

IN THE HANDS OF A CHANGE MAKER

A Journey Map Is Only as Good as What You Do With It

“If we don't make them successful in their first year, then we have failed. But if they're seeing value and ROI from the solution during that first year, it significantly increases their likelihood to renew.” – Karin Moffett, VP of Customer Care

Using Journey Mapping to Drive Business Value

Brainshark, based in Boston suburb Waltham, is a leading sales readiness platform provider, helping clients improve their sales effectiveness with the training, coaching, and content they need to make the most of every selling opportunity. They engaged Heart of the Customer to map their clients' implementation journey – the time from when the client purchases the software, rolls it out to their sales teams, and begins fully utilizing the platform.

By following a deliberate process to map their customers' implementation journeys, Brainshark was better able to:

- Reduce Time-to-Value – when the client starts getting the benefit – by 25%.
- Influence product priorities to incorporate specific needs voiced by their customers.
- Provide stronger guidance around clients' business processes, creating not only a better implementation, but an altogether improved sales readiness program.
- Better demonstrate Return on Investment (ROI) in ways that better align with how clients recognize it.

Mapping Implementation

For B2B organizations (especially in software), the implementation experience is critical, as it strongly correlates to renewal rates. Brainshark's goal was to learn more about the customer journeys associated with onboarding their software, looking for the best opportunities to improve the experience.

Involving a Broad Cross-Functional Team

“Sending members of the team out to visit clients firsthand was enormous for us. Because we were there to hear it in person, it was very impactful.”

The first journey mapping best practice is to involve a broad, cross-functional team. This ensures buy-in across the organization and helps ensure that multiple voices are involved in the changes following the mapping effort.

Creating this broad team was important at Brainshark because members across the organization felt they had a stake in the process. As a by-product, it also created “buzz” around the project when participants went back to their teams and talked about the journey mapping workshops and client interviews.

In most B2B companies, 90% of the staff has not been onsite to speak directly to customers, and therefore doesn't have a full understanding of the customer experience. Bringing team members onsite to meet customers creates a big impact. For Brainshark, it was not only helpful for team members to be hearing the same message, but the voice of the customer also built relationships and bolstered the momentum of the project. Everyone who participated in customer interviews, whether onsite or virtual, became more energized about the journey mapping process and took ownership of the customer experience.

Additionally, executive buy-in is extremely important for driving change once the journey mapping is complete. Luckily, Brainshark's CEO understood the importance of the customer experience from the beginning, so journey mapping wasn't a hard sell. To maintain executive confidence, Karin and her team provided weekly progress updates, and at the end of the project, a re-brief explained the process, the customers targeted, the questions that were asked, and the key themes and outcomes. As a result, there was support and buy-in across the entire executive team at Brainshark, and they felt that journey mapping was the right way to evaluate their customers' needs.



Creating a Journey Key Performance Indicator (KPI)

“We validated that the implementation period needs to happen very swiftly, so customers quickly start to see value from their investment. They know it; they’re using it; it’s ingrained in their culture.”

Before starting journey mapping, it’s useful to establish Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to measure against. This keeps the team focused on the business outcomes that are the focus of the mapping.

Brainshark’s KPI was “time-to-first-value,” the number of days after the sale that it takes a customer to have a meaningful, valuable experience with the product. The smaller this number is, the faster their customers are seeing the benefits of the software and using their product to its full potential. Though they were already recording this metric, the journey mapping process reiterated its importance, and the need to make this a highly visual KPI.

And it worked – the changes inspired by the mapping program resulted in a 25% decrease in time-to-value. This change ensures that Brainshark’s customers hit the ground running and adds significant value to the customer experience with their product.

Creating a Vision of the Future

A journey mapping best practice is to map the current state and use this to develop a vision of the future journey, and Brainshark followed this best practice. In order to begin improving their time-to-first-value score, the team developed a first-year framework to streamline and track this essential phase of the customer journey. The framework includes milestones that they and the customer can use to monitor progress through the implementation process and beyond. This way, they can keep track of outcomes at each stage.

Using the Journey Map to Drive Action

“The map is great for a snapshot of what things look like at one point in time and we have it posted on our wall here in our corporate headquarters. But it’s only as good as what you do with it.”

Moving forward, the Brainshark team prioritizes the voice of the customer and regularly ask themselves “what is the customer’s experience?” In decision-making, the customer journey is the most important consideration, and relationships with customers have already tangibly improved from the process of being asked for input.

“I’m always pushing the ‘think about the customer experience’ mentality. We have always focused on it – that’s why we invested in this – but it is possible to lose that focus along the way. Going through journey mapping has helped us reinforce the customer experience as one of the top focuses in the organization and across the leadership team.”