

Module 7: Communication in customer journey

Green customer journey map

A **customer journey map** is a research-based tool that helps you to understand how a customer relates to the product, business or brand over time. It tells the story through different contact points when a customer interacts with an enterprise. The journey maps can visualize an existing experience of a client or present the future – so called idealistic versions of the maps. So, the customer journey map can also be seen as the quality measure of how each customer of the enterprise should be treated during the process. Traditionally there are three stages on each persons' journey: before, during and after. There are as many different journeys as there are customers. In order to map someone's journey, you need to know who she or he is, because all customer journeys are different (see figure1).

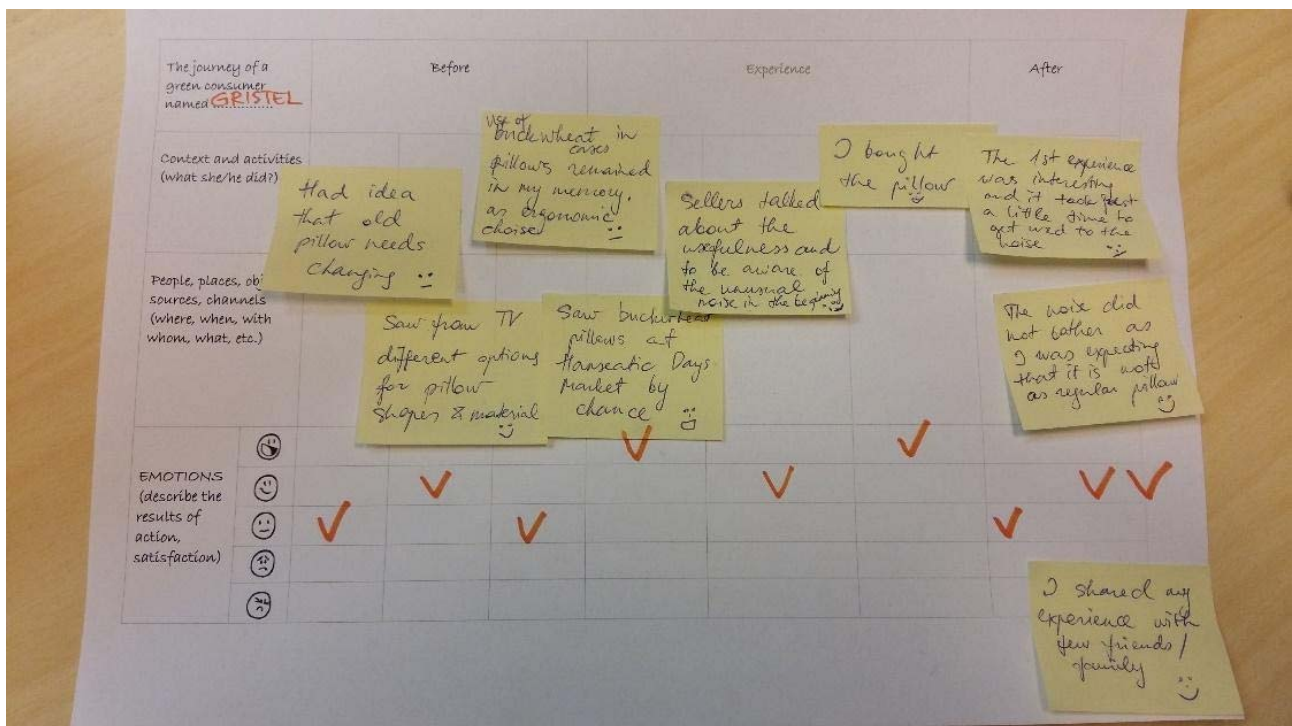


Figure 1. Example of Gristel's journey with buckwheat pillow

Now it is time to go back to the point, where you created your personas (see module 5) and map their journey.

1. Define the time frame (how long it takes for a persona to reach your product/service) of the "story" and write down the stages of your customer's journey. (You can use

- the worksheet or create your own.) Add additional rows if necessary (different stakeholders influencing the experience, suggestions, what if? section etc.).
2. Fill in the information or ask the real client to do so. Use photos, screenshots, sketches, stories – anything that helps you understand what the customer sees, thinks, feels etc.
 3. Analyze the map to understand if everything works smoothly.

Basics of green customer communication

In the early days it was easy: when someone in a village needed something, he/she turned straight to the person who was providing it. Industrial development and mass production created a situation where the products were made in one place and sold / advertised in another: market, shops, wholesaler, through newspaper, later also on the radio and on television. When the Internet first appeared, it was also a one-way publishing platform for an enterprise. The consumers were able to read about the enterprise and its products. Now the Internet is an important distribution channel, and the social media offers new and efficient ways of engaging both enterprises and customers.



Figure 2. Customer journey from communication point of view

Green customers rely heavily on the recommendations of other people (word of mouth – WOM) and trust less the so-called traditional advertisements. It does not matter what you say about yourself, it is important what others talk about you and your product. Communication through Internet is also cheaper than, for example, TV commercials, radio

advertisements or printed media, and it allows you to reach concrete niche markets. Digitally communicating is also more sustainable than, for example, printing materials about the product. With a rapid growth of communication channels, many opportunities but also challenges appear, and it is important to ensure clarity and consistency across all communication channels.

Since customers trust each others and communicate actively, the journey could also be seen not in a linear but in a circular form, making WOM marketing a possible inspiration point for the next person to start her/his journey (see figure 2).

Customer engagement is one of the key issues enterprises work with. Think of ways how to include your customers in your product design and communicate it back to them (through different channels, make them talk about you). A good example is the Estonian eco ice-cream La Muu. The active communication happens mostly in Facebook, where they talk about their ice-cream, but it is also about things happening in the factory and shops, inviting customers to competitions (one was, for example, an opportunity for their fans to invest into the enterprise) and covering hot topics from society. They also talk about problems that occur and have discussions with customers. Showing your weaknesses helps to create trust and loyalty.

As the customers' interests and needs should be the priority, you have to know who your customers are and how they make the decisions. Over the years, more and more consumers care about their ecological footprint and therefore prefer buying products which they know are environmentally friendly, made from fresh natural ingredients and come from enterprises that have committed themselves to social values. In order to have information about your product, the green generation researches before buying. A good quality product makes you transparent. Therefore, it is important to communicate your green activities and follow through the promises given to your customer. Greenwashing is not in any form acceptable with this target group. They will not forgive you if you lie to them.

Customers appreciate when they can learn something from you. Training in a herbal farm, for example, will help the visitors understand how they can use herbs for their benefit. Bring out concrete facts why the product is good for the consumer (e.g. tested by scientists, supported by a study etc.). Informing and educating your customers will help creating loyalty. Values play an important role in today's communication. Green consumers buy products because they believe in the values you communicate (for example, users of the Body Shop products value that the product has not been tested on animals). Show the proof and then talk about it. It is also useful to refer to The SDGs in your communication, in case your enterprise, for example, does something to save energy or water, avoids plastic in packaging etc. A green customer appreciates social responsibility.

In addition to WOM, when people talk about you, without you being able to influence the contents, there are several channels where you can share your values and stories. Start with the webpage, social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn etc.), influencers with their range of channels, direct marketing by e-mail and finishing with leaflets, sales calls, advertisements in press, on the radio, on billboards or TV, depending on the budget. Communication at different steps of a customer's journey will not work alone. It has to be supported by a holistic green marketing mix containing a green marketing strategy. (Please see figure 3.)

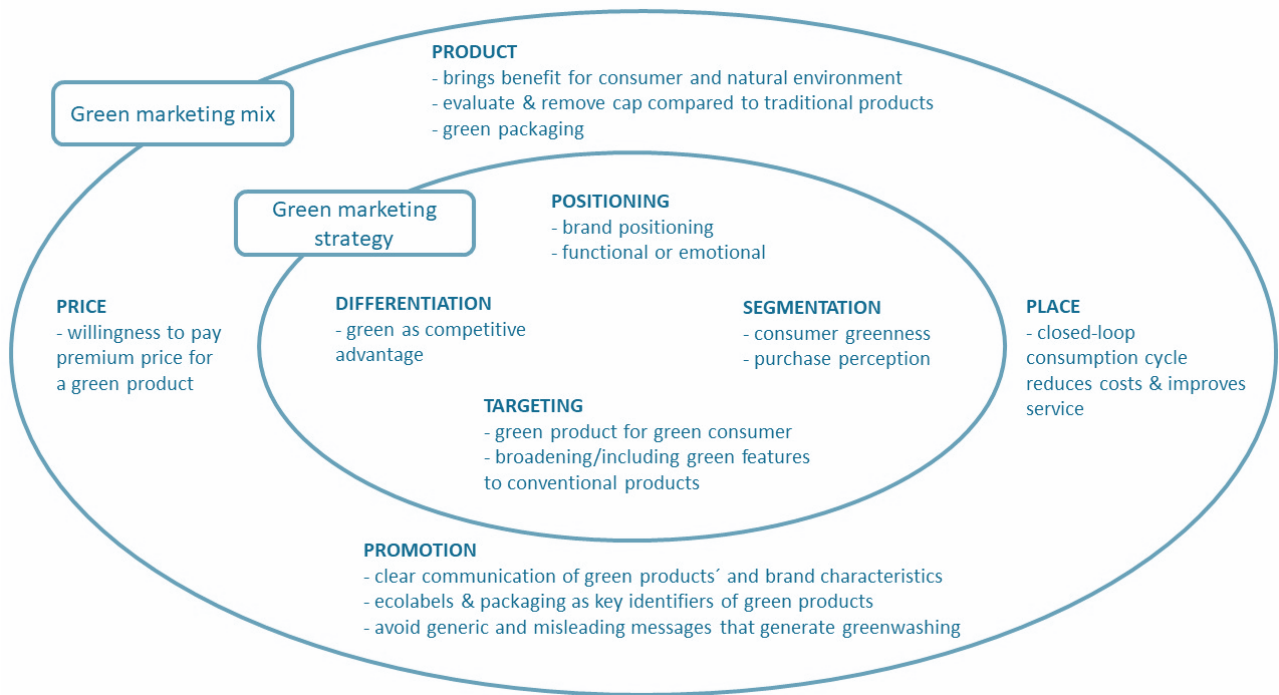


Figure 3. Green Marketing Strategy and Green Marketing Mix

The Finnish enterprise ilona LUONKOS has a very short text in English on their web-page bringing together the above-mentioned. They are convinced that they have the best product in the world, so they are not afraid of talking about it, bringing out the benefits of the product, mentioning packaging, but also the values they rely on, finishing it all up with references to the media buzz around their product. In case information about your product does not go viral with the help of bloggers or vloggers, it is necessary to analyze your marketing mix and set the goals. Let's use a random buckwheat pillow producer as an example, to fill in a target group oriented marketing mix (see the table).

Table 1. Target group oriented marketing mix

The main target group and market	Estonian office workers, who have neck problems and wish to sleep better.
Target group's expectations	To have a good sleep, get rid of neck pain.
Value offered to the target group	The pillow helps to sleep better and adjusts with your posture.
Unique selling point and unique selling arguments	In addition to helping with neck problems, the pillow does not cause allergies, because it is made from linen and ecologically produced buckwheat.
Measurable marketing goals	To sell 1000 pillows by Christmas

In order to sell the desired number of products, it is helpful if you write down all the marketing activities that you will do each month and the channels you will use. To accomplish the goals, the marketing should be done through channels your target group uses. Let's take the same buckwheat pillow example to see how to plan the company's communication (see example in table 2).

Time	Channel	Activity	Target group	Cost
January	Webpage	Create or update your webpage (texts containing keywords like neck pain, pillow, buckwheat etc., contacts) Create a Facebook page for buckwheat pillow (or your company).	Everybody looking for a solution for their neck pain	0-1000 € (depending how much needs to be done)
February	Social media	Launch a Facebook campaign (1 week) to gain followers	Facebook helps you to select the target group	100 €
March	Personal meetings/internet research	Collect information about massage salons in your area which you can cooperate with		0 €
April		Order design and flyers (100 pieces) Continue making Facebook posts		50 €
May	Your region	Distribute flyers to different massage salons, try to find someone who would recommend your pillows to their customers		0 €
June	Social media	Launch a Facebook campaign (1 week) – scientifically proven info how good buckwheat pillows are	Your Facebook followers	100 €
July
August				
September				
October				
November				
December				

Table 2. Example of communication plan

Assignment



1. Analyze your own product or service based on a customer journey model (use a real client to tell you the contact points). Use also the table attached.

- Where was the first contact point (channel) with the enterprise/product/service? (What are your first impressions?)
- What other products could satisfy the same need for you? How can you buy the product?
- How do you feel experiencing the product? Where could you share the feedback about the product?
- Write a short description (you can illustrate your journey with pictures/screenshots) etc.

The journey of a green consumer named		Before			Experience			After	
Context and activities (what she/he did?)									
People, places, object, sources, channels (where, when, with whom, what, etc.)									
EMOTIONS (describe the results of action, satisfaction)									

2. Fill in the marketing mix communication strategy worksheet oriented for a target group (table 1) by applying it to your own enterprise and product/service.

3. After filling in the target group oriented marketing mix, you can plan your enterprise's communication by using table 2.

Finally, revise your business model!