



The Ultimate Customer Experience

Creating Lasting Member Relationships

Club^{OS}

Table of Contents

- What is Customer Experience 3
- Advantages of the Ultimate Customer Experience..... 4
- The Risk of Poor Customer Experience 5
- Mapping the Customer Journey..... 6
- Leverage Customer Feedback 7
- Differentiator #1: Technology 8
- Differentiator #2: Your Team 9
- Contact Us..... 10

What is Customer Experience?

In fitness — like all business — there are a lot of different aspects you have to keep a sharp eye on. Team productivity, profitability, overhead costs, business visibility, just to name a few. One thing that may not be on your list, but that can make a huge impact on your fitness center, is the customer experience.

What exactly is customer experience? Is it your customer service? Your member engagement? The services that you provide members, or the way you interact with prospects? As you've probably guessed, it's all of the above.

Customer Experience: The intimate, long-term relationship a business builds with a customer across every stage of the customer journey.



The New Business Battleground:

Forbes reports that as of 2018 “89% of companies compete primarily on the basis of customer experience – up from just 36% in 2010.”

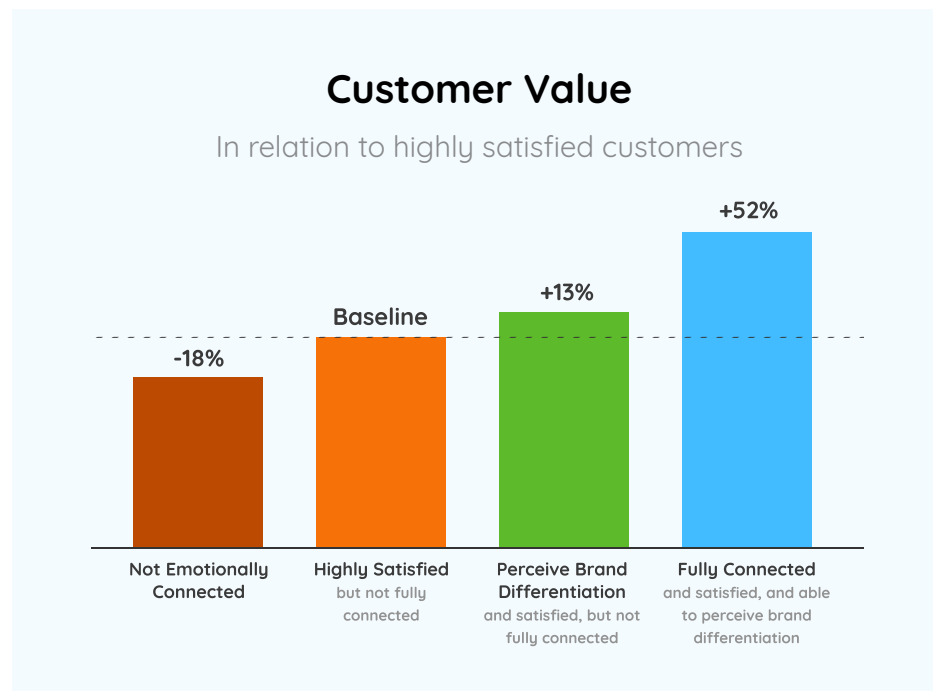
If “intimate” seems like an overblown term for a business relationship, remember that the heart of a strong customer experience is creating a connection that goes beyond a business transaction. The stronger the connection between a customer and their preferred business, the more benefits that business receives.

The importance of customer experience only continues to grow as the fitness industry becomes more competitive. In a crowded market, the ultimate customer experience is the differentiator that your fitness center needs. This e-book will explore how customer experience can provide a competitive advantage, the risks involved, and show you how to begin revamping your perceived customer experience.

Advantages of the Ultimate Customer Experience

If you had to pinpoint the biggest advantage to improving your customer experience, what would it be? A simple answer might be converting dissatisfied customers into satisfied customers, right? Every business wants to satisfy its customers through the services and products they provide. However, the [Harvard Business Review](#) published a study on the impact of connecting with customers on an emotional level and found the potential benefits go well beyond simply satisfying customers.

The study mapped an “emotional connection pathway”, and tracked customers emotional connection levels from “not emotionally connected” to “fully connected”. The study’s baseline were customers rated as “highly satisfied”. This enabled the study to track the ongoing value increase as customers deepened their emotional connection beyond initial satisfaction with the company. Incredibly, they found customers rated as “fully connected” were 52% more valuable to businesses than customers rated as “highly satisfied”.



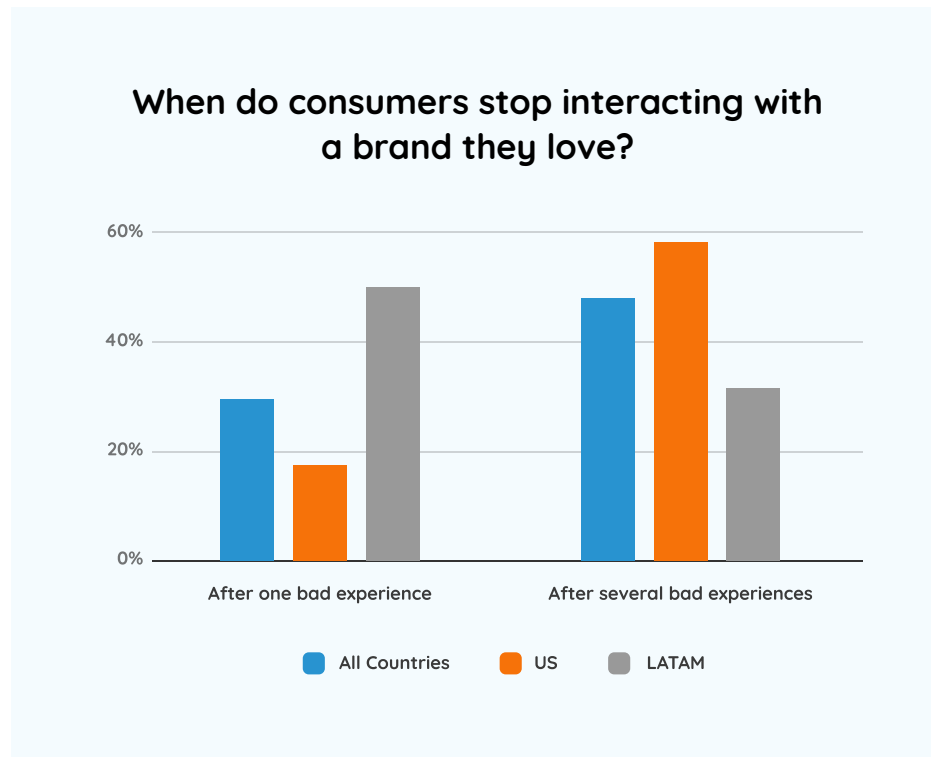
Why are fully connected customers more valuable? Because [86% of consumers](#) say they are willing to pay more for a great customer experience. More simply, customer experience drives revenue growth. Not to mention, when customers are fully connected and trust a brand, they’re more likely to recommend it to their friends and family. As we all know, peer-to-peer referrals are an invaluable resource for fitness centers due to the high-quality of the prospects they produce.

The Risk of Poor Customer Experience

How forgiving are customers? Even the most meticulously managed companies can deliver bad experiences, products, and interactions from time to time. But cultivating a customer experience that delivers a consistent and positive experience is even more important than you may think.

A [Pricewaterhousecoopers survey](#) of consumers found that 59% of U.S. customers will walk away from a brand after several bad experiences even if they love that company or product. To make matters worse, 17% of U.S. customers will abandon a brand after just one bad experience.

The recent controversy surrounding Soulcycle and Equinox highlights the power of great customer experience and the responsibility that comes with it. These brands connected with members on a fitness, emotional, and even spiritual level. Through this, they enjoyed premium prices and fierce customer loyalty. However, when the news broke that the brands' major investor supported political ideals in conflict with their customer base, that connection was strained. [The Atlantic](#) reported that Soulcycle saw a 12.8% drop in class sign-ups in the 18 days following the scandal in comparison to the 18 days leading up to it.



Mapping the Customer Journey

To build the ultimate customer experience, you have to visualize the processes your customers go through to accomplish each task. To understand every touchpoint, pain point, and decision your customers encounter, create a customer journey map.

Customer Journey Map: A visual representation of the steps your prospects or members must complete in order to achieve a specific goal.

Customer journey maps put you into your customers' shoes. Use this information to craft the smoothest possible workflows in order to create an exceptional customer experience. In fitness, you can map a variety of processes like the prospect's buying journey, members' journey to purchasing personal training, or the decision-making process members take when considering resigning their membership contract.

There are five steps to creating a customer journey map:

- **Set Goals:** Understand what you're striving to achieve. What has the map taught you? What processes have you perfected? Who has benefited?
- **Create Customer Personas:** Understand what customer type each map is benefiting by creating personas. Get started with our [free persona templates](#).
- **Map Touchpoints:** Touchpoints are all the ways a prospect or member interacts with your club, either in person or online. This step enables you to identify repetition or unnecessary friction within the mapped process.
- **Take the Journey:** Work through your map from the viewpoint of your customer. Identify the pain points that cause you to disengage from achieving the desired goal.
- **Make Changes:** Implement your analysis into tangible changes. No matter how big or small the changes, they will make a positive impact on your customer experience.



Leverage Customer Feedback

Another strategy to improve your customer experience is by going straight to the source, your customers. Collecting customer feedback is a proven strategy to boost retention levels and lower the overall costs to keep paying members. Best of all, customer feedback gives your members a voice and can de-escalate potentially explosive situations before they boil over.

Harnessing customer feedback to improve customer experience has three stages:

- 1. Collection:** Compile feedback through a variety of methods.
 - A. NPS Surveys** - NPS or net promoter score is a single question survey that asks customers to rate how likely they are to recommend the business to a friend on a scale of 0-10. NPS enables companies to gauge customer loyalty in a consistent manner over time. For more info on NPS, [watch this free webinar hosted by Listen360](#).
 - B. Social Listening** - Compiling feedback from customer reviews of your company on social media via comments, messages, and blog posts.
 - C. Customer Interviews** - Interviewing “ideal customers” from the demographics you serve to identify their mentality, preferences, and potential pain points they’ve identified that you haven’t.
- 2. Analysis:** Examine responses to uncover commonalities and customer expectations. This requires feedback collection methods that provide measurable responses you can compare over time. In particular, NPS surveys provide metrics that can illuminate customer trends in satisfaction.
- 3. Implementation:** Act on the insights you gain from the feedback. You should be able to implement improvements to your team’s in-person interactions, your website, products, or services. Because each change is tied directly to customer research, your customer experience should improve.



Boost Your Sales Rates:
“Collecting customer feedback can increase upselling and cross-selling success rates by [15% to 20%](#).”

Differentiator #1: Technology

Gathering data via customer journey maps and customer feedback is only half the battle in creating the ultimate customer experience. You have two major assets at your disposal to help differentiate your fitness center's customer experience from that of your competitors: the technology you use and the team you've assembled. Let's look at the first, technology.

We live in a technologically advanced world, and you can't expect to cultivate a world-class customer experience if you're still managing leads via a spreadsheet or following up with members when you have spare time. You'll be behind your competitors, plain and simple.

CRM software impacts customer experience in 3 key ways:

- 1. Brand Consistency:** CRM software gives you control over brand voice via email and text message templates. Set on-brand messaging that staff can use when reaching out to prospects and members as well as templates for automated touchpoints. Plus, this functionality is scalable for multi-location clubs, keeping customer experience consistent at every location.
- 2. Unified Prospecting:** CRM software unifies your prospecting across every channel, i.e. social media, website, and in-person. This ensures every prospect receives a response and every channel is covered consistently.
- 3. Personalizing the Experience:** CRM software enables you to automate important milestones for members like birthdays or one-year anniversaries as well as implement helpful appointment reminders and alerts when training services are running low.



The Omni-Channel Experience: Companies investing in providing multiple channels for customers to interact with their brand has jumped from [20% to 80%](#) in the last 10 years.

Differentiator #2: Your Team

The biggest differentiator for your fitness center is the people who run it. Your team is the most valuable asset you have. From coffee shops to fast-food chains, a staff that goes the extra mile — remembering your name, your order, or small details from your previous conversation — is the difference between a customer who occasionally stops by and the loyal member who visits your club every day.

Bring your team in line with your vision for customer experience in two ways:

1. Automate Touchpoints: The misconception about automation is that it will make business less human. In fact, as technology improves automation can bring more human interaction into the fitness space. How? By automating simple tasks like appointment reminders, quick email follow-ups, or organizing lead funnels, your staff can knock out this work quicker and spend more time on person-to-person interactions with your prospects and members. This keeps your front desk from becoming a “dead zone” where staff are so consumed by repetitive work that guests walking through the front door are not greeted or immediately helped.

2. Coach to the Journey: For your customer experience to work, your team has to buy into the vision. Once you’ve compiled your customer feedback and your customer journey maps, share your findings with your staff. Then train your staff to deliver the renewed journey you want your customers to have. You can’t expect changes to happen overnight. It takes consistent coaching by you and your management team to create a fitness center that fosters the experience your prospects and members expect and deserve.



Importance of Being Human:
59% of all consumers feel companies have lost touch with the human element of the customer experience.

Conclusion

Did you know, [80% of CEOs](#) believe their company provides exceptional customer experience but only 8% of customers agree? Why? Because the ultimate customer experience is hard to deliver. Equip your fitness center with the software tools it needs to give your prospects and members an experience they'll be raving about to their friends and family.

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