

20/20 Vision for Marketing Breakthroughs

Should You Be Using Product Journey Mapping to Drive Innovation?



By Steve Bassill

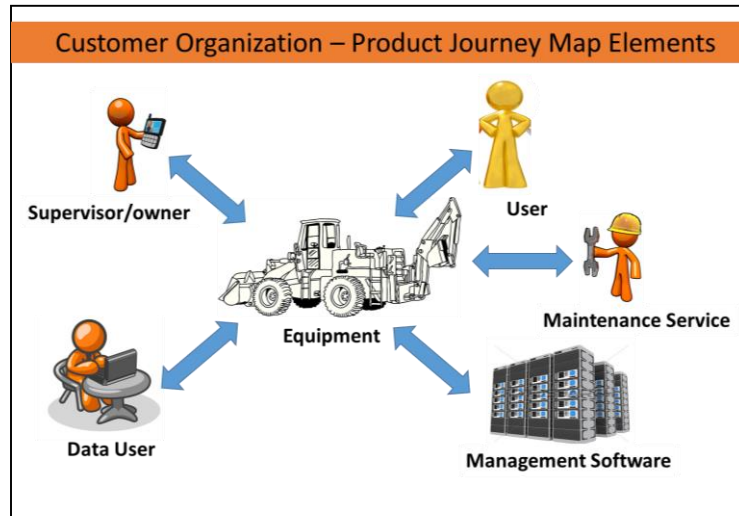
For over 25 years Mr. Bassill has helped companies develop channel strategies that build market power in changing market landscapes.

The Product Journey Mapping goal is to understand the customer organization's interaction with the PRODUCT to drive innovation.

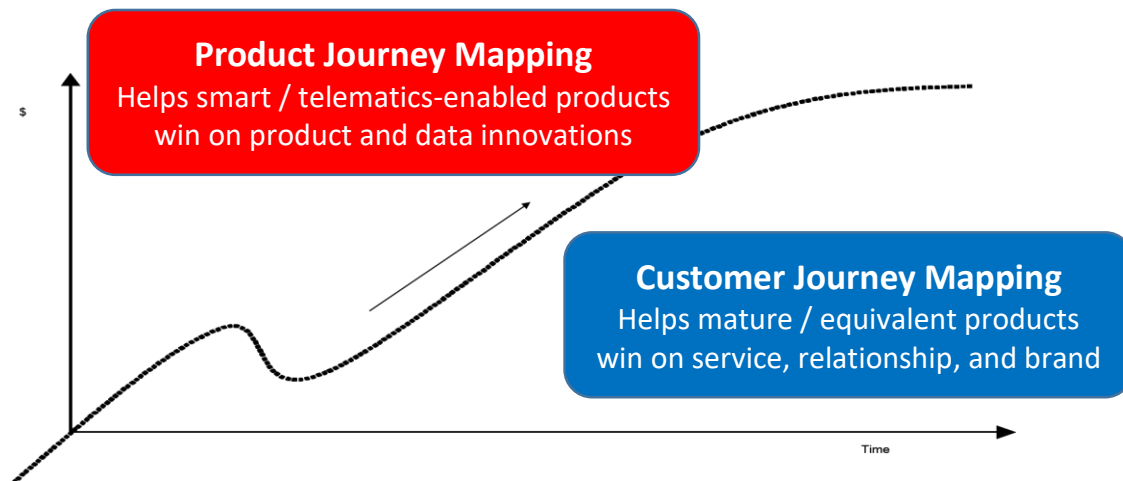
20/20 Vision for Marketing Breakthroughs

The Product Journey is a different paradigm than the Customer Journey. Its purpose is to understand the customer organization's interaction with the PRODUCT including their behaviors, thoughts, frustrations, and delights throughout the customer's entire life cycle with your product - setting the stage for product innovations that can change the game.

The customer is often a customer organization, with many different individuals and functions that use and maintain the product or the data coming from the product. As such, understanding the experience each of these functions / individuals has throughout their interactions is required to understand the value offered and opportunities to create new value.



Customer journey mapping is one of the hottest topics in marketing today. Looking at a market life cycle, Customer Journey Mapping is being used by companies with mature and maturing products in an effort to differentiate their offerings from competition. Customer Journey Mapping identifies how to differentiate on service, relationships, and brand promise.



Companies who have decided to win based on "product experience" are investing more in learning about their customer's product needs and how to integrate digital technology into their products to create new value. These companies need to explore "Product Journey Maps."

20/20 Vision for Marketing Breakthroughs

Product Journey Maps identify the key interactions that the customer organization and individual users have with your product or service.

QDI has developed a framework for Product Journey Mapping that defines the stages of interaction a customer has with your product. This level of deep product insight enables the next round of innovations in the product, in product maintenance, and in related data services.



The Product Journey map looks at the customer's stages of interaction with a product from the time they identify a need they are trying to solve to when they replace or terminate the use of that product in their business. Product Journey Mapping looks at the customer's product use life cycle - from needs creation through replacement and termination -- with the focus on the PRODUCT.

At each step in this Product Journey you are trying to understand the customer's behaviors, thoughts, feelings and how these impact the product decision they make. Intimate knowledge of the customer's expected use application and the problems they are trying to solve are critical to uncover in a Product Journey.

QDI's Product Journey Map shares a key characteristic with Customer Journey Maps; you need to know "who the customer is" on the journey. Multiple people in organizations partake in this Product Journey and as such you need to understand each person's role and interactions.

QDI's Framework for Understanding the Product Journey explores what you are trying to learn about the product, product need, and customer application at each of the five stages of product interaction:

- Needs Creation - What problem are they trying to solve? What challenges are they facing in the business? What external forces may be driving them to consider a change?
- Education - Relative to the product and the customer's buying process, what sources do they use to learn about equipment options – particularly before they engage with you directly?

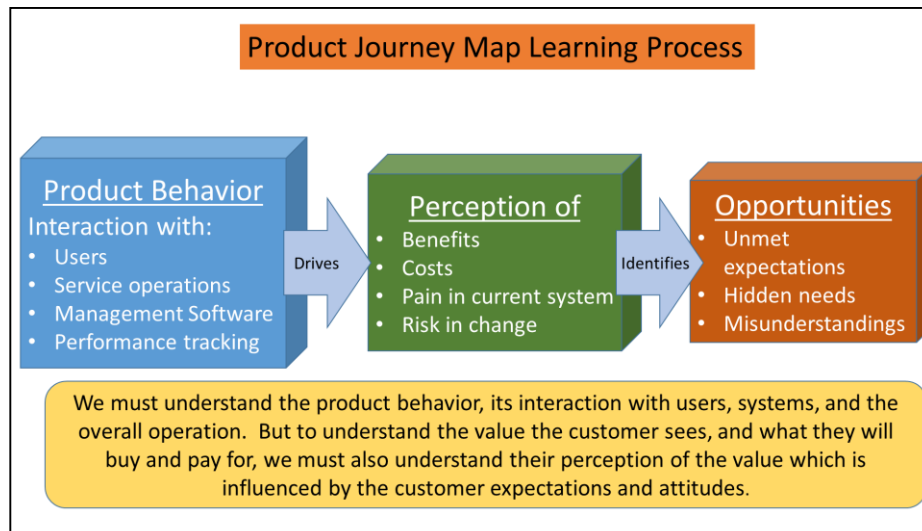
20/20 Vision for Marketing Breakthroughs

- Purchase – What are the customer’s expectations of the product, purchase process, and post-sale support? What is the product criteria on which the decision is based? What assumptions about the product’s interaction with other equipment, people, and reporting systems is the customer making?
- Use – Starting with detailed descriptions of the customer’s operating environment, what are the problems they are trying to solve and how do those problems relate to their overall operations? With smart products, how is the customer planning to integrate them into its business today? How will they handle data? Who analyzes and stores the data? What opportunities exist to assist the customer and what are they worth to the customer?
- Replacement / Termination - What are the customer’s expectations or experience with replacing a product like this (or this product)?

At each stage of the customer’s life cycle with your product you are seeking to learn about the customer’s behavior, expectation, perceptions and attitudes and how they impact decisions regarding your product, your company, and your business processes.

Ultimately, the customer’s perception of the value you deliver is based on how well you meet his expectations (regardless of what you said, if the customer expected your product to reduce the time needed by 30% the customer will measure you against this expectation).

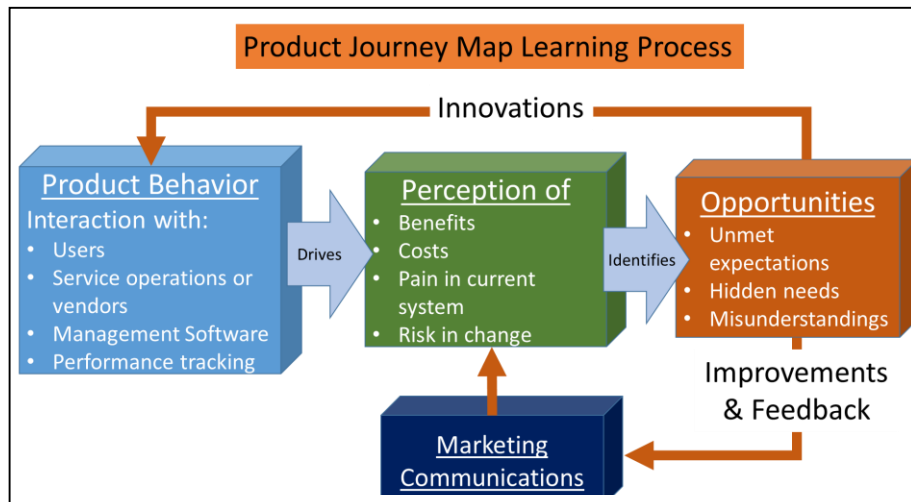
Underlying these expectations and perceptions of you and your performance are the customer’s attitudes toward your product and your company



(I.e., if the customer’s attitude is your brand doesn’t justify the premium, then your innovations must demonstrate the performance improvements). This level of insight is needed at each stage of customer interaction.

20/20 Vision for Marketing Breakthroughs

With this level of product / customer insight you can then look to understand what is changing in the customer's business and competitive environment (I.e., if the customer is extending service intervals, is this a maintenance service opportunity or maybe a digital analytics opportunity). With these insights, you can then identify two major opportunities to increase your value to customers:



- Innovate to create products and services that meet the changing needs you have discovered
- Implement product and process improvements that meet customer expectations and communicate your abilities and new levels of performance to the customer and your internal organization.

The Product Journey is a different paradigm than the customer journey. It strives to understand the customer's interactions with your product throughout the customer's entire life cycle of interactions with your product - setting the stage for innovations that can change the game.

We call this process a learning journey because it is iterative and as you learn more you find more you need to understand. Likewise, as the world moves to smart products, the learning gets more complicated as you are trying to understand how customers utilize the data from a product as well as the underlying product. The data that comes from products moves across the organization and ends up creating value for audiences that never interacted with the product itself. Thus, the Product Journey in the smart product world becomes a much more dynamic learning journey.

Conclusion:

The Product Journey is a different paradigm, focusing on the customers' interactions with the product from need through use to sale/disposal. Product Journey Maps provide the insight to move to game changing product innovation and digital services based on real customer voice.

20/20 Vision for Marketing Breakthroughs

About QDI Strategies

QDI Strategies has been helping companies create marketing breakthroughs in product, brand, and channels for over 25 years.

Where Clients Ask QDI for Help

New Products / New Markets	Develop market insight to <u>speed</u> launch and ramp-up while <u>reducing the risks</u>
Channel Issues	Provide <u>clarity</u> regarding conflict, performance, and go-to-market options
Share Growth	Discover market drivers and determine <u>strategy opportunities</u>

QDI Strategies, Inc.
1580 S. Milwaukee Ave, Ste. 620
Libertyville, IL 60048
Tel: 847-566-2020
Fax: 847-281-9723
www.qdistrategies.com

