

Customer Journey Mapping in Practice

by Jim Tincher, Mapper-In-Chief, Heart of the Customer

Seeking to identify specific ways to boost loyalty and referrals among its radiology patients, Meridian Health reached out to the customer journey map experts at Heart of the Customer (HotC).

HotC's Mapper-in-Chief, Jim Tincher, and his team worked with Meridian's Vice President of Marketing, Chrisie Scott, and Director of Experience Marketing, Tria Deibert, to identify several key customer segments (personas) to focus on in creating their customer journey maps, to shed light on the differing needs of each type of patient, and to explore what they were thinking and feeling during each step of their healthcare experience.

They began with a hypothesis based on input from internal staff: that scheduling difficulties were the primary source of customer frustration. But as is often the case in journey mapping, it soon became apparent that the touchpoints employees believed to be problematic were not actually causing friction for customers.

Data gathered from dozens of patients through journaling exercises and more than half a dozen focus groups during the early stages of the mapping process revealed that patients found Meridian's scheduling and registration procedures to be straightforward and smooth, with particularly high marks given

to their caring and competent staff. Patients were also quite satisfied with other touchpoints that were identified during the mapping process, including the actual treatment they received.

At the same time, highlighted moments of truth revealed an issue that did need to be addressed: many patients didn't know what to expect at different stages of their journey, and weren't initially offered guidance to navigate from step to step.

Focusing on two of the journey maps HotC created for Meridian—those representing patients on either end of the experience spectrum—illustrates the unique value of customer journey mapping.

On one end, there's Seen-it-all Stanley (Figure 10-12), a heavy healthcare user whose familiarity with "the system" tempers both his expectations and his anxiety level. He knows to leave a little extra time for parking, he can relax and enjoy watching TV in the waiting room until he's called in, and he knows when he can expect his test results.

Minor inconveniences or delays don't faze Stanley because he knows he's in good hands. Meridian has already earned his loyalty, and needs only to maintain the high level of service it already provides in order to keep it.

The Experienced Patient's Journey

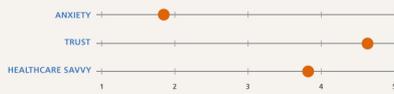
Opportunities to Impact the Experience at Meridian Health



Seen-it-all Stanley

Age 65
Background Cancer survivor; heavy user of health care
Insight Stanley represents a core patient for Meridian Health: a heavy healthcare services user who has learned to navigate "the system." He trusts and appreciates the care provided to him and his family. His expectations are tempered by an abundance of experience.

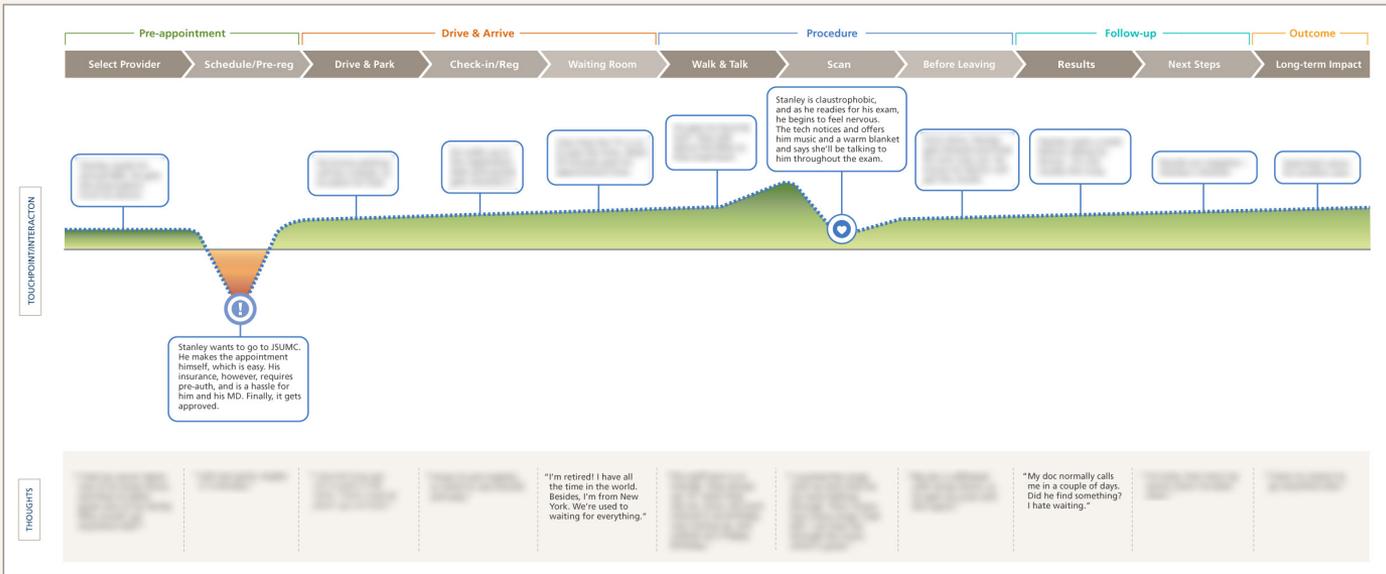
EXPERIENCE FACTORS Stanley knows how radiology works, and trusts his hospital to do right.



QUOTE "Jersey Shore is 'my' hospital. All my records are here, and I trust them. Sometimes I'm told I should go somewhere else, but I come back here. I usually expect my appointment to take a whole day. If it's less than that, I'm lucky!"

LEGEND

- Median level of satisfaction
- Moment of Truth: A critical interaction that determines how the patient continues with their journey.
- Stanley's Route
- ▲ Satisfaction up
- ▼ Friction Point: An interaction that reduces engagement.



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FIGURE 10-12. Customer journey map for Seen-it-all Stanley, created by Heart of the Customer for Meridian.

On the other end of the spectrum is Newbie Natalie (Figure 10-13), who is “learning the ropes” as she navigates Meridian’s radiology services for the first time. Understandably, Newbie Natalie is more nervous, which magnifies the negative impact of friction during any touchpoint in her journey.

Parking difficulties get Natalie’s visit off to a bad start, and not knowing when to expect her test results unnecessarily adds to her already elevated anxiety level. As a result, even though she is satisfied with the treatment she receives, and even though those kinds of problems are unlikely to recur on subsequent visits, they negatively impact her overall experience.

That finding was key to determining where to focus future customer engagement efforts, because Natalie won’t be a Newbie for long. If her first experience is peppered with uncertainty and inconvenience, regardless of how minor, she will have little incentive to choose Meridian next time around.

So therein lay Meridian’s greatest opportunity: meet Natalie’s needs today, so that she can transition into a loyal, satisfied Seen-it-all Stanley tomorrow.

With that information and completed customer journey maps in hand, HotC moved on to the action component of the customer journey mapping process by leading workshops to brainstorm and prioritize ways to improve Newbie Natalie’s experience.

Once it was determined that better communication was key, Meridian was able to devise ways to provide clearer, more specific guidance for each step of her journey. In doing so, Me-

ridian keeps her anxiety to a minimum, helps her avoid unnecessary inconvenience, and provides the information that allows her to frame realistic expectations.

Had Meridian not engaged HotC to create customer journey maps and instead—per staffers’ initial perceptions of what the priority should be—focused on “improving” their scheduling and registration processes, not only would their efforts have been fruitless, they might even have decreased customer satisfaction by tampering with a system with which patients were happy. Instead, customer journey mapping illuminated simple, effective steps Meridian could take to turn anxious new patients into loyal and satisfied healthcare users.

About the Contributor

Heart of the Customer Mapper-in-Chief and lead consultant Jim Tincher sees the world in a special way: through the eyes of customers.

With a lifelong passion for customer experience, Jim founded HotC to help companies of all sizes increase customer engagement. Before launching the company, Jim led customer engagement initiatives at Best Buy, Gallup, and UnitedHealth Group. In the process, he became an expert in using Voice of the Customer research to identify unmet needs, develop new products, and improve customer service. His *HotC Journey Maps* are a powerful tool designed with one simple goal: customer loyalty. Clients ranging from start-ups to Fortune 500 companies use his processes to improve customer-focused results and he leads a team of CX experts that can transform your business.

Jim's fascination with customer experience also led him to become a *Certified Customer Experience Professional*, only the second in the world to earn such a designation. He is also an active member of the *Customer Experience Professionals*

Association (CXPA), serving as one of their CX Experts and providing advice to members worldwide.

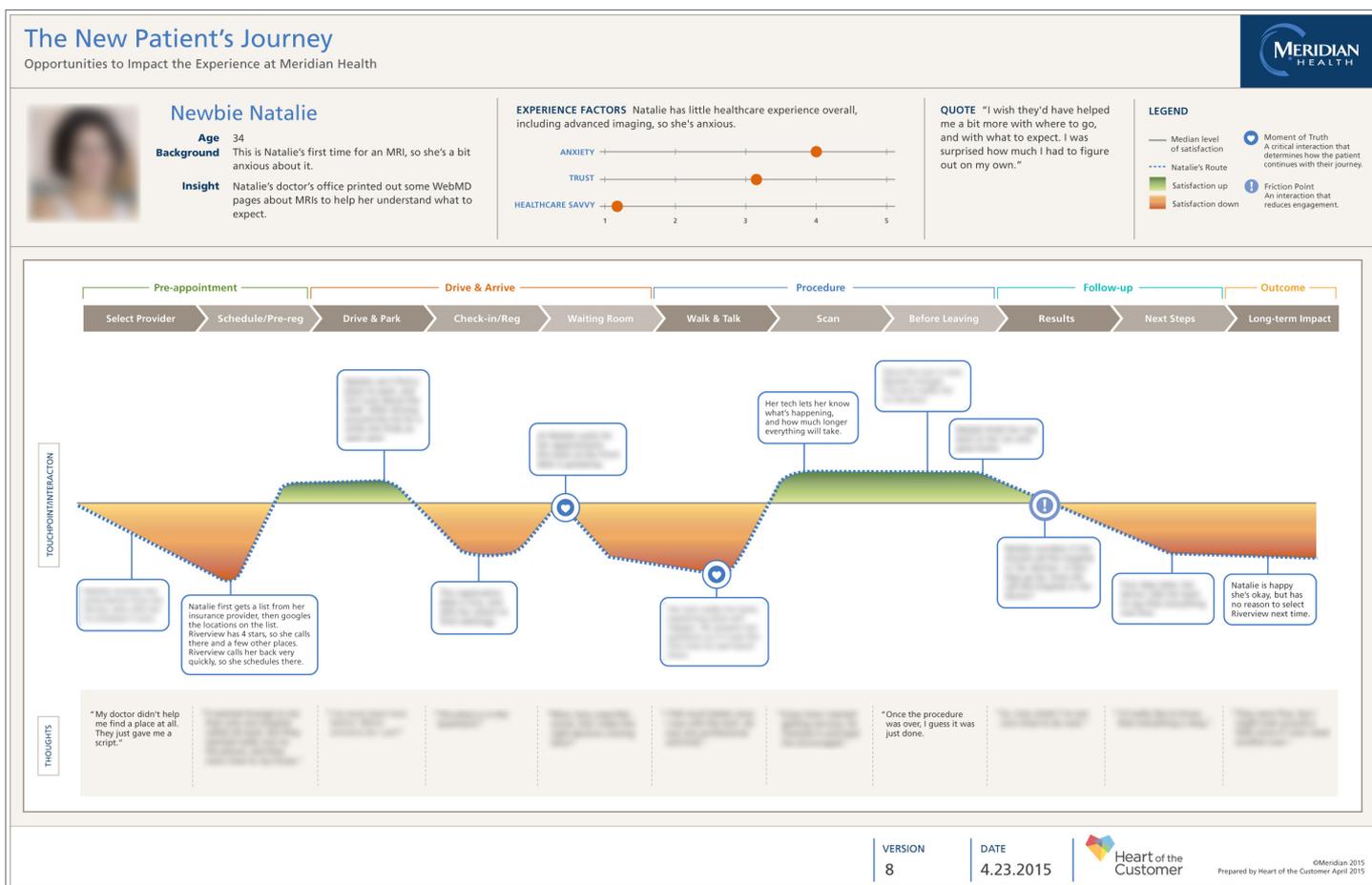


FIGURE 10-13. Customer journey map for Newbie Natalie, created by Heart of the Customer for Meridian.