

70. Frictionless Flow Framework

How can I make the customer journey as frictionless as possible?

Key Definitions

A *customer journey* is the path that a potential buyer follows, from first orientation, through purchase and use, to eventually considering follow-up possibilities. It is the entire life cycle of steps that needs to be travelled, from the customer's perspective. While salespeople often focus on the buying process, the customer journey is the full process experienced by the customer. Firms can influence customers, and create value for them, throughout the voyage.

A pleasing customer journey is sometimes referred to as a *happy flow*, or *frictionless*. Customer friction is anything that impedes customers from getting what they want and how they want it. It is any barrier or irritating factor that makes the customer journey less smooth.

Conceptual Model

The *Frictionless Flow Framework* outlines the six types of customer friction that organizations need to minimize to satisfy (potential) customers. In the top half of the framework, the five generic steps in any customer journey are described, while in the bottom half the six types of friction are detailed. These frictions have been divided into two groups. On the left are frictions that dissatisfy customers because they feel *inefficient* – they result in some type of loss or pose a risk that a loss will be incurred. On the right are frictions that dissatisfy customers because they feel *uncomfortable* – they bring the customer in a disagreeable position or pose a risk that this might happen. In all cases, something is a friction if customers perceive it as such. The framework can be used as a checklist to identify specific frictions in any customer journey.



Key Elements

The five generic steps in the customer journey are the following:

1. **Explore.** The first step in any journey is to orient oneself. Key questions to be answered are “what is possible?”, “what do I like?”, and “where can I start looking?”.

2. **Examine.** The second step is to determine what you would like to buy. This can involve the evaluation of many options or can be limited to quickly zeroing in on one preference.
3. **Exchange.** The third step is the buying itself. This involves determining how and how much to pay, under which conditions, and how the product/service will be provided to the buyer.
4. **Experience.** The fourth step is to make use of the product/service purchased. This can be quick consumption, but can also be a long process of installing, using, and maintaining.
5. **Extend.** The final step is to consider becoming a repeat customer. This can involve completing the previous use and reflecting on one's level of satisfaction.

The six types of friction are the following:

1. **Effort Friction.** In our age of instant gratification, the perceived loss of time and energy is felt as irritating. Waiting, needing to provide extensive information, scrolling through incomprehensible menus, and having to come back multiple times, are typical examples.
2. **Cost Friction.** In our age of free wifi, the perceived burden of unnecessary costs is also felt as annoying. Delivery fees, service charges, prepayment requirements and the need to upgrade your IT systems are all examples of needlessly losing money and/or resources.
3. **Quality Friction.** In our age of first time right, it is also frustrating when mistakes are made, and quality is lower than expected. When parts are missing, something breaks too quickly, it isn't on time or it doesn't work as promised, we don't get the anticipated effect or result.
4. **Uncertainty Friction.** In our age of plentiful information, it feels uncomfortable not to know things. A lack of clarity and/or information about when a product will be delivered, whether seats are available, and how a decision will be made, can all lead to a sense of irritation.
5. **Dependency Friction.** In our age of customer choice, it feels uncomfortable to be locked in. A lack of power and/or autonomy to switch to another supplier, change or return an order, use alternative parts, or own your own data, can all be sources of dissatisfaction.
6. **Unfairness Friction.** In our age of corporate social responsibility, it feels uncomfortable to fear being treated wrongfully. Unreadable user agreements, the fine print in a contract, and hiking prices based on your surfing behavior are all examples that undermine trust.

Key Insights

- **Customer journeys need to be understood.** Firms often map and understand their own internal processes but fail to do the same for the steps that customers go through, even though they can influence the customer's behavior and satisfaction throughout the journey.
- **Customer journeys are full of frictions.** Few customer journeys are friction-free, happy flow processes, when looked at from the customer's point of view. Most are full of irritating barriers and frustrating factors making it difficult for customers to get what they want.
- **Customer journeys have economic loss frictions.** Some of the frictions lead to (perceived) losses for the customer. They can lose time and energy (*effort friction*), money and resources (*cost friction*) and/or effects and outcomes (*quality friction*). These frictions tend to create dissatisfaction because they are inefficient.
- **Customer journeys have emotion discomfort frictions.** Other frictions trigger a sense of discomfort with the customer. They can feel ill at ease because they lack clarity and information (*uncertainty friction*), power and autonomy (*dependency friction*), and/or trust and justice (*unfairness friction*). These frictions place customers in an undesirable position.
- **Customer journeys require continuous improvement.** When firms consider ways of strengthening their competitive advantage, they often turn to upgrading their product/service. Yet, improving the customer journey by removing frictions (*friction hunting*) is also a powerful way to compete. But it requires continuous work on the entire journey.

Meyer's Management Models

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Publication Schedule

<i>July 2019</i>	<i>Mind the Gap Model</i>	<i>Change Management</i>
<i>August 2019</i>	<i>Digital Platform Map</i>	<i>Digital Strategy</i>
<i>September 2019</i>	<i>Interaction Pressure Gauge</i>	<i>Interpersonal Interaction</i>
<i>October 2019</i>	<i>Revenue Model Framework</i>	<i>Revenue Model Typology</i>
<i>November 2019</i>	<i>House of Engagement</i>	<i>Organizational Engagement</i>
<i>December 2019</i>	<i>Confidence Quotient</i>	<i>Trust Building</i>
<i>January 2020</i>	<i>Competition Tornado</i>	<i>Competitive Strategy</i>
<i>February 2020</i>	<i>11C Synergy Model</i>	<i>Corporate Synergy Management</i>
<i>March 2020</i>	<i>Leadership Fairness Model</i>	<i>Leader-Follower Interaction</i>
<i>April 2020</i>	<i>Strategic Agility Model</i>	<i>Strategy Process Approach</i>
<i>May 2020</i>	<i>Control Panel</i>	<i>Corporate Control Dimensions</i>
<i>June 2020</i>	<i>Rising Star Framework</i>	<i>Talent Management</i>
<i>July 2020</i>	<i>Strategy Development Cycle</i>	<i>Strategy Process Steps</i>
<i>August 2020</i>	<i>7I Corporate Center Model</i>	<i>Corporate Organization</i>
<i>September 2020</i>	<i>Storytelling Scripts</i>	<i>Leadership Communication</i>
<i>October 2020</i>	<i>Strategic Bets Framework</i>	<i>Strategic Decision-Making</i>
<i>November 2020</i>	<i>Rebound Model of Resilience</i>	<i>Organizational Resilience</i>
<i>December 2020</i>	<i>4C Leadership Capabilities</i>	<i>Leadership Competences</i>
<i>January 2021</i>	<i>Digital Product Model Dial</i>	<i>Digital Strategy</i>
<i>February 2021</i>	<i>Digital Distribution Model Dial</i>	<i>Digital Strategy</i>
<i>March 2021</i>	<i>Empowerment Cycle</i>	<i>Employee Empowerment</i>
<i>April 2021</i>	<i>Innovation Box</i>	<i>Innovation Approaches</i>
<i>May 2021</i>	<i>Knowledge Sharing Bridges</i>	<i>Best Practice Sharing</i>
<i>June 2021</i>	<i>Followership Cycle</i>	<i>Leader-Follower Interaction</i>
<i>July 2021</i>	<i>Everest Model of Change</i>	<i>Change Management</i>
<i>August 2021</i>	<i>Fruits & Nuts Matrix</i>	<i>Priority-Setting</i>
<i>September 2021</i>	<i>Powerhouse Framework</i>	<i>People & Organization Strategy</i>
<i>October 2021</i>	<i>Strategy Hourglass</i>	<i>Strategy-Making Steps</i>
<i>November 2021</i>	<i>Disciplined Dialogue Model</i>	<i>Interpersonal Communication</i>
<i>December 2021</i>	<i>Team Building Cycle</i>	<i>Team Building Process</i>
<i>January 2022</i>	<i>Market System Map</i>	<i>External Analysis Framework</i>
<i>February 2022</i>	<i>Strategic Alignment Model</i>	<i>Business Level Strategy</i>
<i>March 2022</i>	<i>Creativity X-Factor</i>	<i>Creativity Enhancement</i>
<i>April 2022</i>	<i>Organizational System Map</i>	<i>Organizational Analysis</i>
<i>May 2022</i>	<i>Corporate Value Creation Model</i>	<i>Corporate Level Strategy</i>
<i>June 2022</i>	<i>Change Manager's Toolbox</i>	<i>Change Methodologies</i>

July 2022	Sustainable You Model	Personal Sustainability
August 2022	Value Proposition Dial	Business Level Strategy
September 2022	The Tree of Power	Organizational Power
October 2022	Psychological Safety Compass	Team Dynamics
November 2022	Strategic Action Modes	Strategy Process
December 2022	Corporate Management Styles	HQ Management
January 2023	Thinking Directions Framework	Reasoning Skills
February 2023	5I Innovation Pipeline	Innovation Process
March 2023	Resistance to Change Typology	Change Management
April 2023	Ambition Radar Screen	Motivation Analysis
May 2023	Corporate Strategy Framework	Corporate Strategy
June 2023	Cultural Fabric Model	Organizational Culture
July 2023	New Pyramid Principle	Presentation Approaches
August 2023	Activity System Dial	Value Creation Analysis
September 2023	Customer-Centricity Circle	Organizational Design
October 2023	Status Snakes & Ladders	Leadership Branding
November 2023	Stakeholder Stance Map	Stakeholder Management
December 2023	Best Practice Sharing Modes	Sharing Methods
January 2024	Duty of Care Feedback Model	Feedback Method
February 2024	BOLD Vision Framework	Organizational Vision
March 2024	MOVING Mission Framework	Organizational Mission
April 2024	Leadership Circle Map	Leadership Skills
May 2024	Digitalization Staircase	Digital Strategy
June 2024	Time Management Funnel	Personal Time Management
July 2024	Wicked Problem Scorecard	Organizational Decision-Making
August 2024	Hunting & Farming Typology	Sales Management
September 2024	Guiding STAR Matrix	Objective Setting Approach
October 2024	Corporate Synergy Typology	Corporate Level Strategy
November 2024	Self-Centered Thinking Traps	Thinking Styles
December 2024	Sustainability Maturity Ladder	Sustainability Management
January 2025	Top Line Growth Pie	Growth Strategy
February 2025	Innovation Sins & Virtues	Innovation Management
March 2025	Interpersonal Interaction Drivers	Communication Determinants
April 2025	Frictionless Flow Framework	Customer Journey
May 2025	Five Phases of Change	Change Management
June 2025	New Learning Curve	Personal Learning
July 2025	Performance Assignment Matrix	Corporate Strategy
August 2025	Embedded Innovation Pipeline	Innovation Management
September 2025	Core Courage Model	Leadership Behaviors
October 2025	Synergy Value Matrix	Corporate Level Strategy

November 2025	Triple Diamond Model	Organizational Decision-Making
December 2025	Embedded Identity Model	Personal Awareness
January 2026	Partnership Distance Model	Interorganizational Relations
February 2026	Dynamic Organization Paradigm	Human-centered Organization
March 2026	Leadership Journey	Leadership Development
April 2026	Low Performance Team Slide	Team Building