

BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE:

How CIOs Can Leverage Journey Mapping for Smarter Digital Transformation

APRIL 2025

*How Journey Mapping Helps
Organizations Stay Ahead of
Shifting Consumer Expectations*

two|roads

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Digital transformation isn't just about technology—it's about creating seamless experiences that deliver business value.

Discover best practices to help your organization stay ahead.

Understanding the Modern Consumer	02
Boosting Customer Experience in Complex Industries	04
The Impact of Consumer Journey Maps	07
Two Roads' Framework to Success	08
Consumer Journey Mapping: A Case Study	10
Authors	12



Understanding the Modern Consumer

96 percent of consumers sometimes or always read customer reviews before buying, according to a recent report from Brightlocal.



Many of today's consumers grew up immersed in technology. They've grown accustomed to making purchases online and on mobile apps. They expect their shopping experience to provide those options seamlessly, to keep up with their behaviors and preferences, and they're surprised to learn when an industry or business has yet to evolve.

So, to boost profits and reputation, businesses must deeply understand what modern customers want. The truth is that a seamless, connected, technologically sound shopping experience has gained equal footing with price and product.

People are now accustomed to multiple methods of engagement. And they loathe friction. They seek seamless integration across all platforms, including mobile apps, websites, text messaging, and in-person interactions. Banking customers, for example, expect to easily transfer money, sign up for credit cards, perform balance inquiries, or deposit checks online, regardless of whether they're doing so via mobile app or desktop computer. When they physically visit a branch location, they want to consult with bankers who can quickly assess and address a specific and more complex issue.

Consumers also want easy access to a company's pricing and product reviews before making a purchase. **In fact, 96 percent of consumers sometimes or always read customer reviews before buying, according to a recent report from Brightlocal.** Increase the cost of the transaction, and customers tend to perform more pre-purchase research accordingly.

When it's done right, transparency creates two-way trust between business and consumer. For example, Amazon labels frequently returned items on its site, alerting shoppers to potential flaws in product description and/or quality. In so doing, Amazon gains the trust of the shopper, who now feels they can make an informed purchasing decision. Amazon can also trust that the shopper will leave with a lasting and positive impression of its brand.

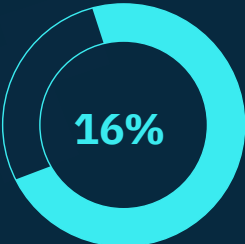
The modern consumer's expectations of transparency have also been fueled by new technology. Delivery tracking apps from food service leaders like Domino's Pizza and Starbucks give customers a window into every step of their transaction, from purchase to pick up.

Still, traditional industries have struggled to adapt to new technologies and processes. Not all consumer implementations will be directly applicable in other industries. But the core principles translate. **Even complex and costly industries like automotive, healthcare, and beyond must meet customers where they're at with good information, transparency, and seamless cross-platform service.**

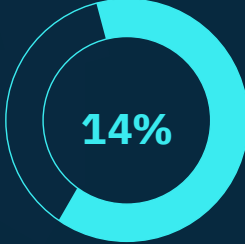
Consumers Are Willing to Pay For a Better Experience

Consumers are willing to pay more for goods and services, when the service is better and they find value in the item being purchased. When Consumers are willing to pay more, it enables revenue and profit growth.

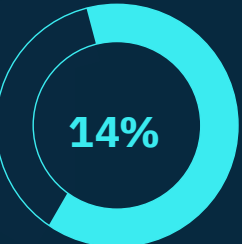
SOURCE: ©2018 PWC



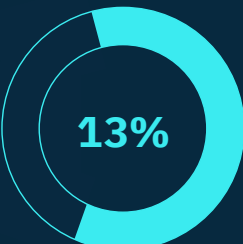
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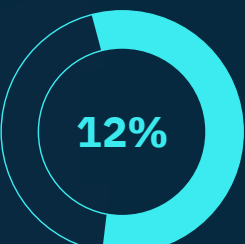
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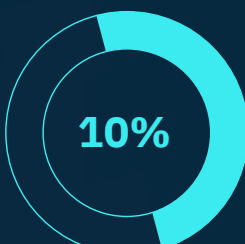
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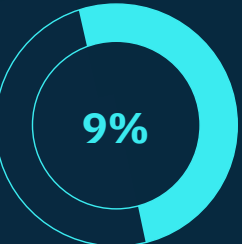
Sports Ticket



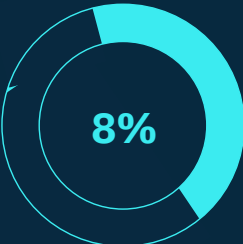
Dinner



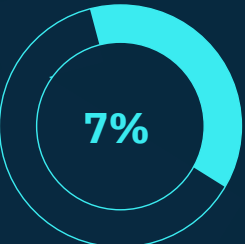
Airline Ticket



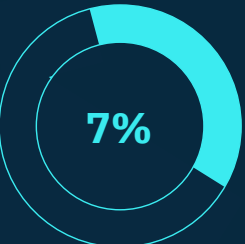
Cable Subscription



Cell Phone Plan



Car Insurance



Winter Coat



Boosting Customer Experience in Complex Industries

Why have legacy enterprises and traditional industries struggled to keep up? For one, as they fall further behind newer and more innovative competitors, the gap in offerings feels too big, too expensive, and too risky to close. Plus, if a business has previously experienced success, leaders may not see a need to evolve—**until it's too late**.

At its peak in the 1990s, Blockbuster was **valued** at more than \$3 billion, boasting more than 9,000 stores worldwide and 65 million registered customers. Then, streaming services entered the arena, and it couldn't quickly adapt. By 2010, the company had declared bankruptcy.

At Blockbuster and other companies where technology is not the primary focus of the business model, leaders can be reluctant to invest in innovation. Leading automotive brands are often hyper-focused on creating the best vehicle possible—a tunnel vision that can leave customer and employee experience out of sight, out of mind, at least until a disruptor appears. Tesla differentiated itself by going the opposite direction, prioritizing innovation and steering fully into customer experience; as a result, the company's market cap leads the automotive industry at around \$875 billion. Its closest competitor is Toyota, with a market cap of about \$302 billion. Regardless of where the industry evolves from here, customers—and investors—have noticed the fresh approach.

In today's business environment, leaders must be willing to make innovation and adaptability part of their company's identity. *They must be willing to look beyond product and reinvent any element of the business model.*

That means effectively anticipating industry shifts by budgeting for long-term maintenance and continuous product improvement.



Transparency should play a key role in this reinvention, although the exact shape of it will vary from one industry to the next.

Sometimes, it's policy that does the disruption. The Affordable Care Act passed during the Obama administration massively changed the healthcare sector. Providers and institutions scrambled to navigate the Act's impact on health information technology and come into compliance. Quick adoption of effective reporting methods and a well-versed H.R. department was key. More than a decade since the act was passed, one in four employers had been audited by the IRS for suspected non-compliance, according to one survey. **Companies that prioritized adaptability were able to get out ahead of the sudden shift.**

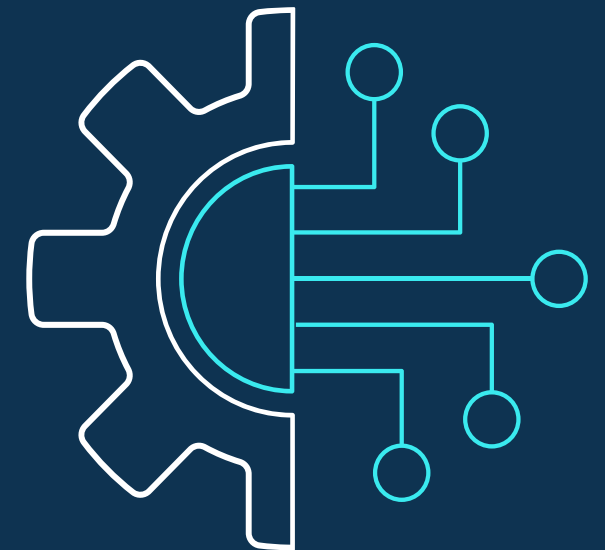
For a vehicle service shop, it could mean not just physically showing a customer the damage to their vehicle and explaining a needed repair, but equipping employees with the ability to provide information on similar recent repairs and the pricing associated with each.

For health care institutions, it could mean actively involving patients in the diagnosis and treatment planning processes. Engagement matters: A patient passively listening to a nurse or doctor explain a treatment plan will feel less informed than a patient who is actively involved in discussing, weighing, and selecting treatment options. In bringing patients into these processes, providers can maintain a level of authority through the doctor or nurse's guidance while providing patients with greater autonomy and a better experience.

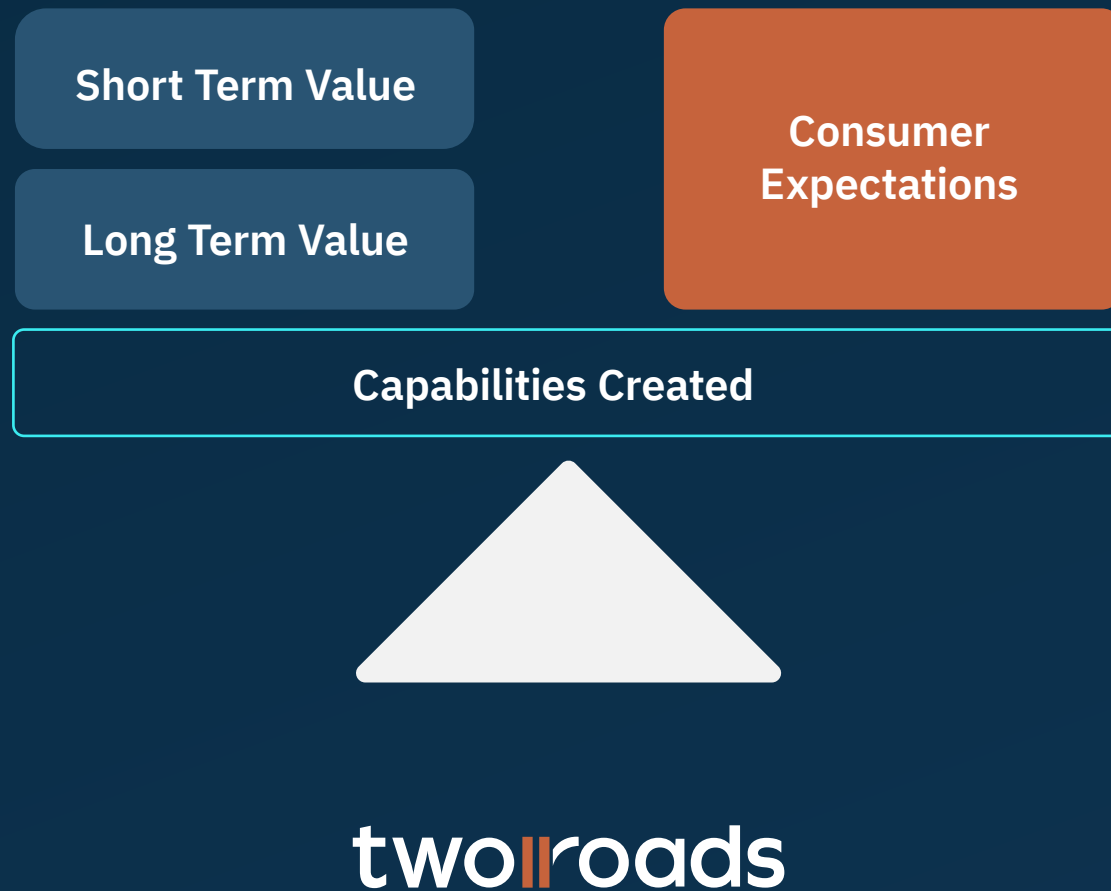


In all cases, employee and customer feedback should guide decisions around technological and operational enhancement. Set aside time to regularly evaluate surveys, reviews, and interviews, as well as to conduct market research into competitors, generational trends, and adjacent technology. Businesses must also assess evolutions happening in other industries—you may look good relative to competitors, but you could be missing developments in other industries that are shaping customer expectations. Then, set an established cadence to consistently reevaluate customer needs and the success of any previous upgrades. A consumer journey map can help companies navigate the process.

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Finding the balance between enabling value and consumer demands.



The Impact of Consumer Journey Maps

A consumer journey map is a critical thinking exercise used to spur conversation around every touchpoint between customer and brand—before, during, and after purchase. For each interaction, teams analyze and discuss consumer experience and ways to improve it. **Journey mapping helps bring siloed business units together toward a common goal, uniting disparate product teams and shifting the overall organization’s approach from product- to consumer-centric.**

For companies who have already successfully made that shift, consumer journey mapping can help maintain it. Regularly walking through each step of the customer’s interaction provides an opportunity to identify industry changes that may require attention and ensure products and services are calibrated to the latest consumer needs, and that internal business applications are enabling employees to serve those needs, as well.

These are critical steps in this era in which organizations are introducing multiple channels and attempting to serve complex, detailed personas. As they partake in mapping, companies should consider the characteristics of the modern consumer. They’re liable to rapidly shift between brands and shopping patterns. The shopping process is no longer linear: One customer might begin purchasing a car by weighing their trade-in options or shopping inventory online, while another might start by checking their credit score. Either way, the buyer expects a dynamic, personalized experience. And they prioritize both value and sustainability.

Two Roads' Framework to Successfully Uncover the Customer Journey

Mapping the customer journey requires a detailed and multifaceted process. Each step helps businesses get to know their consumer in greater depth and surface capabilities that meet their needs.

Here's how it works. 

Step 1: Research and Establish Targeted Buyer Personas

Start by determining who your company hopes to serve and seeking greater understanding of the population, identifying the relevant demographics and research. Within the automotive industry, for example, the step could include conducting a market analysis, visiting dealerships, and gathering stakeholder input.

Most companies will serve multiple types of buyers, but it's important to fully map the main target consumer's journey before diving into additional subsets. That helps with prioritization down the road and creates early alignment, enabling a sense of cohesion across all personas. Once companies map their main target's journey, they can flesh out functionality for less-common consumer personas and identify projects for target groups with conflicting interests.

Step 2: Complete Targeted Consumer Mapping

Once they've identified who they hope to serve, companies should understand and analyze each persona's buying patterns, touchpoints, actions, and motivations. They should map the current and desired future states of the consumer's experience. What is the consumer currently experiencing and what does your company want them to experience? It's important to consider and discuss enablers as well as blockers.

Step 3: Analysis and Solution Design and Build

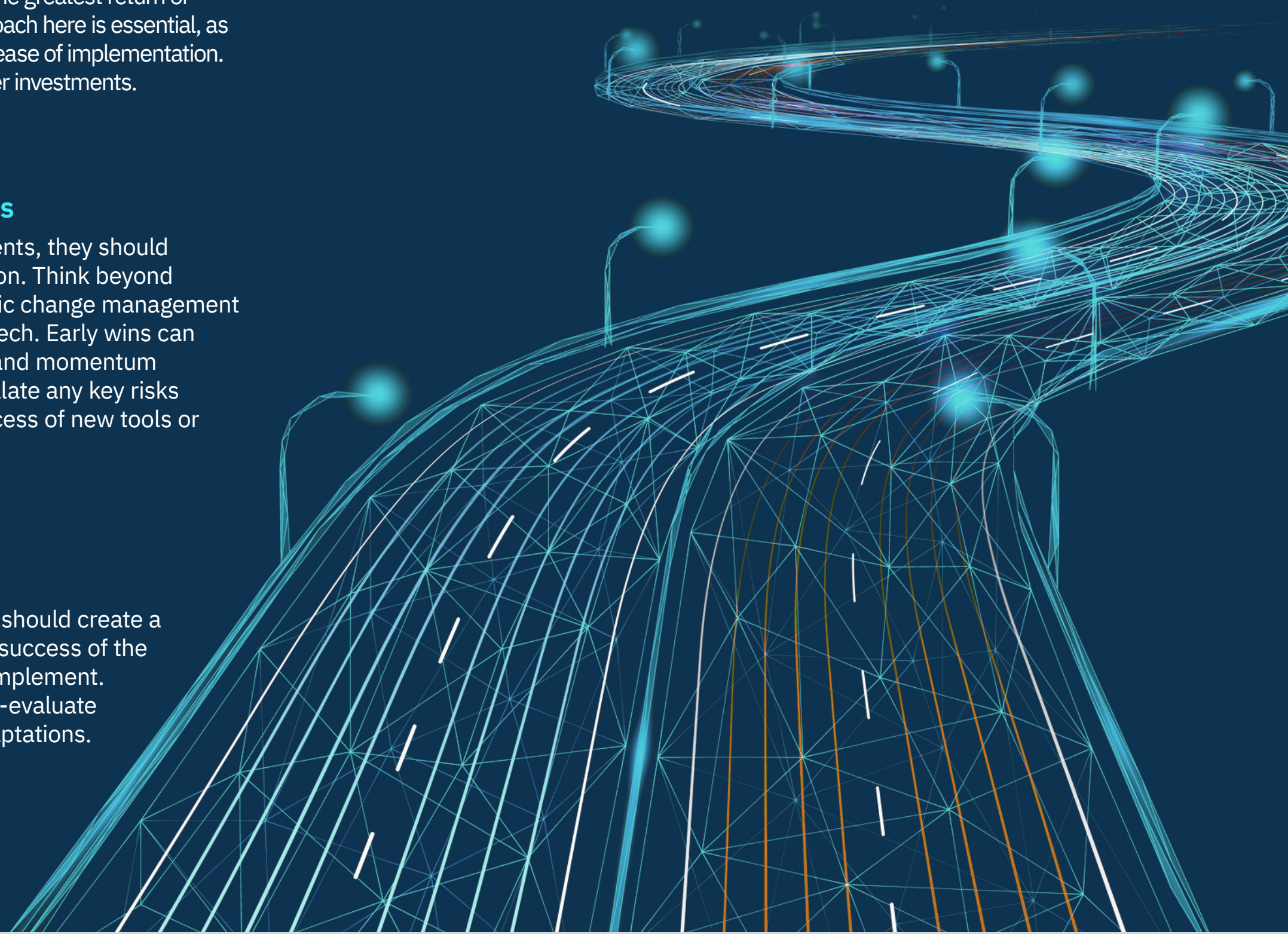
Next, companies should decide the specific solutions they'd like to build, considering which areas of opportunity might provide the greatest return or enhancement of consumer experience. A holistic approach here is essential, as is a laser focus on prioritizing both optimal impact and ease of implementation. It's OK to start smaller and create a roadmap for deeper investments.

Step 4: Implement and Measure Changes

Once companies identify and prioritize improvements, they should develop and execute a plan for roll out and adoption. Think beyond simply "installing a tool" and toward a more holistic change management approach that accounts for people, process, and tech. Early wins can prove value and help companies generate buy-in and momentum across their teams. Along the way, it's vital to escalate any key risks to appropriate stakeholders and measure the success of new tools or techniques using previously established KPIs.

Step 5: Evolve the Experience

The work does not end on launch day. Companies should create a team dedicated to maintaining and enhancing the success of the solution—a step that too many businesses fail to implement. The team should establish a regular cadence to re-evaluate the consumer journey and consider any future adaptations.



Consumer Journey Mapping In Practice

Recently, a Fortune 500 automaker was at a crossroads in deciding how to improve its vehicle service departments. Innovation in this area was identified as a point of need as the vehicle service industry grows, yet more and more vehicle owners seek out independent shops for their service.

To help land on the right path forward, the automaker partnered with Two Roads to design an omnichannel, end-to-end product that incorporated personalized data from dealers into each step of the service process. The product dramatically increased transparency and trust between dealer and consumer via real-time text message and video updates. From the moment a customer books a service appointment to the time of payment and vehicle pickup, the new product provides the most up-to-date information about their vehicle and what to expect as service progresses.

To start, Two Roads guided the company through market research and customer journey mapping that shaped product launch and change management. Through the research phase, it became clear that a new product alone would not suffice. Two Roads helped the company design an ideal end-to-end operational workflow, mapping it to specific new product capabilities and utilization metrics. Ultimately, that wide angle approach is enabling a new experience equipped for the level of personalization, real-time updates, and transparency that customers desire.

VEHICLE SERVICE JOURNEY

STEP ①

Scheduling

Dealer schedule is booked by availability

Guest makes appointment online with VIN-specific functionality and pricing

STEP ②

Check-In

Dealer service Platform and Service Lane Portal are combined on one screen

Guest e-signature means no paper repair order and improved communication flow

STEP ③

MPI & In-Shop

Dealer shares vehicle needs through electronic multi-point inspection & video

Guest visually inspects vehicle needs, building trust & transparency

Since launch, the automotive leader's new product has been adopted by more than 300 of its dealerships, providing increased revenue of up to 26%.

These dealerships have also experienced a 7 percentage point rise in repeat customers and improved retention rates. And the future is bright—with Two Roads' guidance, the company put in place a standard operating process to continue product planning, prioritization, and development, to secure its industry-leading positioning for years to come.

Like many large enterprises in more traditional fields, the automaker was struggling to adapt to rapidly shifting consumer expectations. Journey mapping provided a step-by-step process not only for better understanding their customers, but for prioritizing and implementing improvements. An outside voice in this process can be key. **Two Roads can help your company navigate consumer journey mapping to strategically prioritize innovation that meets modern consumer expectations.**

STEP ④

Approval

Service advisor, technician, and parts department are all kept in the loop

Guest can approve or decline changes in service immediately via electronic signature

STEP ⑤

Payment

Dealer reduces line at the counter, improving checkout efficiency

Guest can pay online and enjoy an expedited checkout process

STEP ⑥

Vehicle Pickup

Dealer knows when guests pay online, simplifying the pickup process - even after hours

Guest is in & out quickly and has digital records of the entire experience

OUR AUTHORS



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Jeremy has 22+ years of experience in digital transformation, product strategy, customer experience, operating model design, and program management. His industry expertise includes technology, transportation, financial services, retail, and automotive.



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Two Roads is an experienced management consulting firm based in North Texas focused on helping our clients tackle today’s most complex business and technology challenges. Our local, lean, experienced and award-winning teams integrate seamlessly with our clients to help drive business value and deliver successful outcomes. With expertise in strategy, planning, organization, process, and technology, we empower our clients to navigate their transformation journeys effectively.



Local

Based in North Texas and invested in our community.



Committed

Invested in our clients’ long-term success.



Problem Solvers

We love a good challenge.

Future-proof your digital strategy with confidence. Two Roads empowers organizations with tailored, proactive IT solutions that drive smarter decisions and lasting business success. Let’s navigate the future together—contact us today.

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