

Put yourself on the path to empathy



You've heard of journey-mapping, but what about empathy-pathing? The shortest distance between a company and its customers is empathy. Keep this how-to guide handy to keep your empathy quotient high.

1 Apply the tree metaphor

Pick a customer and follow his or her journey from a distance. Then, keep zooming in on the details of each twist, turn, and roadblock they encountered. What comes into focus upon closer inspection?

2 Route the feedback loop through your front door

Don't just survey customers: invite them to your office for lunch and solicit their unvarnished feedback: what are they loving—and what are they less enthusiastic about?

3 Tap your team for empathy meetings

Bounce a ton of purposeful, open-ended questions that lead you to why and where a customer might be struggling. Think of it like "Choose Your Own Adventure" for customer service.

4 ...and turn those into empathy documents

Take the outcomes of your empathy meetings and compare your ideas against actual customer feedback. Maintain robust records of customer pain points, real and imagined.

5 Shadow would-be users

Potential customers are a wellspring of information. Get to know their pain points and their work lives overall. Can you apply this feedback to improving your product or process?

6 Train the microscope inward

How is empathy evaluated and measured across the organization? Pick some metrics and stick to them. Empathy should be a company-wide initiative, prioritized across teams and at all levels.