

GET TO KNOW YOUR CLIENT JOURNEY

Peter King explains how Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre got to grips with understanding their customers

CENTRES need to put a major effort into staying ahead of the competition by understanding who their customers are and what's important to them.

At Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre that has meant a specific initiative focusing on the Customer Journey that we undertook two years ago – a game changer for us, and a project that has generated great interest among venues around the world. In fact, it is a piece of work that provides insights that impact all customer-facing businesses.

MCEC had built a thorough three-year plan encompassing all parts of our business, resulting in a detailed series of goals, objectives and delivery strategies designed to help MCEC remain ahead of its competition. This is nothing different from what most businesses do these days. However, in our view, one critical element was missing: MCEC's customers. Historically, were operationally focused and prescriptive in the way we interacted with our stakeholders.

This needed to change. We felt we needed to become completely customer centric, with the needs and expectations of our customers driving every decision we made. This proved to be the most important decision we have made and has transformed our entire business – our relationships, our understanding and our structure, including even our event-delivery model.

The Customer Journey project had a clear scope and sequence, which was:

- To accurately define our key customers.
- To outline their needs, desires and influences with respect to events – effectively humanising them and providing consistency across the business.
- Mapping how they currently make decisions and interact with MCEC, and
- Using those maps to identify clear opportunities to improve the customer experience, be that through service, communications, content, F&B etc.

Ultimately, we wanted to deconstruct our customers and their needs with precision, so we could determine the best way of satisfying their requirements. Faced with these four challenges, we took the following steps:

- We crafted a set of seven customer personas to create a common language and customer objectives within the business;
- We mapped the various journeys taken by our customers in their interactions with us;
- We identified ideas for improving their respective customer experiences.

Each of these steps included a series of detailed actions.



In addition to his role on the AIPC board, Peter King is chief executive of Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre



As a result of our findings, we reorganised our structure to ensure we provided assistance and support to customers at critical times in their particular journey with us. Our team has received constant positive feedback since this change, and we know that they now feel more empowered to provide immediate outcomes that satisfy our customers. Across the business, our post-event survey results are at the highest levels we have ever seen.

We recently announced the launch of our customer portal, myMCEC, which is a direct result of our Customer Journey work and aims to ensure customers continue to find it easy to do business with MCEC.

In stage two of our Customer Journey we have to reset our teams, continue to challenge them and improve our delivery performance every year.

Standing still is not an option – and by basing our evolving structure and practices on specific customer perspectives we are ensuring that changes will work to their greatest advantage. ●