support. Optimizing the journeys that affect the majority of your customers will have a large-scale impact for your company.

3 What are your resources and what do you want to prioritize?

A payments player like AMEX already has their basics down, so they can focus more on customer journey touchpoints, like rewards. You don't need to fix every journey at once. Based on your first two answers surrounding company goals and journey work to date, you can start to form a priority list of which journeys to prioritize first.



Journey Strategies Transformed: 3 Case Studies

1 Global Auto Manufacturer

2 Big Box Retailer

3 Credit Card Provider



CASE STUDY #1

Global Auto Manufacturer

Opportunity: A multinational auto manufacturer recognized the growing importance of CX in the automotive industry. They subscribed to NPS Prism® to identify their most impactful journeys. They shortlisted the top 10 journeys through comprehensive journey analysis and focused on enhancing the “completion service” journey because it's highly emotive with a medium-high incidence. Next, they focused on the “app” journey.

Solution: This auto manufacturer worked with NPS Prism® to improve their customer satisfaction. They analyzed key elements within two major areas:

1. The Completion Service Journey:

- Ensuring time expectations were being met
- Being transparent about the price and what's included
- Returning the car in excellent condition to the customer

Their goal wasn't just to meet the basic standards but also to go beyond by delighting customers.

2. The App Journey:

- Data showed that a leading OEM saw considerable improvements in their app experience starting in 2022, which led to a significant NPS boost.
- Inspired by this success, the auto manufacturer focused on enhancing the UI/UX of their own app, adopting proven strategies from industry leaders.

Results: By implementing these targeted improvements, the company witnessed a significant transformation in both journeys. Their brand's app used to rank in the middle of the peer set but moved up to 2nd place.



CASE STUDY #2

Big Box Retailer

Opportunity: A leading U.S. retailer aimed to optimize the “buy online, pick up in store (BOPIS)” journey, turning it into a promoter-creating experience. Originally, this retailer was hyper-focused on getting their waiting period to five minutes or less. Still, NPS Prism® data showed that customers don’t mind waiting until the time hits ten minutes.

Solution: The retailer used NPS insights to make meaningful changes. Here are the key steps they took:

- Enhanced employee friendliness
- Changed their KPI and the ten-minute threshold, relieving pressure on employees
- Provided clear signage, making shopping more convenient for customers
- Streamlined the pickup process by making it quicker and smoother

Results: The retailer successfully transformed the journey by focusing on these specific customer journey stages, resulting in going from the middle of the pack for “BOPIS” to ranking in the top five.



CASE STUDY #3

Credit Card Provider

Opportunity: A U.S. credit card company sought to improve its credit card journeys, particularly in areas where it lagged behind competitors. The company scored low on basic journeys like “paying a bill,” “renewing transactions,” and “replacing a lost card.” When it came to paying a bill, for example, people didn’t understand how much they owed because they were given a current balance, and not a total balance. Plus, the company had a lot of cobranded cards which weren’t all visible on the website.

Solution: Utilizing NPS Prism®, here are the key steps the company took to understand and improve the experience for their customers:

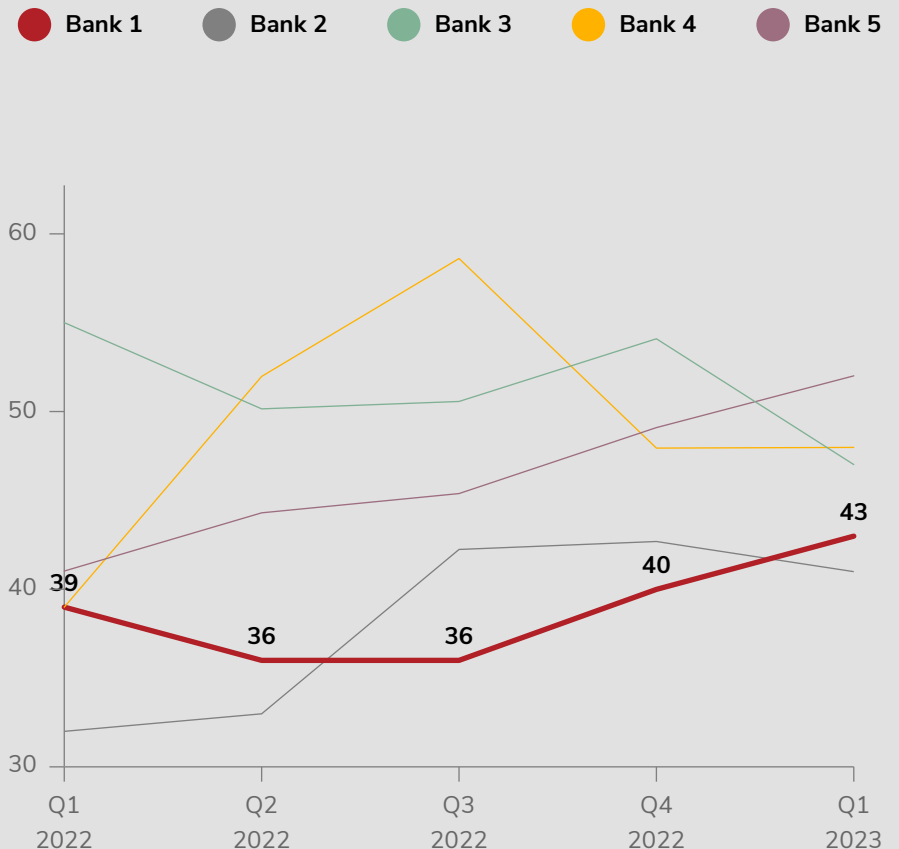
- Identified importance of basic interactions
- Tested the experience’s key drivers
- Addressed confusion over bill payments
- Improved visibility of cobranded cards
- Created a combined website to see all accounts in one place

Results: The credit card company experienced notable advancements in episode NPS and rNPS by addressing the basics and improving key customer experience journeys. These improvements had a positive impact on customer sentiment and brand loyalty by enhancing transparency, accessibility, and reducing confusion regarding cobranded cards.

**Bank 1 Has Seen Consistent Improvement,
in Q1 Passed Bank 2**

Journey NPS, Make a Credit Card Payment

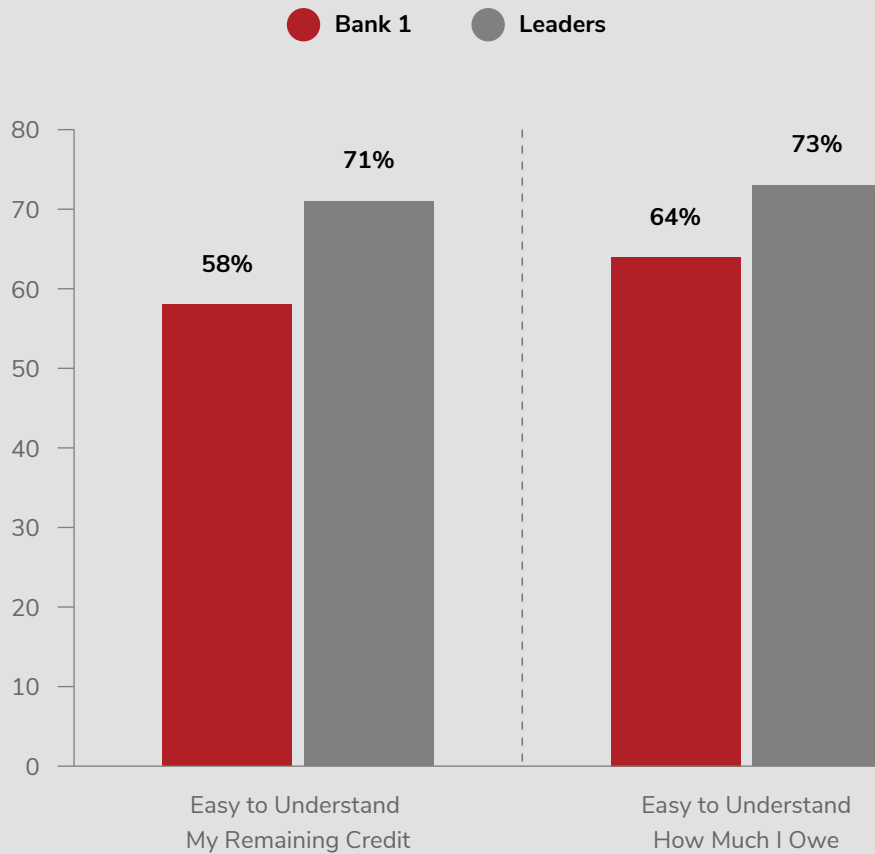
Rolling 2 Quarter View



Opportunity for Bank 1: Provide Additional Clarity on What is Owed/Remaining Credit

% of Respondents that Strongly Agree with Following Statements (Directional)

Q1 2023 (*NEW QUESTIONS IN Q1 2023)



While many companies tend to look at overall rNPS, a more actionable analysis starts at the journey level.



Make Journey Strategies Your Competitive Advantage

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Implementing journey strategies is crucial for organizations aiming to deliver outstanding customer experiences and foster loyalty. By closely examining individual journeys, companies can gain a deeper understanding of customer experience and focus on the most significant touchpoints. Utilizing tools like NPS Prism® offers valuable insights into journey emotiveness, enabling organizations to align their efforts effectively.

By continuously measuring performance, organizations can fine-tune their strategies and drive ongoing improvements in episode NPS, ultimately leading to enhanced overall NPS and customer loyalty.

Ready to identify which customer journey touchpoints generate the most impact so that you can improve your overall NPS score and drive business growth?

Reach out to the NPS Prism® team today for data-backed insights to take your company to the next level.

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