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Master Thesis

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Subject

"Customer-Led Lean Operations and Tools"

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Dedicated to

my family.

"When everything seems

to be going against you,

remember that the airplane

takes off against the wind,

not with it." – Henry Ford

Customer-Led Lean Operations and Tools

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Key words: Customer experience, Lean management, touchpoints, wastes, Omni-channels, value, Journey mapping, Lean and Customer Experience methodology.

Abstract: The purpose of this master thesis is to show the importance of the customer experience and its improvement through the Lean management philosophy and techniques in a theoretical basis. There is a presentation of the literature review for both in order the reader to understand their terms.

Moreover, we analyze the important tools of the customer experience such as the customer journey mapping. Touchpoints and channels are being presented also since they consist significant elements of the maps. Furthermore, as we continue we present the digital experiences through the websites and give some great examples in order to show their significance.

Finally, there is an effort to show the common characteristics of both approaches and the way they can cooperate together to make customer experiences better and improve every potential problem. At the end, all the international bibliography is provided.

Methodology

In this Master Thesis, Google Scholar and Scientific sites have been used to start the search for quality research papers. Initially "lean management," "Customer experience management," "touchpoints," "Lean literature review and Case Studies" and "Lean and Customer service" were used as the search keywords. Moreover, documents and articles from different sites were found with key words, "digital marketing", "channels" and "websites".

Thereafter, keyword "lean management and lean literature review" were used and 35 papers were downloaded as "Customer experience" was used and 45 papers also were downloaded. These papers were studied to understand the research issues and to collect some crucial information for the project. It was observed that many of these papers, not only provided literature review on Lean Management and Customer Experience Management, but also case studies.

For Lean management, papers were divided in 6 categories: case studies (7), literature review (12), tools and techniques (10), conceptual (6). The same methodology was conducted for Customer Experience management: case studies (6), literature review (10), tools and techniques (20), conceptual (4) and empirical (15).

Overall 134 papers have been reviewed from over 35 international journals and scientific websites over the period of 1988-2015. But, this set of 134 papers does not include all papers which were used in review of Customer experience and Lean Management definitions. In this critical research review, literature review papers, conceptual papers, descriptive papers, exploratory papers, and empirical papers including case studies, surveys, and best practices were included. In this project tools and techniques will be included some of those are, Total Customer Experience tools, Customer Experience Management models, 5S, Just in time, Affinity Diagram, and Kaizen.

Primary databases searched for the papers were Emerald, Elsevier, NICE, Oracle, Mckinsey, Harvard Business School and Springer publishing groups. However, there are many limitations on the search methodology. There are not many papers which combine customer experience and lean management for organizations and specifically how they can be combined.

Structure

In the 1st Chapter, general information is presented for customer experience and Lean management, in order the reader to understand the reason of this thesis and also the contents of the next chapters.

In the 2nd Chapter, there is the literature review for both sides. In other words, we can understand what is the customer experience and Lean, which are their tools and methods and why they are so important in recent years.

In the 3rd Chapter, are presented the steps of a customer journey mapping, some significant elements that organizations should be focused on such as, touchpoints, moments of truth and channels. At the end of the chapter, there is an example in order the reader to have a clearer view.

In the 4rth Chapter, we discuss about the differences between an Omni-channel experience and a Multi-channel. Furthermore, examples of great companies are presented to the readers.

In the 5th Chapter, information about digital experience is cited and some of the biggest trends in the digital world for 2015 and 2016.

In the 6th Chapter, we are present how customer experience and Lean can be used together for better results in the company's profits and the customer's satisfaction.

In the 7th Chapter we present the conclusions from the whole project and some information for future research.

In the 8th Chapter the international bibliography is being presented.

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1. Introduction

In recent years, the service sector became the most important part of almost every economy in the world, considering that service's contribution to GDP is in a high level. For example, in 2013 services in the USA consist the 77.71% of GDP, in Japan the 73.1% of GDP and in Greece the 82.41% of GDP, (QuandI Financial and Economic Data). This means that organizations must invest to the customers and create unique experiences for them, in order to sustain their success and improve their competiveness. Almost every company in the service sector realized that customers are inextricably linked with service operations and as a result they do their best to create value for them through reinforcement programs and customer-focused strategies. (Su, 1999)

Actually, organizations which trying to compete in the battlefield of services, must adopt strategies that have customers in the focal point and offer them good solutions. It is vital to keep customer satisfied, and if sometimes do not achieve that, they should listen to customer's complaints. These complaints consist a treasure for organizations because they can learn why their services did not live up to customer's expectations and how to improve the problematic pieces of it. The customer will be loyal to any company that achieves to obliterate their dissatisfaction. (Kong, 2011)

Before, the success of a product was measured by its physical dimensions such as price. (Clutterbuck, 1998), (Fudenberg, 2000), (McAlexander, 2002). Nowadays, customers presume that all of these characteristics such as quality, delivery, functionality are given from all service companies. That is why organizations in order to be different from their competitors should give more emphasis in customer experience and in the emotional connection that the customer has with the brand (Anderson, 2006), (Barber, 2005), (Bendapudi, 2005), (McGrath, 2005), (Mascarenhas, 2004), (Narayandas, 2005), (Selden, 2006), (Bernacchi, 2006).

Customer experience means the emotions that consumers have when they come in direct contact with an organization "the touchpoints"[1] such as tangibles, the shape of the product, the packaging, and the usefulness.

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[1] Definition: A point of contact or interaction, especially between a business and its customers or consumers (Oxford dictionaries)

Also, indirect contact could occur such as, product representation and word of mouth. The importance of customer experience management lies in the concept that, it tries to improve the gaps between the customer's expectations and customer's experience (Schwager, 2007).

People from the marketing field; urge more and more organizations to use the principles and tools of TCE[2] in order to be strong competitors and to achieve the maintenance of their customers. That means that customers will be loyal to the company. Moreover, TCE it has a better implementation if it is focused on improvement (Calhoun, 2001). Although, organizations use these tools to have a competitive advantage, there are still some obstacles that they have to overcome such as, innovative products, products with lower prices and better ways to promote new brands. (Schiffman, 1997), (Bernacchi, 2006).

Actually, organizations trying to maintain their competiveness successfully must think how to keep their customers satisfied and especially to give them great experiences. It is not a secret that dissatisfied customers will unveil their poor experience to other people (Horovitz, 1990).

A dissatisfied customer from a negative experience has a massive impact in company's performance. So, in order organizations to avoid customers from moving to competitors and to attract new ones should listen to their customer's voices. According to customer led management concept, service companies should determine the type of improvements after monitoring the opinion of their customers. (Su, 1999). Customer experience management is a very strong tool in the hands of organizations, and it could separate them from the competitors (Shaw, 2002).

Despite this, there is not a lot of research in literature explaining how organizations can implement and improve the interactions with customers and their brands. In a few words, how customers could have the greatest experience.

There are 10 stats showing the importance of customer experience management:

1. *"86% of buyers will pay more for a better customer experience. But only 1% of customers feel that vendors consistently meet their expectations."*
   Source: Customer Experience: Is it the Chicken or the Egg, Forbes, 2013

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[2] <u>Definition:</u> It is a totally positive, engaging, enduring, and socially fulfilling physical and emotional customer experience across all major levels of one's consumption chain and one that is brought about by a distinct market offering that calls for active interaction between consumers and providers. (GUO, 2012)

2. *"40% of organizations cite 'complexity' as the greatest barrier to improving multichannel customer experience, overtaking 'organizational structure' since 2010."*
   Source: E consultancy Multichannel Customer Experience Report

3. *"Only 37% of brands received good or excellent customer experience index scores this year. 64% of brands got a rating of "OK," "poor or "very poor" from their customers."*
   Source: Forrester's Customer Experience Index, 2012

4. *"89% of consumers began doing business with a competitor following a poor customer experience."*
   Source: Right Now Customer Experience Impact Report 2011

5. *"Customer power has grown, as 73% of firms trust recommendations from friends and family, while only 19% trust direct mail"*
   Source: from Forrester's report "Consumer "Ad-itudes" Stay Strong," Forrester Research Blog

6. *"86% of consumers will pay more for a better customer experience."*
   Source: Right Now Customer Experience Impact Report 2011

7. *"Only 26% of companies have a well-developed strategy in place for improving the customer experience."*
   Source: Econsultancy Multichannel Customer Experience Report

8. *"When asked what were the key drivers for a customer to spend more with a company 40% said improvement in the overall customer experience, and 35% said provide quick access to information and make it easier for customers to answer questions."*
   Source: Oracle Report: Why Customer Satisfaction is No Longer Good Enough

9. *"Even in a negative economy, customer experience is a high priority for consumers. 60 per cent say they often or always pay more for a better experience."*
   Source: Harris Interactive, Customer Experience Impact Report

10. *"About 13 per cent of dissatisfied customers tell more than 20 people."*
    Source: White House Office of Consumer Affairs, Washington, DC)

11. *"85 per cent of dissatisfied customers tell 10 people about their experience, delighted customers tell eight people, and satisfied ones tell five."*
    Source: Fortune magazine

At the same time, 50 years ago, no one could imagine that Lean would be the most significant management philosophy for operations. Although, Ford used Lean for assembly lines, nowadays it has expanded to financial services, health division and IT, but despite Lean's evolution, many researchers claim that it has a long way ahead. (Ritter, 2014)

Historically, Lean thinking was developed as a result of the massive competition and the shortage of resources in Japan especially in the car industry. Actually it belongs in the innovative ideas of Toyota Motor Corporation (Shingo, 1988), (Monden, 1983), (Ohno, 1988). Their aim was to create a process-focused system in order to find the resources that did not add value to the customer and reduce them. In a few words, they tried to eliminate all the wastes[3]. Lean management gave a strong competitive advantage to companies especially in times of strong competition among the industries, (Taylor, 1997). That is because not only from the implementation of a philosophy but also from the difficulty to be copied by the competitors. (Emiliani, 1998)

 Some of the first methods of Lean are Just in Time (JIT)[4] and Kanban[5]. These techniques not only tried to make employee's job easier, but also they were concentrated on eliminating wastes. (Rich, 2009)

With the term "wastes" we mean actions that block the good performance of their operations and obligate them to offer products and services with no value to the customers. "*The primary types of waste include defects, re-work, and overproduction of goods, transportation, waiting, inventory, unnecessary movement, and unnecessary processing* (Womack, 1996)*. There are five basic concepts that define lean thinking and enable lean production: specify value, identify the value stream, flow, pull, and perfection"* (Womack, 1996).

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[3] Definition: Waste in lean production is defined as actions that do not add value to a product and can be eliminated. (Emiliani, 1998)

[4] "Just-in-Time" means making "only what is needed, when it is needed, and in the amount needed." For example, to efficiently produce a large number of automobiles, which can consist of around 30,000 parts, it is necessary to create a detailed production plan that includes parts procurement. Supplying "what is needed, when it is needed, and in the amount needed" according to this production plan can eliminate waste, inconsistencies, and unreasonable requirements, resulting in improved productivity. (Toyota)

[5] In the TPS (Toyota Production System), a unique production control method called the "Kanban system" plays an integral role. Because Toyota employed Kanban signs for use in their production processes, the method came to be called the "Kanban system." At Toyota, when a process refers to a preceding process to retrieve parts, it uses a Kanban to communicate which parts have been used. (Toyota)

Many organizations in order to compete in the worldwide market, are trying to implement the Lean thinking and its tools. The secret of its success relies on its philosophy, which consists of continuous improvement and elimination of processes and resources that do not add value[6] to the end customer. As we said earlier, these processes are known as wastes, and Lean undertakes to minimize them, so that they cannot cause additional costs to the firm. If companies want to win in the game of competition, they have to trust Lean and its techniques and be the first who will try the continuous improvement. (Lean Manufacturing Tools)

These firms that implement Lean management, appear to have a competitive advantage[7]. According to its definition, all the resources of an operation create true value to the end customer if only they participate in the processes and they give to companies the opportunity to satisfy their customers and keep them in that way. (Lewis, 2000)

Customers are willing to purchase products in any price if they receive the equivalent quality and satisfaction from the services or products. According to the above, there are two ways to create value to the consumers:

I.   *Value is created if internal waste is reduced, as the wasteful activities and the associated costs are reduced, increasing the overall value proposition for the customer.*

II. *Value is also increased, if additional features or services are offered, which are valued by the customer. This could entail a shorter delivery cycle or smaller delivery batches, which might not add additional cost, yet add customer value.* (Rich, 2009)

The relationship between the customer and organizations is infinite because every day, new needs are emerging and firms trying to satisfy them, using quality processes with lower costs and reduction of every resource which is considered waste. So, firms should comprehend what is value to the customer and how it will reach to them. (Radnor, 2012). Actually this is the first stage that organization should understand. The most important is that employees and especially the entire business must embrace the idea of satisfying the customer's needs.

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[6] Working from the perspective of the customer who consumes a product or service, "value" is defined as any action or process that a customer would be willing to pay for. (Wikipedia)

[7] Definition: Competitive advantage can be defined as the result of a business being either a particularly able player in its market (i.e. being better, which could mean being lower cost or more lean) and/or, being differentiated in what it offers. (Lewis, 2000)

This is the step where Lean thinking comes to connect the organization with the customers, and not only to understand their needs but also to convey them into the firm, in order everyone to express their ideas about new ways to satisfy and retain the customers. The true goal of an organization is to materialize the promises that they give to the customers and to think before them. This will give the consumers the chance to have a great experience and a truly valuable customer journey. (Radnor, 2012)

Managers and marketers of a firm must learn how to listen to the needs of the customers and expectations in order to deliver them products and services with the appropriate characteristics and quality. The second idea is that, companies should understand that operations are complex and most of the time this is an obstacle in satisfying the customer, but they somehow have to find a way to survive. (Follett, 2014)

Through the time of twenty years, a lot of techniques and methods were used to succeed this improvement such as build-to-order, Agile and Six Sigma (Hill, 2005). Although these methods offered many possibilities for improvements, only Lean management approach is the most suitable for change. (Rich, 2009)

"Lean production is able to manufacture a larger variety of products, at lower costs and better quality, with less of inputs, compared to traditional mass production: less human effort, less space, less investment, and less total cycle time as it utilizes optimal skills of the workers, by giving them multiple task, by integrating direct and indirect work, and by encouraging continuous improvement activities (Dankbaar, 1997)*."* (Sharma, 2009)

Nowadays, where firms encounter many financial difficulties, Lean management can ensure them sustainability by expunging the main wastes. Some of its benefits are:

a. Employees that are fully trained, in order to be flexible and can assist in every department when need it.

b. Reduction of the costs that customers pay through the price of the product. In that way industries can maintain their key clients and even attract new ones. Moreover, it can reduce the waiting during the service delivery.

c. The communication between the organization and the customers will be improved by listening to the voice of the customer, and build products and services to cause them satisfaction and trust with the organization.

d. Trustworthy suppliers, which will deliver quality products and on time. This strategy will save money and time for the firm, because there will be no need of rechecking the products for potential defects. (Sharma, 2009)

e. In addition, the implementation of Lean management, not only has quantitative but also tactile effects. Some quantitative are the reduction of inventories and time, the reduction of faults in the final products and the productivity growth. On the other side, some the tactile effects are:

- *Consolidation of product service lines and departments leading to more standard processes, reduced variability, flatter management structures and more flexible processes.*

- *Decreasing work in progress by removing bottlenecks and making work flow smoothly.*

- *Increased capacity and output leading to more on time delivery of services thereby increasing customer satisfaction as they receive an improved and more consistent level of service.*

- *Reducing instances of failure demand[8]. The reduction of failure demand includes fewer calls being made to an authority to complain about the lack of a service or a service not being delivered properly.* (Radnor, 2012)

Research in organizations that used Lean management showed: *"eliminating waste, inflexibility and variability in their systems and reducing costs by up to 50% in the process. End customers enjoy high service levels too, with pharmacies and hospitals receiving off-hours or short-notice shipments, often at no extra cost"* (Knut Alicke, 2010)

Although, Lean management is considered an example of how operations should work, its development raises a lot of theoretical and methodological questions. (Katayama and Bennett,

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[8] Failure demand is when an organization's service standards fail to meet or exceed customer expectations about when and how a service should be undertaken and so the customer complains about the service, thus creating more demand on the service, regardless of whether the problem is the responsibility of the authority or not. (Radnor, 2012)

1996). For over a decade, Lean became a significant part of service industries. These are the leaders for other types of organizations to start using this philosophy, in order to stay strong in the competition.

Specifically, companies in the service industry care about the customer experience and how they will deliver quality combined with low prices. In order to succeed on this, they had to decrease the cost of the processes and create value to the consumers, mainly for keeping them happy and satisfied. So, they achieved it through the Lean management, as they find it the best way. Lean is a trustworthy kind of management, as organizations ascertain from the results. One more example of its offer is that there were "*improvements of up to 20 percent in customer satisfaction and 25 percent in the engagement of organization's people."* (Hemsley, 2014)

From all the above we can extract that, customers are the most significant part of an organization. Specifically, customers can define the success in a company if their expectations are fulfilled. The purpose of this project is to show how to improve customer experience so it can be better in order both sides (company and consumers) to be satisfied and be easier to implement. This improvement must derive from the Implementation of Lean management and its techniques and this combination we will try to prove.

So far, we can focalize to the most critical reasons why the implementation of Customer Experience Management combined with Lean management is so notable for an organization to commit.

First of all, they improve customer satisfaction in every interaction, forcing them to stay loyal and to communicate their experience to other possible customers. Moreover, they create value to customers by keeping them satisfied and that is a strong competitive advantage for a company. Last but not least, customers prefer to remain loyal to organizations that offer them good experiences and because of that, organizations achieve increased sales and revenues. We will further analyze this combination at the following chapters.

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2. Literature Review

2.1.   Customer experience

The first usage of the term "experiences" refers to ongoing perceptions, feelings, and direct observations. Webster's Third New International Dictionary defines experience in that vein as "direct observation of or participation in events: an encountering, undergoing, or living through things in general as they take place in the course of time." The second definition refers to the past, referring to knowledge and accumulated experiences over time – or, as the Webster's Third New International Dictionary states, to "knowledge, skill, or practice derived from direct observation of or participation in events: practical wisdom resulting from what one has encountered, undergone, or lived." (Zarantonello, 2015)

Experience, as it is described in Collins English Dictionary is, *"The accumulation of knowledge or skill that results from direct participation in events or activities" and ". . . the content of direct observation or participation in an event"* (Collins, 2007).

Another definition from The Oxford English Dictionary is *"Active participation in events or activities, leading to the accumulation of knowledge or skill" (OUP, 2006). These are essentially cognitive definitions of experience as an outcome. A more affective and process based definitions is provided by the American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (2006), which defines experience as "The feeling of emotions and sensations as opposed to thinking" and ". . . involvement in what is happening rather than abstract reflection on an event".* (Palmer, 2010)

Schmitt (1999, p. 26) refers to another definition for experiences *". . . provide sensory, emotional, cognitive, behavioral and relational values that replace functional values"*. Likewise Gupta and Vajic (2000, p. 34) and (Harris et al., 2003) stated a more holistic definition *". . . an experience occurs when a customer has any sensation or knowledge acquisition resulting from some level of interaction with different elements of a context created by the service provider" and "total customer experience emphasizes the importance of all contacts that a consumer has with an organization and the consumer's holistic experience"*

According to Mitchell M. Tseng Ma Qinhai Chuan-Jun Su (1999), customer satisfaction from the service of an organization is vital for its successful performance. If this satisfaction grows, as a

result of every interaction that the customer has with services, organizations acquire a sustainable competitive advantage and business improvement. (Su, 1999)

Carbone and Haeckel (1994), were the first who mentioned that there is a gap in the literature related to how organizations could implement and improve their customer experience in order to have increased revenues and keep the customers satisfied (Bate, 2007), (Kong, 2011)

Several researchers such as Prahalad and Ramaswamy, (2004) and (Schwager, 2007), came to the conclusion that the good customer experience makes firms strong competitors. (Su, 1999)

As Abbott (1955) cited in Holbrook (2006, p. 40): "*[. . .] what people really desire are not products, but satisfying experiences. Experiences are attained through activities. In order that activities may be carried out, physical objects for the services of human beings are usually needed. Here lies the connecting link between men's inner world and the outer world of economic activity. People want products because they want the experience which they hope the products will render.*" (Palmer, 2010)

In previous years, it was evident that companies did not care about customers and the experiences they had and as a consequence their services were poor, Shostack (1984) claims. At the same time, Nunes and Cespedes (2003) noticed that the cause of the poor service was that organizations concentrated only on the characteristics of the product and not at the creation of value for the customers. (Su, 1999)

On the other side, Roberts (2004), points out the significance of creating value for the customers and brands that would give to the consumers the opportunity to have positive experiences with a product or a service. Moreover, an organization must motivate the customer to trust the brand in order to communicate it to other possible clients, Smith and Wheeler (2002) adds. (Palmer, 2010)

As (Liljander and Strandvik, 1997), (Yu and Dean, 2001; Pullman and Gross, 2004; Mascarenhas et al., 2006), (Johnson and Mathews, 1997; Flanagan et al., 2005), (Flanagan et al., 2005), (Grace and O'Cass, 2004; Berry and Carbone, 2007) and (Pullman and Gross, 2004) argue the benefit of a good customer experience is that keeps the customer loyal, fulfils his/her expectations and grows the trust between the customer and the brand. (Su, 1999)

David Court, Dave Elzinga, Susan Mulder and Ole Jorgen Vetvik (2009), comes to prove the above through a research where they found that organizations should find a way to communicate with the customers and improve the word-of-mouth approach. These two findings are significant, because organizations can ensure that their clients are satisfied and so loyal to them, that they can bring new ones in the company. (David Court, 2009)

Leonard L. Berry and Lewis P. Carbone (2008) noticed that the first and most important step for a company is to comprehend the customer and empathize him. In a few words, it should be in a position to know before them, the expectations of the customers and the evaluation that they will do after the experience. At the same time, Stephan H. Haeckel (2008) argues that, the organization should recognize the "touchpoints" that the customer has from the interaction with the company and design a map for the customer journey. (Leonard L. Berry, 2002)

The definition that Adam Richardson (2010) gives to the customer journey map is: "*A customer journey map is a very simple idea: a diagram that illustrates the steps your customer(s) go through in engaging with your company, whether it be a product, an online experience, retail experience, or a service, or any combination."* (Adam Richardson, 2010)

Adam Richardson (2010) also highlights the importance of the mapping of customer journey, explaining that if managers and marketers do this for every product or service, they will understand the consumer's point of view. Also, after the mapping the company can proceed in finding the touchpoints that are necessary every time. For him there are four categories of touchpoints *(Products, Interactions, Messages, and Settings)*. He also emphasizes that, the mapping and touchpoints demand hard work almost from all parts of an organization. (Adam Richardson, 2010)

Ewan Duncan, Conor Jones, and Alex Rawson (2013), in their research about customer journeys discovered that companies who can create the whole experience have many profits such as, decreased losses, improved consumer satisfaction, higher revenue and increased employee satisfaction. More particularly, "*the unit's on-site customer-service scores had doubled, revenues from upselling had climbed 5 percent, and the cost of serving customers had dropped 10 percent."*

Despite the benefits, every firm should adjust customer journeys to their unique strategy in four ways: "*they must identify the journeys in which they need to excel, understand how they are currently performing in each, and build cross-functional processes to redesign and support those*

journeys, and institute cultural change and continuous improvement to sustain the initiatives at scale." (Ewan Duncan, 2013)

An interesting framework comes from Adam Richardson (2010), which present how organizations should design their customer journey mapping, what questions should be included in each stage and how they could overcome possible obstacles. The stages of this framework are:

a. **"Actions:** *What is the customer doing at each stage? What actions are they taking to move themselves on to the next stage? (Don't list what your company or partners such as retailers are doing here. That will come later when we look at touchpoints)*

b. **Motivations:** *Why is the customer motivated to keep going to the next stage? What emotions are they feeling? Why do they care?*

c. **Questions:** *What are the uncertainties, jargon, or other issues preventing the customer from moving to the next stage?*

d. **Barriers:** *What structural, process, cost, implementation, or other barriers stand in the way of moving on to the next stage?"* (Adam Richardson, 2010)

Berry and Carbone in 2007 suggested a five-phase approach, to help managers to design their customer experiences and journeys.

i. *Identify the emotions that evoke customer commitment.*

ii. *Establish an experience motif.*

iii. *Inventory and evaluate experience clues.*

iv. *Determine the experience gap.*

v. *Close the experience gap and monitor execution.* (Kong, 2011)

i. According to Carbone also a firm in order to be customer-centric should have three important characteristics.

- *Vision and strategy (clear experience statements);*

- *Leadership such as a CXO (chief experience officer); and.*

- *Transfer of skills and knowledge by getting employee to think in terms of experience clues.* (Kong, 2011)

Many researchers argue that, the mapping of customer journey is very important, even if it is not necessary, because it can capture the touchpoints and the moments of truth that customers are likely to meet and feel. This will give the opportunity to managers to create journeys for the customers which will be pleasant and give positive experiences. (David Court, 2009)

In addition, (Lusch, 2007), (Zomerdijk, 2010) and (Carbone, 2004), tried to explain the customer's perspective. As they claim, customers can perceive if the company wants to create value for them through their products or services. Moreover, customers sometimes separate their experience unconsciously in negative or positive, because they can evaluate if their needs and expectations from their journey are fulfilled. (Kong, 2011)

Although it is proved that a negative experience will dissatisfy the customers, Katz et al. (1991) found from his research in banking operations that, while customers were waiting in order to be served longer than 5 minutes, their satisfaction were decreased. But when the company found a way to distract their attentions their dissatisfaction decreased. So this contributed to help managers to find one more way to design and improve their services. (Su, 1999)

An interesting theory comes from Ratner, Kahn, and Kahneman (1999), who noticed that, customers prefer to stop a pleasant experience and start a new one, without having the same positive emotions. The explanation is that customers prefer having plenty of average memories, rather than perfect and few ones. (Zarantonello, 2015)

Sheth et al. (1999), argue that companies can form consumer's attitude and then their experiences, if combine three factors:

1. "***Stimulus characteristics*** *– people perceive a stimulus differently according to its sensory characteristics and information content. Stimuli that differ from others around them are more likely to be noticed (Solomon, 1999).*

2. ***Context*** *– in perceiving stimuli with a given set of characteristics, individuals will also be influenced by the context of the stimulus (Biswas and Blair, 1991).*

3. ***Situational variables****- in which the information is received, including social, cultural and/or personal characteristics – perceptions are greatly influenced by individual characteristics, including prior experience with a particular product or service offering."* (Palmer, 2010)

According to Leonard L. Berry and Lewis P. Carbone (2008), firms can use another tool in order to understand customer's expectations and the degree that they are fulfilled, and that is in-depth interviews. They suggest that the same approach should be used for employees, since they are in contact with customers and they can realize their true feelings about a service. They also, propose to organizations to develop emotional bonds with their customers and always keep them satisfied, because this is difficult for other firms who provide the same services to be copied. (Leonard L. Berry, 2002)

Another researcher, Bruce Temkin (2008), displays the six laws of customer experience:

1) *"Every interaction creates a personal reaction."*

It is a very important step for a company to customize every solution to the exact expectation. Unfortunately it is very difficult for the organization to achieve that.

Below there are some implications derive from the first law:

"Experiences need to be designed for individuals."-Although it is extremely difficult to create experiences for every customer separately, it is a little easier to create categories.

"Customer segments must be prioritized"-Organizations must separate the truly loyal customers and try giving them the special experience that they seek.

"Customer feedback needs to be the key metric."-Measurements from the inside of the organizations do not give the true image of customer's needs and expectations.

"Employees need to be empowered"-Employees must be trained in order to comprehend when they have to customize a certain service to a certain consumer.

2) *"People are instinctively self-centered."*

Every individual more or less cares about its own needs and priorities, either he is a customer or an employee. Customers should care about more of how a service is delivered to them, and employees must focus on the client's needs.

Below there are some implications derive from the second law:

"You know more than your customers; deal with it."-Organizations must think that the customers do not know about the processes a product follows. Therefore the experiences of a customer must be easy to understand and feel.

"Don't sell things, help customers buy them."-In order a product or a service to be successful, it must be produced when having in mind the opinion of the customer.

"Don't let company organization drive experiences"- Companies should train their employees to assist the customers when they need it in order to have a pleasant experience.

3) *"Customer familiarity breeds alignment."*

Employees because of the poor coordination they have in the processes often cause unpleasant feelings to the customers and as a result they end up being dissatisfied.

Below there are some implications derive from the third law:

"Don't wait for organizational alignment."-Every organization has its defects. It is important for the company to always searches new ideas and new techniques. In order to wait a long time to acquire them, the best way is to focus on the customer's needs.

"Broadly share customer insight."-It is not a secret every individual in the organization is responsible for the product or service which will end up to the customer and not only people who interact with them.

"Talk about customer needs, not personal preferences."-It is important for a business operation to think from the customer's point of view when a product is made.

4) *"Unengaged employees don't create engaged customers."*

In order a firm to offer a customer the perfect customer journey, it must also trained its employees on how to think like a customer, why must produce products to keep him happy and loyal. So, organizations must concentrate not only on customers but also on employees. Actually, an article in the Harvard Business Review cited: *"Profit and growth are stimulated primarily by customer loyalty. Loyalty is a direct result of customer satisfaction. Satisfaction is largely influenced by the value of services provided to customers. Value is created by satisfied, loyal, and productive employees."*

Walt Disney also described this relationship:

"You can design and create, and build the most wonderful place in the world. But it takes people to make the dream a reality."

Below there are some implications deriving from the forth law:

"Don't under-spend on training."-If organizations want to succeed, they must not neglect the training of their employees as we cited above. The processes and the way the job is done cannot change if the people do not.

"Make it easy to do the right thing."-Employees, in order to help customers understand the characteristics of a product, it is essential to comprehend them first. Technologies must be easy to handle.

"Find ways to celebrate."-It is essential for employees to be rewarded for their good job, because it motivates them to be even better and as a result to keep the customers satisfied.

"Measure employee engagement."-Organizations should measure the experiences and the complaints of the customers, but in order to be intergraded, must also measure the performance of their employees.

5) *"Employees do what is measured, incented, and celebrated."*

Managers often try to explain why their products or services fail to satisfy their customers. They can find the answers if they see what actions have been measured, how well employees are doing their job and what circumstances are celebrated.

Below there are some implications derive from the fifth law:

"Don't "expect" people to do the right thing."-Employees often do what their employers ask and that is to achieve the profit and the short-term goals. If that is the case employees and employers must be taught to have in the center of their organization the customer satisfaction, and in that way they will be profitable.

"Clearly define good behavior."-Everyone in a company must know their role and especially employees. They have to know in moments of crisis what should be their behavior mostly in front of the customers.

"Watch out for mixed messages."-Organizations cannot always blame employees for their mistakes. They cannot reward the wrong results because employees get frustrated.

6) *"You cannot fake it."*

People cannot be fooled; at some point they will understand that they are not the number one priority of an organization. Employees too, can realize if the true goal is the creation of a perfect customer experience.

Below there are some implications derive from the last law:

"Don't hide behind a 4th priority."-It is understandable that an organization have many issues that need solutions, so they try to set some priorities. The first three priorities are the most important, so the customers must be in there.

"Sometimes it's better not to start."-If the customer experience is not the first priority, then the company should not begin a new costly project.

"Advertise to reinforce, not create positioning."-Organizations should use marketing to attract customers. Through the marketing the company has the opportunity to attract the audience. (Temkin, 2008)

David Court, Dave Elzinga, Susan Mulder and Ole Jorgen Vetvik (2009), point out that marketers not only should be occupied with the classic marketing like 4Ps, but also they have to find and create touchpoints which will be easy for the customers to understand.

A recent research found that *"two-thirds of the touch points during the active-evaluation phase involve consumer driven marketing activities, such as Internet reviews and word-of-mouth recommendations from friends and family, as well as in-store interactions and recollections of past experiences. A third of the touch points involve company-driven marketing."* (David Court, 2009). If organizations follow that pattern, it could be proved salutary and a competitive advantage. (Ewan Duncan, 2013)

2.2.   Lean Management

In the 21th century, where technology is changing, firms must adapt in the circumstances in order to survive from the massive competition. For that reason, they discover every day new tools and techniques, and use different types of management to achieve continuous improvement. (Sangwan, 2014)

Francisco Ortega, Alejandro Sandoval et, al, point out that nowadays, because of the worldwide competition, customers want something more than receiving the products and services they expect. They need to interact with the organization, be a part of it in order the organization to materialize all of its promises. This is the part where Lean management must participate and assist the company to evolve with new ideas and strategies, with employers that will comprehend the customers and offer them all the experience they seek. (Gazzo, 2014)

(Krafcik, 1989) and (Womack, 1990) were the first who present to the industries the term "lean production" in their book The Machine That Changed the World. The word lean derives from its utility since it eliminates wastes with the minimum cost and the maximum quality for the satisfaction of the customer and with less complex processes. (Shell, 2009)

According to LEAN Enterprise Institute, *"The original core idea behind LEAN is to maximize customer value while minimizing waste. Simply put, LEAN means creating more value for customers with fewer resources. A Lean organization understands customer value and focuses its key processes to continuously increase it. The ultimate goal is to provide perfect value to the customer through a perfect value creation process that has zero waste"*

As many writers note Lean is "*a way (Storch and Lim, 1999; Howell, 1999), a process (Womack et al., 1990), a set of principles (Womack et al., 1990), a set of tools and techniques (Bicheno, 2004), an approach (NIST, 2000; Taj and Morosan, 2011), a concept (Naylor et al., 1999), a philosophy (Liker, 1996; Cox and Blackstone, 1998; Singh, 1998; Comm and Mathaisel, 2000; Liker andWu, 2000; Alukal, 2003; Holweg, 2007; Shah andWard, 2007; De Treville and Antonakis, 2006), a practice (Framework of the LAI, MIT, 2000; Simpson and Power, 2005), a system (Womack and Jones, 1994; Cooper, 1996; Shah and ward, 2007; Hopp and Spearman, 2004), a program (Hallgren and Olhager, 2009), a manufacturing paradigm (Rothstein, 2004; Seth and Gupta, 2005), or a model (Alves et al., 2012). Scope of LM includes product development (Krafcik, 1988), operations*

management (Narasimhan et al., 2006), total supply chain (Womack et al., 1990; Singh, 1998; Naylor et al., 1999; Comm and Mathaisel, 2000; Cooney, 2002), human design element (Shah andWard, 2003), manufacturing paradigm (Rothstein, 2004; Seth and Gupta, 2005), market demand, and environment changes (Alves et al., 2012). Various goals for which LM is implemented are – to get large variety of products with fever defects (Krafcik, 1988), to integrate product development, supply chain management, and operation management (Womack et al., 1990), to reduce cost/produce more with less (Hayes and Pisano, 1994), to reduce time to delivery (Liker's, 1996), to level the production schedule (Naylor et al., 1999), to improve quality at low cost (Liker andWu, 2000), to remove waste from system (Worley, 2004), to maximize capacity and minimize inventory (De Treville and Antonakis, 2006), to improve productivity and quality (Bhamu et al., 2012), to achieve agility (Alves et al., 2012)" (Sangwan, 2014)

Moreover, from 1988 to 2012, lean management earned many different definitions by many notable researchers and writers, according to its growing utility. Some of them are cited below:

(Womack, 1994): *"Lean production can be defined as an alternative integrated production model because it combines distinctive tools, methods, and strategies in product development, supply management, and operations management into a coherent whole."*

(Cox, 1998): *"Lean production is a philosophy of production that emphasizes the minimization of the amount of all the resources (including time) used in the various activities in the enterprise. It involves identifying and eliminating non-value adding activities in design, production, supply-chain management, and dealing with the customers. Lean producers employ teams of multi-skilled workers at all levels of the organization and use highly flexible, increasingly automated machines to produce volumes of products in potentially enormous variety."*

(Rothstein, 2004): *"Lean production is more commonly considered as a broad production paradigm including an array of manufacturing systems containing some variety of lean practices, such as just-in- time inventory systems, teamwork, multi-tasking, employee involvement schemes, and policies for ensuring product quality throughout the production process"*

(Alves, 2012): *"Lean production is evidenced as a model where the persons assume a role of thinkers and their involvement promotes the continuous improvement and gives companies the agility they need to face the market demands and environment changes of today and tomorrow"* (Sangwan, 2014)

In 1990, Womack et al. introduce the three critical principles of Lean management:

1. *identification of value*

2. *elimination of waste and*

3. *the generation of smooth flow*

Much later, in 2003 Womack and Jones came to interlard these principles into five:

1. *Identifying customer defined value.*

2. *Optimizing the value stream.*

3. *Converting the value flow smoothly by controlling and eliminating wastes.*

4. *Activating the demand pull by synchronizing customer demand and information flow.*

5. *Perfection of all products processes and services.*

(Arif-Uz-Zaman, 2013)

These five principles of Lean management are analyzing below with the help of Cardiff University:

1. ***"Identify Customers and Specify Value*** *- The starting point is to recognize that only a small fraction of the total time and effort in any organization actually adds value for the end customer. By clearly defining Value for a specific product or service from the end customer's perspective, all the non-value activities - or waste - can be targeted for removal.*

2. ***Identify and Map the Value Stream –*** *The Value Stream is the entire set of activities across all parts of the organization involved in jointly delivering the product or service. This represents the end-to-end process that delivers the value to the customer. Once you understand what your customer wants the next step is to identify how you are delivering (or not) that to them.*

3. ***Create Flow by Eliminating Waste –*** *Typically when you first map the Value Stream you will find that only 5% of activities add value, this can rise to 45% in a service environment. Eliminating this waste ensures that your product or service "flows" to the customer without any interruption, detour or waiting.*

4. ***Respond to Customer Pull*** – *This is about understanding the customer demand on your service and then creating your process to respond to this. Such that you produce only what the customer wants when the customer wants it.*

5. ***Pursue Perfection*** *- Creating flow and pull starts with radically reorganizing individual process steps, but the gains become truly significant as the entire steps link together. As this happens more and more layers of waste become visible and the process continues towards the theoretical end point of perfection, where every asset and every action adds value for the end customer."* http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/lean/principles/

As we said in the first chapter, there are seven types of wastes. David Magee (2007) in his article formed the following definitions:

"Overproduction– Producing items more than required at given point of time i.e. producing items without actual orders creating the excess of inventories, which needs excess staffs, storage area as well as transportation etc."

"Waiting – Workers waiting for raw material, the machine or information etc. is known as waiting and is the waste of productive time."

"Unnecessary Transport – Carrying of Work in Process Inventory (WIP) a long distance, insufficient transport, moving material from one place to another place is known as the unnecessary transport."

"Over processing – working on a product, more than the actual requirements is termed as over processing."

"Excess Inventory - This includes excess raw material, WIP or finished goods causing longer lead times, obsolescence, damaged goods, transportation and storage costs, and delay. In addition, the extra inventory hides problems such as production imbalances, late deliveries from suppliers, defects, equipment downtime, and long setup times."

"Unnecessary Motion – Any wasted motion that the workers have to perform during their work is termed as unnecessary movement."

"Defects – Defects in the processed parts is termed as waste. Repairing defective parts or producing defective parts or replacing the parts due to poor quality etc. is the waste of time and effort."

"Unused Employee Creativity – Loosing of getting better ideas, improvement, skills and learning opportunities by avoiding the presence of employee is termed as unused employee creativity." (M. Shabeena Begam, 2013)

In addition, a company in the service industry in order to survive and be sustainable must eliminate anything that does not add value to the consumers, Sharad Sharma (2015) claims. Moreover, he believes that every process should be done right at the first time. As an example he mentions "a takeout restaurant and a bank executive handing the customer the correct form the first time."

Services can be categorized into three types, as Silvestro et al. (1992) identified. The first one is the professional service, such as a bank, where there is a serious concentration on customers and their satisfaction. The second one is the service shops, where employees have positions of back and front office and also has interactions with consumers and the third is the mass service.

Researchers, conceiving the explosion of services cited some case studies, in order to show that Lean manufacturing and methods can be used in the service sector too. Two of those researchers were Allway & Corbett (2002), who actually proved this theory through the findings of their research.

Some of the tools that organizations in the service sector found useful are production balancing (heijunka), just in time (JIT), 5S standardization and value stream mapping (VSM).

Production balancing (heijunka): "*is one of the pillars of the Toyota Production System. It leads to efficient resources use, inventory reduction, downtime and high and high costs elimination, hence directing the creation of processes flexibility. Practical applications of production balancing in services are seen in hospitals (setting the correct patients flow through service and surgeries), in restaurants (avoiding disruptions and delays in serving meals), in the financial sector (balancing the distribution of credit approval processes)*" This tool is very essential to the company because not only without it JIT cannot exist, but also contribute to choose the appropriate supplier, to the development of a process and better delivery of the products.

Furthermore, Slack et al. (2002) describe JIT as "*a paced technique, aiming at improving global productivity and eliminating waste. It comes as a consequence of the use of a balanced production. The customer will have his needs met on time and only for what is needed (it is a pull system,*

triggered by demand). JIT allows organizations to deliver services more efficiently and with reduced costs, since it intends to provide just the right amount, at the right time, at the place determined and using the minimum capacity from facilities, equipment, materials and people. JIT has a number of tools and techniques that provide operating conditions, such as Kanban."

The next most used tool is 5S. Companies do not give the appropriate attention in this tool, although it is responsible for the stability of the changes that take place in the processes or of the employers and employees do what is need to be done.

The last tool is the value stream mapping. As Rother & Shook (1999) concluded VSM is: *"all action (adding value or not) required to bring a product through all flows essential to each product: production flow from raw material to the hands of the consumer, and the flow of product design, from conception to launching."* Particularly in the world of services, is a very useful tool as it gives the discretion to the employees to map the entire journey of a customer. (Higor dos Reis Leite, 2015)

After the first models of Lean production, Bowen & Youngdhal (1998) come to introduce employee's power. Besides the basic concept of Lean to use flow process in the production and to respond to customer pull, they referred to "empowerment", saying that employees are the most important part of an organization, since some of them manage the customer service and others are concentrated in flawless process operations. At the same time, Chase & Apte (2006) showed that "the service sector in the United States had 83% of the workforce while manufacturing had only 10% (U.S. Department of Labor, 2006)."

Another writer who discusses about the relationship of customers with employees is Maister (1985) and highlights two "service laws": Firstly, it is better for the customer to be aware of the service than having some expectations from it. In that way he would be more satisfied and loyal to the company. The other service law is that whatever is the initial impression of the customer for the company it is difficult to change, and that will affect the rest of the customer journey. From all the above he concluded that there are two factors which are the most important in the service sector: the consumers and the employees.

Womack & Jones (2005) in their research study, discuss for the first time about the term "Lean Consumption". This term is used to describe the customer's need to shop easier and without distractions. So companies must understand that need and create processes that lead in that way.

Below they present the Principles of Lean Consumption:

1. *Solve the customer's problem completely by insuring that all the goods and services work, and work together.*

2. *Don't waste the customer's time.*

3. *Provide exactly what the customer wants.*

4. *Provide what's wanted exactly where it's wanted.*

5. *Provide what's wanted where it's wanted exactly when it's wanted.*

6. *Continually aggregate solutions to reduce the customer's time and hassle* (Higor dos Reis Leite, 2015)

As Thorleif Astrup Hallund (2015) claims, managers and mostly marketers must search deep in customer's mind to reveal what are their true needs and expectations from a product or service. In that way customers will feel that the company cares about them and wants to fulfill all the promises given to the consumers.

Moreover there are 22 data for Lean implementation as Shah and Ward (2003) support, and they separate them into four categories: Total Quality Management, Total Productive Maintenance, Human Resource Management and Just in Time. Except for these, they continue, there are other methods such as feedback from the employees to ascertain if they come along with the organization's strategy and goals, and for every success there will be awards, bonuses, and increase of the wages. Another one and most important is the feedback from the customers to see if their expectations from the product or service they used is fulfilled. For that reason there are complaint papers, questionnaires and off course customer services. (Sangwan, 2014)

As many studies in companies have shown, during the process of a product only 5 percent of the resources add value to the end customer and 95 percent are wastes. The experts claim that this

combination has a very bad impact in a firm, because of the increasing cost and the displeasure of the customers. (Follett, 2014)

But every problem in a firm has its solution that derived from Lean management, as Green and Dick (2001) highlights.

Richard Hemsley (2011), the The COO of global transaction services at RBSG, presents the benefits of Lean's implementation to his company. As he says: *"The most impressive thing I've seen has been the huddle boards and the way that the team meetings we've been holding for years have developed into short, focused, objective sessions. The quality of the dialogues that team managers have with agents and with customer service managers has improved tremendously. Everybody understands what their role is and knows that they need to participate. By now, people can almost predict what questions they are going to be asked. We've got to a position where we can have performance-driven dialogues in just ten minutes that achieve all the results that we could hope for—not just making day-to-day improvements, but solving problems to improve performance in the medium term as well."* (Hemsley, 2014)

On the other hand, Klaus Lund (2015) highlights that there are two challenges that Lean must confront:

a) *LEAN does not have its starting point in the customers' total experience and satisfaction across the touch-points and different journeys.*

b) *LEAN beyond the first introduction period doesn't manage to become "continuous improvement" philosophy in organizations, but instead fades out and abandoned by more than 2/3 of organizations.*

But, that does not mean that organization do not have to implement Lean. Conversely, he says that this is the time where Customer Experience Management must interfere. That combination we will be analyzed in the next chapters of this master thesis. (Hallund, n.d.)

Moreover, many researchers point out, that despite the use of Lean techniques by an organization, does not mean that the whole business has changed. It demands a bigger effort in order these techniques to be a part of the employees and every process to be carefully studied.

Despite the benefits, some researchers point out that Lean has to face two challenges. The first one refers to manufacturing sector, where new ideas and methods appear to create value for the

consumers and the competition is massive. The second one refers to organizations of the service sector and the difficulties they encounter to keep the customers satisfied. (Jasti, 2014)

As Womack et al. (1990, p. 13) stated:

"Mass-producers set a limited goal for talks themselves – "good enough," which translates into an acceptable number of defects, a maximum acceptable level of inventories, and a narrow range of standardized products. To do better, they argue, would cost too much or exceed inherent human capabilities. Lean producers, on the other hand, set their sights explicitly on perfection: continually declining costs, zero defects, zero inventories, and endless product variety. Of course, no lean producer has ever reached this Promised Land – and perhaps none ever will, but the endless quest for perfection continues to generate surprising twists." (Bendell, 2006)

A recent research that conducted showed that, for some organizations the implementation of lean was a great experience that changes the culture of the organization. However, for other organizations it was not a pleasant journey, since Lean did not fulfill the company's expectations.

According to David Jacquemont (2014), there are four challenges that emerge from lean, for every organization who wants to have continuous improvement:

- o *"Delivering value efficiently to the customer."*

The first step of a company, is to recognize what truly needs the customer and then to find the best way to create value for him by improving the business processes and reducing the non-value resources. Actually the company must be in a constant communication with the customer listening to his complaints and wants.

- o *"Enabling people to lead and contribute to their fullest potential"*

Through the contribution of the employers and the entire faculty, an organization builds its image and dominates in the worldwide competition. So it is important for the organization to emphasize in the training of its people, in the right coordination of the teams in order to do the things right from the first time.

o *"Discovering better ways of working."*

The entire firm must be in a consecutive journey of discovering new strategies and methods that will improve all the processes and operations. It must learn to cooperate with experts in order to find the solution for every potential problem, without the fear of recurrence.

o *"Connecting strategy, goals, and meaningful purpose."*

The last but not least step that an organization must take is, to convey its vision, its goals and its strategies to the employees. In that way everyone will know their positions and how to improve them. It is a very important step, because it keeps the organization in vigilance. (Jacquemont, 2014)

According to Deming *"It is not necessary to change, survival is not mandatory!"* For organizations this means that they have to understand and recognize the customer's needs in a daily basis and to provide low cost and qualitative products and services. Lean implementation is the solution as it is crucial for the companies if they want to be the winners of the competition. (Follett, 2014)

Marketers will and have created a more holistic view of what the customer is willing to pay in order to fulfil his needs. Communication channels, touchpoints and other activities can reveal the interactions that the consumer has with a company through its journey, from the time he enters the store to the moment he buys a product. This gives the opportunity to the marketers to have an evaluation of the consumption.

Despite the fact that Lean philosophy is one of the greatest types of management, there are many critics who believe that, Lean has a lot of limitations and difficulties when implement. But they seem to forget that Lean thinking continues to evolve, since it is used in more and more different types of industry. (Rich, 2009)

Lean management has a very promising future. With all of these tools and the next to come, organizations can visualize the customer's feelings, recognize their needs and fulfill successfully their expectations with lower costs and a much better quality. (Ritter, 2014)

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3. Customer Journey Mapping

3.1. What is an experience map?

 "Experience mapping is a strategic process of capturing and communicating complex customer interactions." An organization, through the mapping, achieves to keep its employees as a team with one goal, which is to give the consumers the perfect experiences.

Experience mapping, when created in the right way, is an essential tool for organizations. Its use is significant because it shows the whole journey of the consumer, it reveals the positive and the negative emotions that people have during the purchase of a product or a service. The advantage of the mapping is that companies and especially marketers can predict situations that could be improved in order to offer the extraordinary experience that we all seek. For that to happen, firms must always have in the center of the mapping the customer journey model. (Risdon, 2011)

To begin with, we have to point out the differences between Customer Journey Mapping and Process Mapping, in order to understand completely how a journey mapping works:

	Customer Journey Mapping	Process Mapping
Focus	On the customer	On the company
Description	Customer experience	Internal activities and processes of the company
Terms	Simple language	Professional language
Participants	All stakeholders	Process mapping experts and some departments

Table 1:

Differences between Customer Journeys Mapping and Process Mapping. (Isaacson, 2012)

Moreover, there are three zones that separate the customer journey:

"Pre-Service Period"

The first stage is to think about how organizations can satisfy the customers through the touchpoints and channels. They really must consider what would be the appropriate touchpoints and channels, such us social media, from which they can trust the insights, about what customers seek and want from the product or the service.

Social media is a tool that almost anyone uses to express their feelings. Also, marketers should search if customers talk about the services of the organization in a positive or negative way, according to the customer's previous experience with it.

"Service Period"

At this stage, the customer interacts with the organization through the touchpoints and channels. This is important because now the customers will form their opinion about the experience and at the end of the journey they will evaluate it. For instance, at a retail store, the cashier will be the last touchpoint. If this goes wrong, then the experience of the customer will be negative at the end.

"Post-service period"

"No business can go without reflections and evaluations of their services. How are they being perceived by the customers? Did the service provider follow-up with the customers? After-sales services are particularly powerful because they can impact and influence the customer's perception in a positive way if he or she has a negative impression previously. This is a good opportunity for the service provider to display genuine interest and sincerity in ensuring a pleasant experience for the customer. At this final stage, organizations will identify the general social media comments customers have about their services. Do they talk negatively or positively about their experiences with the service to people around them? This will lead to the customer's final assessment of his satisfaction level as he made comparisons to his initial expectations." (https://canvanizer.com/new/customer-journey-canvas)

3.2.   Steps of a Journey Mapping

Every journey map is different from the others. One reason is that marketers have multiple ways and steps to represent a customer journey. Also, maps can differ if they represent a journey for a product or a service. According to these reasons, below there are different steps and concepts of the journey mapping:

"Uncover the truth"

The first step is to meditate how customers behave and react in different touchpoints.   This   is important to organizations when starting the mapping, to seek for sources that are obvious and not complicated in order their research to be easier. Actually, at the first step, they must talk to the customers and observe them at their natural environment, in order to understand their behavior. Moreover, questionnaires, customer satisfaction surveys, the creation of personas and existing reviews would be very helpful for this cause. Another way is to interviewing consumers so that they have a more holistic view about customer's needs. (Toi Valentine, 2013)

"Chart the course"

The second step is that, employees together should gather the crucial insights and compose a customer journey model. In other words, even if they did not participate in the first step of the experience mapping must cooperate and share ideas and insights to design their next steps. (Risdon, 2011)

"Tell the story"

The third step is to envisage a captivated story, such as the thoughts, the actions and the emotions of the customer. The data that the organization will collect must be categorized and separated by those that are not so important to be comprised, in order to build a successful customer journey. So, before envisaging the map, the insights must be evaluated.

Below there are three ways that a company can achieve the perfect journey:

1. *"Have a point of view. Can organizations summarize the key points they want someone to walk away with after viewing the map? What story do they want to tell to other people?"*

2. *"Consider the audience. What kind of details will help them best understand the story? Which insights are essential for them to make good strategic and design decisions?"*

3. *"Design for impact. What immediate next steps do companies want their map to initiate? What other uses of the map are they hoping to encourage in the short-, mid-, and long-term?"* (Iran Narges and Amber Reed, 2013)

"Use the map"

The fourth and final step is to understand the map and try to create new ideas and improvements. Now the mapping is ready to show the organization what actions must be taken for improving the way the customer's needs are satisfied. (Quattlebaum, 2013)

Another five steps with their principles are:

1. The first is to choose the journey that organizations want to map - *"Take the customers' perspective"*

When marketers begin with the mapping, they must think just like the customer, using simple terms and emotions that are more possible to feel during their experience.

2. The second is to have many options of touchpoints - *"Be emotional"*

"The CJM should incorporate and reflect the emotional, experiential, and functional elements of the customer experience. The emotional refers to how a customer is feeling, experiential refers to what a customer experiences, and functional refers to the logistics of how it happens."

3. The third is to describe these touchpoints - "Be universal"

This means that the journey mapping must be applied to the different types of customers.

4. The fourth is to recognize the insights and the moments of truth - "Keep it simple"

The mapping must be easy to understand its story, with many colors that represent the different channels and touchpoints, and the different emotions that customers will feel.

5. And the last one is to design manuals in order to conduct the implementation - *"Gather lots of input"*

This is the principle where inputs must be gathered from different departments of the company, in order to find new ideas for improvements by interviewing and training the stakeholders. (Isaacson, 2012)

Finally, the journey mapping is also different if it concerns about products and services exclusively in websites.

"Define the Behavioral Stages"

Marketers, after creating the personas with the characteristics of the customer, and using all the collected qualitative and quantitative information, they are in a place where they can predict the behavior of the customer in almost every stage of the journey.

"Align Customer Goals with the Stages"

In the websites, the stages must be created according to the customer's goals and needs. Actually this is the most difficult part and the number one priority of the company. Some tools that can assist to harmonize the goals with the stages:

- *"Survey answers*

- *User testing feedback*

- *Interview transcripts*

- *Customer service emails or support transcripts"*

"Plot Out the Touchpoints"

The third step is to categorize the touchpoints according to the goals. For example, a touchpoint it would be the description of the product and the service on the site or the contact form with the organization.

"Determine If Your Customers Are Achieving Their Goals"

This is where marketers measure and evaluate the qualitative and quantitative data to find ways to satisfy the customers. In order for this to happen there are three questions that need to be answered:

1. *"Where are roadblocks appearing?*

2. *Are people abandoning their purchases on the checkout page in large numbers?*

3. *Are you finding that the people clicking on your opt in download page are not then signing up to get the download?"*

"Recommendations for Change"

The last step is to observe the points which need improvement and change the areas or the touchpoints that do not offer satisfaction to the customers. (Havice, 2014)

3.3. Important elements of a Journey Map

A journey map in order to be helpful and understandable from the whole organization should include some significant elements which also are different:

"The Lens"

Companies use a filter to perceive the journey that is called "lens". Usually marketers use different types of personas in the same map, in order to describe the multiple characters of the customers. Sometimes they can create maps for every persona and record their potential interactions and their feelings from the touchpoints by asking two simple questions,

1) *"Does this match up to the principles?"*
2) *"Does this meet the needs for this persona?"*

"The Journey Model"

As we mentioned earlier, the journey mapping could be different depending on the types of customers. Furthermore, it could describe journeys which have multiple channels and touchpoints and other important dimensions. Another reason is that, different insights and data could be used in different journeys.

"Qualitative Insight"

According to these insights, organizations can have a much better understanding about the customer's feelings. If marketers ask themselves questions about how they feel at any particular

moment, then they could have a really good chance to know the customer's actual emotions such as, sadness, satisfaction, happiness or frustration.

"Quantitative Information"

Another important fact for a successful mapping is the quantitative information. Companies in order to make the right research, they conduct surveys and questionnaires to the customers. The result is that marketers can predict percentages of the touchpoints that satisfy or dissatisfy the consumers. Moreover, it can show the gaps between services such as, responsiveness and accessibility.

"Takeaways"

The experience mapping is the tool which gives the opportunity to organizations, to start the customer journey. This means that, they recognize every time the right touchpoints, the points were customers feel frustrated or dissatisfied and actions that need to be improved. But, it does not mean that there will not be a parallel cooperation with the strategy of the organization, otherwise it will not be successful. (Risdon, 2011)

 "Context or stakeholder map"

At this stage the organization should make a list of the stakeholders, put them in a circle and in the middle of it the customer. Experts should ask what the company offer to customers and what the customers offer to the company, in order to capture the important information about what the company deals with concerning the experience and what it can do to create more value to the customers.

"Persona"

Inside the map a character must be created who will represent a customer, in the present and future state and identify his needs.

"Outcomes"

In this section, the expectations of customer must be recorded. In other words, what the customer hopes to take from a product or service.

"Customer journey"

The organization must collect all the actions that the consumer must take in order to gain what he expect, but these actions must be listed before the customer reach or purchase the end product and not after that.

"Touchpoints"

After the actions, marketers should discover the channels and the touchpoints that the customer interacts with. So, in that way it is easier to find touchpoints that are not immediate connected with the firm and improve them.

"Moments of truth"

The next stage is to find the moment of truth through these channels and isolate the most significant for the customer.

"Service delivery"

After the organization collect the most important touchpoints, marketers should put under every one of them who is responsible for that service, for example people who are in the call center.

"Emotional journey"

The next move is the marketers to rank the actions, the touchpoint and the person who delivers the service from the customer's perspective. In other words, for every touchpoint must ask just how the customer would feel and grade the experience from zero to ten. This method it can be proved very beneficial to the companies, because they open new frontiers for the customer satisfaction.

"Blueprint"

"To make a long story a bit shorter, we can go on listing the organization underneath, writing down who supports the people delivering the service (back office), and in turn who influences the back office (we link back to the stakeholders map), until we have a complete organizational blueprint, a complete picture of the working of an organization and emotional journey, from the outside in."

"Improve and Innovate"

The last element is the brainstorming. Stakeholders should think new ideas, innovative techniques in order to improve the lower grades of the journey, to find solutions in order to keep the customer satisfied and loyal to the company (Oosterom, 2010)

There is a strong connection between "**moments of truth" and "touchpoints**". Specifically, moments of truth are the possibilities that an organization has to gain the customers and actually to impress them. At the same time, touchpoints are the means that cause these sensations to the customers, through interactions with the products or services. It is vital to a firm, to use them together, in order to achieve the only thing that matters: A successful customer experience. (Copeland, 2015)

3.4. Identifying moments of truth

In the mapping of the customer's journey, there is a description of the interactions and feelings that the customer has with the brand. Some of them are the Moments of truth which if the company does not give the appropriate attention, then the customer will prefer the competitive products. (Marshak, 2012)

As Jan Carlzon cited, the moment of truth is *"Anytime a customer comes into contact with any aspect of a business, however remote, is an opportunity to form an impression"*

According to Brian Solis (2013), there are four stages of Moments of truth that an organization must implement in order to add value and a good experience to the customers.

"The Zero Moment of Truth (Discovery)" – This moment is when the customer has a need and tries to find ways in order to satisfy it. (Stated from Google)

"The First Moment of Truth (Exploration)" – This is the moment where customers have their first interactions with the product or the service of a firm actually is the very first impression that the customer forms during that contact. (Stated from Proctor & Gamble)

"*The Second Moment of Truth (Consumption)*" – In this moment the consumer uses the product and it lasts until the consumer does no longer use it. (Stated from Proctor & Gamble)

"*The Ultimate Moment of Truth (Shared Engagement)*" – The last moment is when the consumer communicates his experience positive or negative to others who are at the zero moments of truth. (Stated by Solis) (Araujo, 2013)

"*The first moment of truth is about obtaining customers' attention and communicating the benefits of an offer. The second moment of truth is about providing the tools the customer needs to experience these benefits when using the product. The combination of these two moments of truth makes up the total customer experience.*"

According to Underwood and Klein (2002), the first moment of truth refers to the aesthetic characteristics of the product such as the packaging. It is the very first impression that the customer has for the product and it must be positive.

Although it is difficult to create a product that will attract the customer from the competitor's products (Judd et al., 1989), organizations must invest a lot of time and energy in order to achieve this. Consumers change their minds about the purchase of a product between a few seconds, and that is when the packaging of the product must be so attractive, valuable and with quality, that the customer will not have second thoughts for its purchase.

As we proceed, the second moment of truth is when customers buy and use the product or the service. At this moment, the packaging of the product must include every detail about how the customer can make use of it, in a simple language. Furthermore, customers seek more and more products that are easy to be used without any professional assistance. In other words, the first and the second moment of truth combined can give a good customer experience and the packaging can fill the gap between the production of a product and its use from the customer. (Löfgren, 2005)

Trying to connect the emotions of the customer with the performance of the company, Mckinsey conduct a research in four countries about the moments that create feelings to the customers in a bank. The results showed that customers want interesting transactions which include the interaction with other people. Moreover, many firms invest time and money in uninteresting transactions and not in the experiences that will make the difference.

Another survey that conducted about how positive and negative experiences influence the decisions of the customer to purchase a product or a service showed that, after a positive experience, more than 85 percent of customers increased their value to the bank by purchasing more products or investing more of their assets and more than 70 percent reduced their commitment when there was a poor service as we can see in Figure 1.
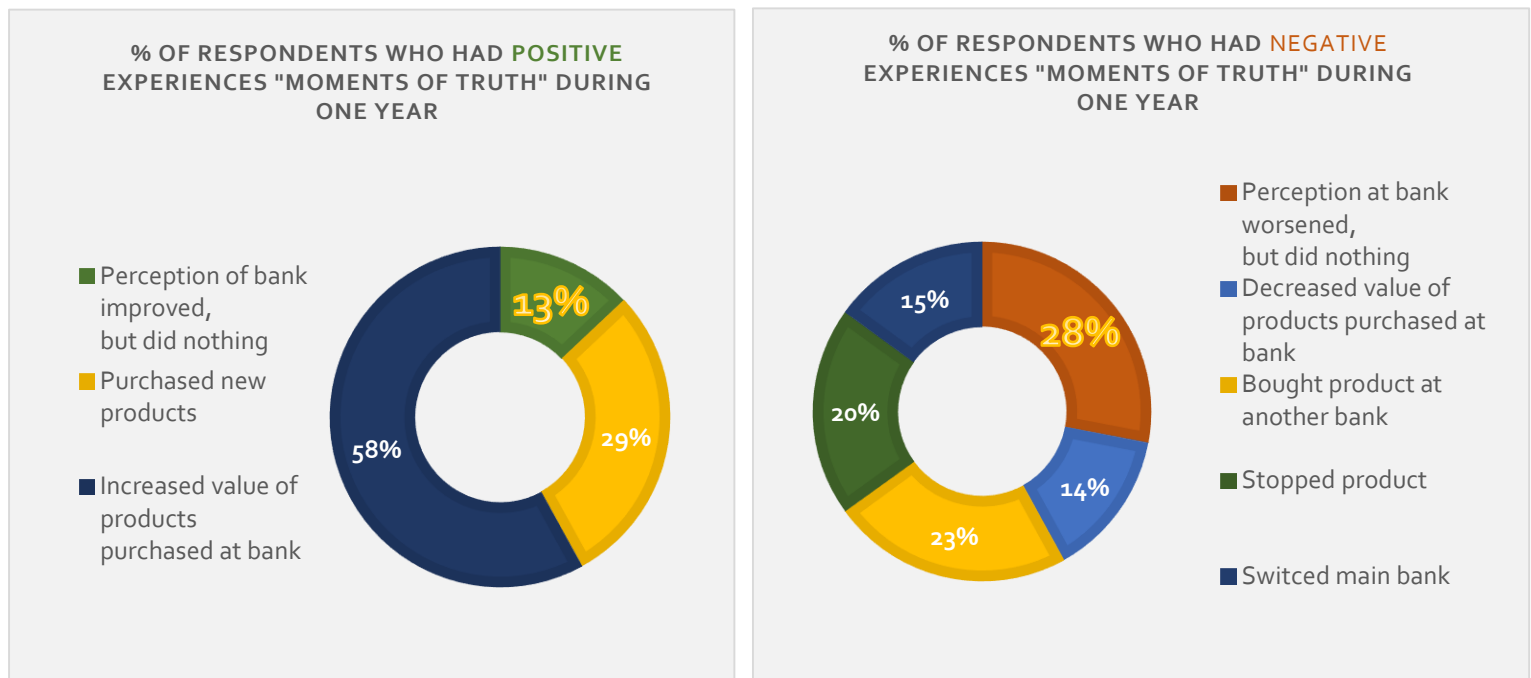

Figure 1

Organizations very often counter difficulties with moments of truth. To begin with, they cannot locate or control when and where they appear. That is because; moments of truth may appear in every interaction of the customer, at different times and channels. The solution could be either, companies to create personas with the characteristics and behavior of the customers or to make customer journeys from the side of the consumers. There are not a few those who insist that the behavior and motivation of the customer through the years has changed. They seek a more interpersonal relationship with organizations because they are motivated more by their feelings

and less by their logic. Moreover, customers need to feel that the organization cares about them by offering them great experiences.

Another problem that companies face is that they may not prevent negative situations because moments of truth occur in real time. In order to avoid that, organizations must use tools such as, social media, feedback after or during the interactions that the customer has through his experience. It is not a secret that as the technology evolved, so customers and firms must be updated.

In nowadays, consumers use their mobiles and tablets to capture almost every experience they have positive or negative. Analytics is another useful tool that helps companies to convert a negative experience to a good one that will stay in the memory of the customer during the journey. (Snow, 2011)

3.5.   Identifying the "touchpoints"

According to Elaine Alison (2013), touchpoint "*is every occasion when your customer sees or hears your name, logo or ad, visits you on-line or in person, or any point during the transaction from beginning to end.*"

Another definition derives from Alyson Stone (2011), "*A touchpoint is any customer interaction (passive, active, direct, or indirect) with your company or your brand, using all five senses, from the time a customer becomes aware of you, for the duration of the relationship.*" She also points out that, touchpoints actually transmit the image of the company to the customers either in a positive or negative way.

There are two main reasons why organizations must invest on touchpoints:

a) It is unpredictable what might go wrong at any touchpoint, and that may cause the dissatisfaction of the customers.
b) By mapping the touchpoints, the organizations can understand when they add value to the customers in order to keep them loyal and satisfied.

Every consumer needs a pleasant experience in order to be brand loyal and communicate it to other consumers. This means that their journey must be positive and the touchpoints simple, understandable and easy.

A study published in the Harvard Business Review showed that companies with brands with simple touchpoints were 86% more likely to be purchased and 115% more likely to be recommended to others. (Aaker, 2013)

The identification of touchpoints is not an easy step for a company. Mostly in our times when organizations do not have the opportunity to spend big amounts of money in order to satisfy the customers, they have to find smart ways to achieve it. Moreover, employees must understand the reasons that the touchpoints are essential for the customers, because only in that way they will offer them the experience they want. (Alison, 2013)

There are many types of touchpoints and below we present the most common:

- Physical interaction with the service or the product of the company
- Interactions with the employees and the organization on the website, on the events of the company and on the telephone
- Contact through advertisements and e-mails with the company
- Contact through the social media, different blogs and reviews that the organization do not have any control
- Interactions through mobiles, hardware and generally through the technology. (Stone, 2011)

Elaine Alison (2013), points out three steps for the companies to follow, in order to identify and capture the touchpoints:

1) Marketers with the executives will collect the touchpoints and write them down to a whiteboard

2) Identify potential problems that need to be fixed

3) Find solutions for these problems from the beginning instead of encounter them later, in that way the suppliers would be informed

Companies must find touchpoints which are cost-effective and add value to the customers in order to give to them a better experience than that they will expect and keep them happy and loyal by minimizing their emotions from a negative experience. (Alison, 2013)

Since touchpoints are essential for the organization, David Aaker (2013) refers to another five steps which will help the marketers to identify them and also improve the problematic ones:

"Identify all existing touchpoints, as well as those that should exist" – Touch points may be in the control of a company or not. So, marketers have to discover all the potential touchpoints through the communication with the customers, the surveys and the social media.

"Provide an internal evaluation of all the touchpoints to determine which are managed well and which are deficient" – Not all the touchpoints are examined by the same department or employee. This means that marketers have to find who is responsible for the different touchpoints and how can improve them in order to win the competition and mostly the customers.

"Look to past, current, and future customers to determine which touchpoints have the greatest impact on their decision and experiences" – Organizations can ask their customers to describe the perfect customer journey and touchpoints for them. Actually the customers would be the ideal candidate to improve the company's touchpoints.

"Prioritize and balance three dimensions" – The three dimensions are the value proposition, the customer loyalty and the brand. Having those in mind the organizations must discover cost effective solutions in order to improve the poor touchpoints.

"Develop a touchpoint action plan" – Develop a plan which will include the important touchpoints and who is responsible for them. In the meantime, the organization must collect data and note measures and metrics. (Aaker, 2013)

In order to better understand the meaning and the necessity of the touchpoints, we present below an example of touchpoints in an airline:

"Choosing the carrier" – It is actually through the internet, and the customer can choose the flight of the destination, the price, the time, and also some previous reviews.

"Check In counter" – This touchpoint must be in a lobby where customer can identify easily, with a minimum waiting. But nowadays more and more customers use their mobiles to do their check-ins.

"Security" – The airline company always has to inform the passengers about the dangerous items that they must not fetch.

"Retail options in their selected airports" – Many airports no longer offer to the customer beverages, newspapers and food but there are some retail stores which can provide these to the customers.

"Boarding process" – Employees should inform the passengers in what time they will be on board and the priority that customers must follow.

"In-flight services" – The air hostesses should provide the customers with beverages and magazines. (Alison, 2013)

Touchpoints can differ from organization to organization, but it is important to be identified and categorized, in order companies to know when and where a customer interacts with them.

Below there are some of the most common touchpoints:

Before purchase	During purchase	After purchase
Mobile app	In store	Call center
Store personnel	Website	Billing
Reviews	Campaign	Information emails
Word of mouth	Mobile app	Customer care teams
Advertising	Catalog	Marketing emails

Table 2

Types of Touchpoints (https://www.surveymonkey.com/mp/identify-customer-touchpoints/)

Table 3 is based on research conducted on German, Japanese, and US consumers in following sectors: for past experience—autos, auto insurance, telecom handsets and carriers; for product comparison—auto insurance, telecom handsets; for post purchased moment—autos, auto insurance, skin care, and TVs.

Which touchpoints and how they form the customer journey.

	Store/agent/ dealer interactions	Word-of-mouth Online research Offline or print review	Past experience	Traditional advertising/ Direct marketing/ Sponsorship/ In-store product experience/ Salesperson contact
Past experience	12%	21%	28%	39%
Product comparison	26%	37%	10%	26%
Post-purchased moment	43%	31%	-5%	22%

Table 3

Source: David Court, D. E. e. a., 2009. The consumer decision Journey. Mc Kinsey Quarterly, Marketing & Sales Practice. Franz, A., 2015. 5 Basic Journey Mapping Principles. [Online] Available at: http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/marketing_sales/the_consumer_decision_journey [Accessed 2015].

Although it is difficult for the organizations to capture all the touchpoints, is essential because this is an opportunity for a great customer experience. So, marketers should write a list of the touchpoints by step into the customer's shoes and ask themselves four simple questions:

1) "Have a problem that needs to be solved?"
2) "Discover the product or business that will solve that problem?"
3) "Make your purchase decision?"
4) "Encounter the business after the purchase?"

(http://blog.crmxchange.com/blog/enhancing-the-customer-experience/the-importance-of-touchpoints-throughout-the-customer-journe)

The mapping of the customer experience can be used by the marketers to capture the emotions and needs of the customer about their product or service. The areas that they concentrate on are:

"Response"

In this area, marketers can understand if consumers are satisfied and how they reply to the way that communications are occurred. Actually, this is a way to improve the promotion of products and services, and the communication of the employees with the customers.

"Touch point"

As we said earlier, touchpoints are areas where the consumers come in contact with the company. These could include:

- *"any communication – such as an advert, website or literature*

- *any human contact – from your reception staff to your frontline team or call center operator*

- *any physical interaction – for example with your building or your car park"*

"Voting point"

Right after the touchpoints, there are the voting points. This is the point where customers dedicate some of their time to evaluate their experience and declare if they are impressed, satisfied or frustrated. For example, if someone is waiting for a long time at the queue, may feel extremely annoyed and decide to leave so he will be dissatisfied. It is better for the customer to meet these voting points at the end of the customer's journey in order to feel the whole experience and have a completed point of view. (https://gcn.civilservice.gov.uk/guidance/customer-journey-mapping/)

There is a wide range of tools which can help the marketers to deliver a better customer journey mapping. Some of them are:

- o *"Social media listening"*

In recent years, people and companies use social media on a daily basis. Actually, customers through the social media, not only learn about the products or services of the company, but also can send messages for potential questions.

Consumers want direct dialogue with the company through Facebook, Twitter, Linked in, instead of waiting on the phone for the appropriate employee to answer a simple question.

- o *"Customer feedback surveys"*

The feedback surveys are another important tool the transfer a lot of valuable information back to the organization. This information could reveal the needs of the customer, interactions that had a positive or negative impact to the customers. After that, the company must comprehend the spots where improvements should occur. Moreover, the company can discover other customer's needs and try to find a way to satisfy them too. This is a very good way to create the perfect customer experience and especially to keep the customers loyal.

- o *"Customer analytics"*

Customer analytics can be found almost in every social media, since they show what customers do, what they like, when they visit a company's page. Through analytics, organizations can collect useful information for creating an improved experience for their clients. (Beard, 2014)

3.6.   Process of creating a Map

The process that an organization follows in order to design and complete the mapping consists of a process with eight steps:

"Review Goals"

Marketers must think about the goals and the strategy that the organization has for its products and services, and then to incorporate it to the journey mapping.

"Gather research"

In this stage, data from qualitative and quantitative research must be comprehended in order to note which of them will be in the mapping. These data can be collected from customer surveys, complaint forms and insights from social media, questionnaires and interviews with the consumers.

"Touchpoints and channel"

Together with the stakeholders, marketers must identify all the touchpoints and the existing channels. In the meantime, they must complete a brainstorming in order to find the touchpoints and channels that they can create in the future for improvements. For instance, the "product" could be a touchpoint and the channel the "store" or the "online store".

"Empathy map"

This type of maps is a true example of the different characteristics and feelings of the customer draw as a persona. This is very helpful to the marketers because they can better understand the experiences and the needs of the consumer. Moreover, they can observe and feel like customers in the whole journey (touchpoints, channels) and envisage what customers see, feel, sense, hear and think.

"Brainstorm with lenses"

This is a very smart method to produce a lot of different ideas in a very little time. In this method, marketers use "lenses", words that represent phases, touchpoints or channels that can be used in the mapping and it gives the opportunity to create different scenarios for the customer journey. For each of these words, stakeholders take two minutes to write down concepts and thoughts and then everyone express their ideas and at the end every voice is heard.

"Affinity diagram"

After the "lenses", an affinity diagram is very useful. *"The affinity diagram organizes a large number of ideas into their natural relationships. This method taps a team's creativity and intuition. It was created in the 1960s by Japanese anthropologist Jiro Kawakita."* It is used mostly after a brainstorming exercise and its procedure is:

1. *"Record each idea with a marking pen on a separate sticky note or card. (During a brainstorming session, write directly onto sticky notes or cards if you suspect you will be following the brainstorm with an affinity diagram.) Randomly spread notes on a large work surface so all notes are visible to everyone. The entire team gathers around the notes and participates in the next steps.*

2. *It is very important that no one talk during this step. Look for ideas that seem to be related in some way. Place them side by side. Repeat until all notes are grouped. It's okay to have "loners" that don't seem to fit a group. It's all right to move a note someone else has already moved. If a note seems to belong in two groups, make a second note.*

3. *You can talk now. Participants can discuss the shape of the chart, any surprising patterns, and especially reasons for moving controversial notes. A few more changes may be made. When ideas are grouped, select a heading for each group. Look for a note in each grouping that captures the meaning of the group. Place it at the top of the group. If there is no such note, write one. Often it is useful to write or highlight this note in a different color.*

4. *Combine groups into "super groups" if appropriate."* (Tague, 2004)

"Sketch the journey"

This is the step where the customer journey comes to life. Marketers can draw the journey according to the touchpoints and channels; they can use different colors for every part. Furthermore, videos and audio can be used in order to make the mapping more vivid. The map it could be in different shapes and sizes because there is not only one template but it depends on the convenience of the marketer.

"Refine and digitize"

Despite the fact that designing a journey map on the papers with sticky notes is not so difficult, there are many marketers that cannot digitize the maps and share them with the other stakeholders, in order to check any possibilities for improvements. So, it would be wise to hire someone who has experience with visual design, in order to capture the customer experience. (Grocki, 2014)

At the same time the journey mapping must be created in a way that gives to whoever read it some information, such as:

✓ The interactions that the customer will have during his journey, his needs and wants and what emotions will be revealed through his experience.

✓ The meaning of success on behalf of the customer and the company.

✓ The way firms can show to the customers that they are valuable to them and create a positive environment for their experience, through processes and improvements.

✓ The moments of truth which will make a positive or negative impression to the customer, depending on what he expects from every interaction and the end product.

✓ And finally, all the appropriate actions that the organization should take in order to improve the poor points of the journey.

Although the designing of a map differs from organization to organization, there some principles that they have to apply on as they are categorized below:

"Maps must be collaborative/collaborated"

It is important for the success of the mapping to exist a cross-functional collaboration. In other words, the stakeholders must participate because it will make it easier for the marketers to improve anything that can go wrong during the journey, by communicating with the stakeholder who is responsible for. Moreover, organizations can ask customers their opinions about the map they created, in order to be more realistic.

"Maps bring the journey to life"

Customer experience, through its depiction to the maps can bring the customer journey to life. Companies should use different colors, videos and images during the mapping to make it appear real. Furthermore, it is useful to use the customer feedback and incorporated it to the touchpoints.

"Maps should allow you to analyze and prioritize touchpoints and improvement opportunities"

A successful mapping should be followed by changes. Organizations must collect important information about the customers, and then analyze them in order to proceed to the appropriate improvements.

"Maps must be shared"

Another principle is that marketers must share the journey map with the entire organization. In that way employees will understand how they should deal with the customers and improve their behavior when interacting with them.

"Maps should be updated"

As the technology and inevitably the customer behavior change, maps must be evolved too. Only with change and improvement organizations can create a good customer journey and be at the first place of the competition. (Franz, 2015)

Some of the benefits the customer mapping offers to the organizations and further to the customers are cited below:

a. Better interactions with the customers
b. Maintaining the existing customers
c. Improve productivity
d. Decrease of the poor customer experiences
e. Offers positive interactions to the customers in almost every touchpoint

Organizations can use mapping, for setting the strategic goals or marketing, because it helps marketers to understand what customers really want and need. Furthermore, it can be used either to capture the interactions of a particular team of customers or comprehend how customers want to communicate with a company for the products or services.

To summarize, there are some important elements that marketers should have in mind:

"Must-haves of a journey mapping

- Personas: the main characters that illustrate the needs, goals, thoughts, feelings, opinions, expectations, and pain points of the user;

- Timeline: a finite amount of time (e.g. 1 week or 1 year) or variable phases (e.g. awareness, decision-making, purchase, renewal);

- Emotion: peaks and valleys illustrating frustration, anxiety, happiness etc.;

- Touchpoints: customer actions and interactions with the organization. is the WHAT the customer is doing"

"Nice-to-haves of a journey mapping

- Moments of truth: A positive interaction that leaves a lasting impression, often planned for a touchpoint known to generate anxiety or frustration; and

- Supporting characters: peripheral individuals (caregivers, friends, colleagues) who may contribute to the experience."

The design of a mapping:

"Defining the Lens"

"The lens is an overriding filter through which you view the journey. The lens may include some general guidelines or criteria that you may want to look at throughout the whole process. " According to this, the marketers can put some characteristics of the customer in the personas. Then, they can discover what are the touchpoints and channels that the customer meets and the potential emotions he will have.

"Gathering Data"

The most important thing in the success of a journey map is the information and data that the marketers will trust. In other words, they have to collect data from customer surveys, questionnaires, complaint forms and social media. Afterwards, they have to identify the information that will lead the customer to satisfaction and use them in the mapping.

"Drafting the Map"

The constructing of the map is a complicated situation. It is better if all the research and information are examined by the stakeholders (employees, designers, managers). The marketers should inform the whole organization about the goals and the results of the mapping, in order to attract different ideas and concepts.

"Create the Story"

At this step, marketers need to collect all the information into a short story. Visualization techniques, different templates can assist them in order to do a successful and suitable journey map.

"Make Use of It"

The last step is the most important. Marketers should have to inform the executives and the CEO and then the whole organization. After that, all the organization should work together to find the points which may cause negative experience to the customer, and find improvements before the beginning of the project. (Ghazarian, 2014)

In every stage of the mapping, the interactions of the customer will be listed, with every touchpoint and channel. Above these interactions, the map should include potential questions that the customers will have such as, how can they speak to the manager.

Last but not least, during the process the emotions of the customer must be outlined. For example, if they are annoyed because of the long waiting, if they are happy for the product they bought and if they are pleased by the politeness of the employees. (Boag, 2014)

3.7.   How the customer decides for a purchase?

B. The customer decides what product will buy, after the comparison with other similar products.

A. The consumer, according to his previous experience with the products of the company and his interactions with the present touchpoints forms a point of view.

C. This is the moment when the customer actually purchases the product or the service.

D. The customer consumes the product and decides if he is satisfied. As a result he will be loyal to the brand. This is the moment where the company builds its loyalty loop.
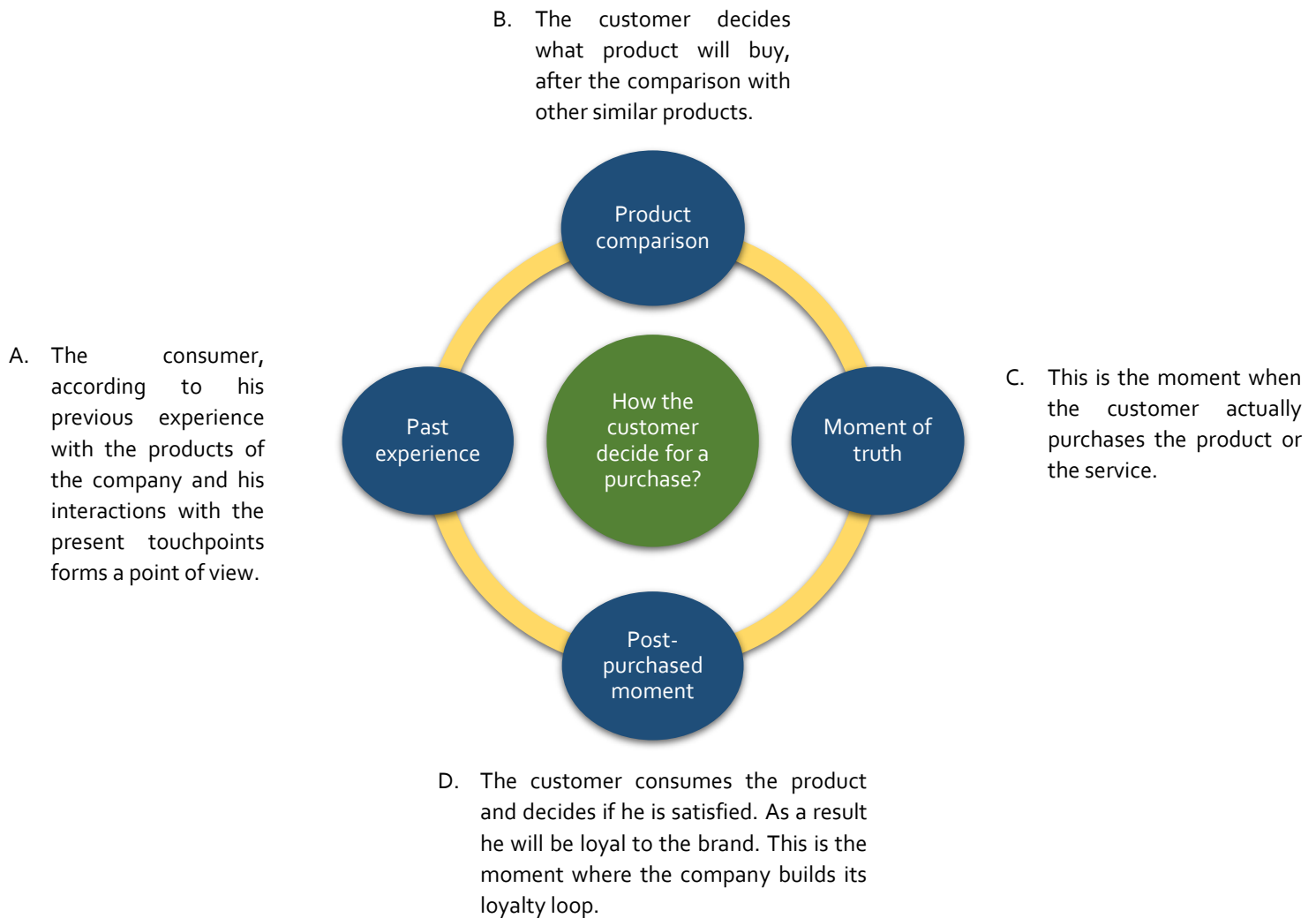
Figure 2

Source: David Court, D. E. e. a., 2009. The consumer decision Journey. Mc Kinsey Quarterly, Marketing & Sales Practice. Franz, A., 2015. 5 Basic Journey Mapping Principles. [Online]
Available at: http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/marketing_sales/the_consumer_decision_journey [Accessed 2015].

The way organizations treat their customers, determines if customers will be loyal to them. Customers want their complaints and problems to be heard and solved by the employees with the best manner through the technology, in order to have a positive experience to keep them loyal and create a strong bond with the brand. Despite the fact that the technology is an important piece of the modern world, companies cannot always depend on it. So the employees must be trained and acquire soft skills for serving the customers. They must learn how to behave on a customer's complaint or negative comments and also how they feel and think in front of a target group of customers. In simple words, every organization should hire people with emotional intelligence. (Marc Beaujean, 2006)

There are certain characteristics that managers should have in order to grow this culture in their business, as Goleman pointed out:

- ✓ *"A strong sense of self-empowerment and self-regulation, which together helps employees to make decisions right on the spot if that should be necessary*
- ✓ *A positive outlook, promoting constructive responses to the challenges of work*
- ✓ *An awareness of your own and other people's feelings, creating empathy and facilitating better conversations with customers*
- ✓ *A mastery of fear and anxiety and the ability to tap into selfless motives, which make it possible for employees to express feelings of empathy and caring"*

As we mentioned above, the training of the employees is a significant part of delivering a positive customer experience and creating unforgettable moments of truth for every customer. On the other hand, managers can implement four principles in order to achieve this:

"Creating meaning and clarity of purpose for people in frontline work"

Employees can deliver great experiences to the customers if they know what and why they do it. The organizations must cultivate their employees with principles, values and understanding for the customers. They should treat customers the same way they want to be treated and the most important of all is that the organization should let them have creative minds and not only give them directions.

"Improving the capabilities of employees"

There must be always continuous training from the managers in order employees to be informed about the needs of the customers, the new ways they decide to purchase a product or a service. Moreover, through their assessments and personal success and failure employees can improve parts of themselves that need to be improved.

"Putting structures, reward systems, and processes in place to back up these changes"

Moments of truth are important for a company and for the customers. Besides other things that must be implemented, processes also must be improved. This is where the quality takes place since principles of Lean and Six Sigma are used for their simplification. For example, Bank of America applied Six Sigma thinking to important moments of truth (such as the opening of accounts) in its branches, in order to reduce the number of inputs and steps in the process for building relationships with customers.

"Enlisting frontline leaders to serve as role models and to teach emotionally intelligent behavior"

Last but not least, employees must learn from the best and have the leaders as their models. They can focus on how leaders behave in front of the customers, how they talk to them and listen their complaints and how important is for them to deliver an extraordinary experience. (Marc Beaujean, 2006)

In Table 4, for skin care, includes consumers who purchased their current brand 2 or more times in past 3 months and for whom current brand made up at least 70% of total category purchases in past 3 months; for all others, includes consumers who purchased same brand on current occasion as on previous occasion and did not consider any other brands.

How loyal are customers to the brands?

	Personal computers	Autos	Auto insurance	Skin care	Telecom carriers
Past experience	49%	63%	13%	38%	38%
Product comparison	24%	30%	9%	37%	20%
Post-purchased moment	27%	7%	78%	25%	42%

Table 4

Source: David Court, D. E. e. a., 2009. The consumer decision Journey. Mc Kinsey Quarterly, Marketing & Sales Practice. Franz, A., 2015. 5 Basic Journey Mapping Principles. [Online]
Available at: http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/marketing_sales/the_consumer_decision_journey [Accessed 2015].

In previous years, marketers and generally the organizations were interesting in keeping the customers loyal to the brand and to advertise the company. But nowadays, customers not only want motivations in order to be satisfied and loyal to the organization, but also to have a great experience and interactions with the touchpoints. If organizations have this in mind, then they attract new customers and maintain the ones that already exist.

Because of the great impact that the social media have in the everyday life of the customer, organizations must learn how to manage them. It is very important, since customers before buying any product, are looking for recommendations and comments in Facebook and Twitter, in order to compare the quality, the price and the characteristics of the products. This is a cheaper way for companies to communicate their products and services than to pay enormous amount of money on the television and radio advertisements.

Now, companies have found a cost effective way to advertise their products and services and target specific customers through the social media and digital marketing. During this procedure, they can use the comments of the customers and identify their needs, in order to create touchpoints, or to improve the characteristics of the products, such as the price and the quality.

Also, they have to motivate the customers to make the right decisions for their purchase and not to consider that the evolution of the social world is the enemy. (David Court, 2009)

3.8. <u>The example</u>- The customer journey of a post-graduate student

Below, we design an example of a customer journey map that refers to the research, decision and the experience of the MBA Total Quality Management International master, of the University of Piraeus. The persona is IRO PAOURI, twenty-five years old who needs to find a master in order to continue her education.

To begin with, the horizontal axis shows the journey stages of the persona. In other words, it describes how the customer decides about the service from the beginning to the end:

1) Awareness: At this stage, the persona tries to get to know more information about the master.

2) Research-Evaluation: Here the customer compares other master programs and evaluate them according to his opinion for the TQM.

3) Decision-Purchase: At the third stage, she forms a negative or positive decision, about the program.

4) Out of the box experience: At the final stage, the persona shapes a point of view for the program after its admission and has experiences from the registration and generally from the whole master.

At the vertical axis, there are different scenarios that the persona will encounter during the four phases:

1) Marketing: This scenario reveals almost all the possibilities that the persona has to be informed about the specific program and others.

2) Interview: Here is the point where the persona interacts with the university and the tutors for the first time.

3) Admission: This is the time when the persona is accepted from the program and she is a part of it.

4) Registry: After the admission, the customer has to candidates with the registry in order to be fully informed about the courses and the payments.

Moreover, the shapes inside the map are the touchpoints which the persona has at every stage and with every scenario. The colors represent six different channels which help the persona to have these touchpoints during her journey.

- Blue-Phone
- Dark blue- In person
- Green- Mass media
- Pink- Website
- Purple- E-mail
- Yellow- Survey-event

Last but not least, we use icons to describe the feelings of the persona during its experience such as, 1) Moment of truth where the persona forms an impression about the service, 2) Positive is when the persona is satisfied, 3) Pain point where the persona is dissatisfied, 4) Possible issue is when there may be a chance that the customer will be dissatisfied and finally 5) Best practice is the points where the experience does not want any improvements.

After we clarified the components of the mapping, now we are going to describe the whole journey of the persona:

A. Marketing-Awareness

This stage includes five touchpoints.

Three of them are via mass media:

✓ Outdoor billboards in conferences and job festivals which are the best practice of the program
✓ Master's brochures which are positive for the persona since they contain information for the courses
✓ Social media like Facebook and Linked in which consist moment of truth and possible issues.

One via website: Information about the program, which is the best practice but it could cause possible issues.

One via survey-event: Job festivals and conferences that could be a moment of truth, since the persona can interact with older students of the program.

Marketing-Research

Here we have two touchpoints.

One via survey-event: University events where students can learn better the different programs and this is another moment of truth.

One via mass media: The persona through research can discover other programs of the same university and then decide which one is better. So this could be a possible issue but also the best practice since there is plenty of information available.

Marketing-Decision

There is one touchpoint via the website, where the persona can read the opinions of the older students of the program and forms an opinion. This is a moment of truth and possible issue because the candidate could change her mind.

Marketing-Out of the box experience

There is also one touchpoint via mass media, where the student can take the advice of the second year students. This is a moment of truth but also positive and pain point because their opinion could be positive or negative about the program.

B. **Interview-Awareness**

Here there is one touchpoint via the phone: The registry calls to confirm about the date of the interview which is a positive experience.

Interview-Research

We have two touchpoints.

One in person: The persona brings the appropriate documents before the interview to the registry and her experience could cause possible issues because it could be difficult for the student if she leaves in a long distance.

One via e-mail: The persona sends the same documents through e-mail which is positive.

Interview-Decision

There is no touchpoint since the decision will be made after the interview.

Interview-Out of the box experience

Here there is one touchpoint via the survey-event, the real interview with the tutors, which is positive and a moment of truth for the candidate.

C. Admission-Awareness

There is one touchpoint via website: Here the persona can find information for the beginning of the courses through the program's page and that is actually a moment of truth.

Admission-Research

No touchpoints.

Admission-Decision

Here we have one touchpoint via e-mail where the program sends the acceptance letter and this is a very positive experience.

Admission-Out of the box experience

Here there are two touchpoints.

Both of them are via survey-event channel, since is the first welcome where the tutor welcomes the new candidates and this is a moment of truth and a best practice. At the same time, after the first welcome there is a discussion with the second-year students about the program. This is not only a moment of truth and a positive experience, but also a pain point.

D. Registry-Awareness

There are two touchpoints.

One in person: The registry officer informs the candidate about the program and every other useful detail. This is a positive moment of truth.

One via e-mail: The candidate receives an e-mail about the cost of the program, which are a moment of truth and a possible issue.

Registry-Research

We have one touchpoint via phone, where the registry calls to the candidate in order to inform her for the appropriate documents. This could be a best practice and a possible issue.

Registry-Decision

There is one touchpoint via phone, about the time of the payment of the first semester and it is a moment of truth.

Registry-Out of the box experience

At the last stage there are five touchpoints.

One via the phone: The registry officer calls to the candidate in order to confirm the personal data and this is positive.

Three in person: At the beginning, the candidate brings the receipt from the payment and this could be a possible issue. Moreover, the candidate must complete the five forms of the registration which is a moment of truth and a pain point. Finally, the candidate must wait in the line in order to give the forms which also are a moment of truth and a pain point, because of the long waiting.

One via e-mail: The registry sends an e-mail to confirm the registration of the candidate. This is a positive experience and a possible issue, since the registration via the internet may cause some problems.

Persona Details

- Paouri Iro
- Female
- 25

Legend

Columns
Life Cycle Stage
Rows
Scenario
Colors
Channel

- (teal) Phone
- (dark blue) In Person
- (green) Mass media
- (pink) Website
- (purple) E-mail
- (yellow) Survey-Event

Icons

- ♥ Moment of Truth
- 😊 Positive
- 😞 Pain point
- ⚡ Possible Isssue
- ★ Best practice

	Phase 1 Awareness	Phase 2 Research-Evaluation	Phase 3 Decision-Purchase	Phase 4 Out of the box experience
Marketing	Outdoor billboards ★ — Master's brochure 😊 — Information about the program ⚡★ — Job festivals ♥ — Social media-Facebook, Linked in ♥⚡	Comparison with other programs ♥ — Information about other programs of the university ⚡★	Point of view of the students ♥⚡★	Advice from the second year students ♥😊😞
Interview	Registry call 😊	Bring the documents ⚡ — Send the documents 😊		Interview ♥😊
Admission	The begining of the courses ♥		Acceptance letter 😊	First welcome ♥★ — Discussion with the second year students ♥😊😞
Registry	The registry officer ♥😊 — The cost of the program ♥⚡	Information about the documents ⚡★	Payment of the first semester ♥	Confirmation of the personal data 😊 — Bring the receipt ⚡ — Complete forms ♥😞 — Waiting in line ♥😞 — Registration 😊⚡

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4. Omni channel experience

A typical customer journey has a plethora of touchpoints with the brand through different channels. Actually, the customer's experience must be transferred efficiently through these channels in order to be satisfied. For instance, the consumer might want first to communicate with the organization by the phone and then go to the store and purchase the product he needs.

It is not a secret that each company wishes to be the winner of the massive competition through the creation of successful strategies. But as the technology changes and people become more familiar with the digital era, organizations must follow them too.

In the past some of the common strategies that companies used to have are presented below:

- o Improvement of the channels for a better customer experience

- o Separation of the useful and cost effective touchpoints and channels

- o Observation of customer's emotions, in order to create channels that respond to them (Jessica Poole, 2015)

4.1. Multi-Channel

In recent years though, except for these approaches organizations start to use two other strategies, Multi-channel and Omni-channel.

1. Multi-channel

Some organizations have different channels in order consumers to come in contact with them, through websites, emails and social media. Organizations using that strategy do not care about improving the interactions via those channels and devices like mobiles, iPad and tablets to create a more satisfying experience for the customers. (Minkara, 2014)

The multi-channel experience is the approach that many organizations prefer. Customers come in contact with the company through the social media such as Facebook and Twitter, but they want something more interpersonal than a message on the media. (Agius, 2015)

4.2. Omni-channel

A definition for Omni-channel comes from Margaret Rouse (2014) "*... a multichannel approach to sales that seeks to provide the customer with a seamless shopping experience whether the customer is shopping online from a desktop or mobile device, by telephone or in a bricks and mortar store.*" (Agius, 2015)

This term is used when organization also uses a plethora of channels for the convenience of the consumers, but there is a difference; companies focus on the improvement of the devices which helps the interactions. In other words, organizations want to ensure that the customers have the same experience through the mobile app and their presence to the store and that gives the opportunity to the company to control better the touchpoints and offer improved experiences. (Minkara, 2014)

 An Omni-channel experience, means that all channels work together for a better outcome; the satisfaction of the customer. Actually, an Omni-channel in order to achieve that, uses different multiple channels, but there is no chance to happen the opposite. (Agius, 2015)

This approach shows the way consumers choose to interact with the company and its products and mostly how companies motivate their potential clients to use different channels such as social media, visit in the store and online catalogues. Moreover, is based on the customer's data and behavior in order to create an experience exactly at the customer's shoes. That is why Omni-channel is so unique, because understands the customer's true needs and as a result keeps them happy and satisfied. Companies should invest in that strategy if they want to increase their profits and be close to the consumer.

In this new technological era, the behavior of marketers and customers is changing. Marketers, despite the type of interaction digital, face to face or retail, must understand how important the experiences are, not only for the customers, but also for the profitability of the company. On the other hand, consumers through the Omni-channel experience seek brands which will make them trust the products and have a seamless customer journey.

The Omni-channel's tremendous evolution is proved by the information above and a report that MIT conducted which claimed that "more than 80% of store shoppers check prices online." Customers very often check the prices before visiting a store in order to compare and find those which are cost effective according to their quality. Moreover, because marketers analyze the customer's needs and emotions in every touchpoint, are capable of creating a more personal experience for almost every consumer. (Newman, 2014)

4.3.   Omni-Channel's benefits

 An Omni-channel experience has a double benefit; satisfaction for the customers since they interact with the company not only through the social media, but also through their devices and enjoy consistency, and profits for the companies which use the data and insights to create an experience based on the preferences and wants of the customers. Moreover, they use these data to incise the company's strategy and goals. (Agius, 2015)

Another one of the benefits that companies have from using the Omni channel strategy is the increased profits according to a research conducted by the Aberdeen Company. The reason is that these organizations use channels like online shopping and customer care and they create experiences that please the consumers. As a result they stay loyal, keep purchasing services and products and communicate their journey to other potential customers. Moreover, the customers want to feel that they are a part of the company and that the company adds value to them by creating products with great quality.

As Omer Minkara pointed out, *"Success in improving first contact resolution rates is demonstrative of the ability to detect and address customer needs seamlessly within a single interaction. This interaction doesn't necessarily need to be within one channel, but may span multiple channels or devices until the customer's needs are resolved. Research shows that top performers achieve an 89% customer retention rate while their peers retain 33% of their clients due to poor and inconsistent interactions."* (Orckestra, 2014)

Impact of an Omni-channel experience strategy.

	Customer retention	Average profit margin per customer	Customer lifetime value
Companies with Omni-channel CEM programs	6.5%	6.1%	3.4%
All other companies	3.4%	1%	-0.7%

Table 5

Source: http://www.i-scoop.eu/impact-omnichannel-customer-experience-management/

Despite the fact that the customer does not recognize exactly which are the channels and does not really care to know them, he wants to interact with the brand. So, through an Omni channel approach the organization can identify the customer's behavior. According to the Corporate Executive Board, *"84% of customers view achieving the right outcome as more important than being able to select their preferred channel. Customers do not see channels; they only see your organization."* (Jessica Poole, 2015)

A research that conducted by Zendesk, reveals the statistics cited below about the customer's expectations of the Omni-channel approach and generally the companies:

- *"64% expect to receive real-time assistance regardless of the customer service channel they use"*

- *"37% expect to be able to contact the same customer service representative regardless of which channel they use"*

- *"87% think brands need to work harder to create a seamless experience for customers"*

- *"73% think brands pay more attention to generating sales across multiple channels than they do to providing an integrated customer service experience"*

- *"78% say a company's reputation for customer service is important to them when choosing to buy from a particular brand"*

4.4.   Examples of companies with Omni-channel approach

Below there are three examples of companies with great Omni-channel approaches:

Disney

Disney constitutes the best example of a great Omni-channel experience. To begin with, customers have the opportunity to navigate through their mobile or the computer, in the spectacular Disney's website.

Actually, consumers can arrange a whole trip to Disney World through the "My Disney Experience" tool such as, where to dine or the places in the Park to see and visit. Moreover, via their mobile they can be informed for the waiting time of every attraction. Another tool that Disney uses is the Magic Band program. This is very useful to the customers because it is like a photo storage device for any pictures taken of customers with Disney characters, a food ordering tool and a hotel room key.

Starbucks

Starbucks is another example of a successful Omni-channel. Customers can have a free rewards card for their convenience during the purchase. Furthermore, they can check and reload the card via their mobile, the website, the store or the mobile app and it can be updated across all channels at the same time. Actually, if the customer stands in line waiting for his purchase and ascertain that his card's balance is not enough, then he can reload it from the mobile and continue with the purchase. Last but not least, all rewards are uploaded automatically without any action from the part of the customer. (Agius, 2015)

Sephora

The last example of company which uses the Omni-channel strategy is Sephora. Not only can its loyal customers be provided with reward cards and privileges such as the navigation in the organization's website, but also potential ones. In the website, consumers can use the Beauty Bag either via their mobiles or via their computer, and track or view their rewards and purchases they committed. Moreover, they can see the history of their purchases, or add products they want to buy. Also, they can create a list of the products they want to purchase so that to check it when they are in the store. (Trout, 2014)

The creation of the Omni-channel must be different from company to company as we saw above, according to their goals and every department of the organization must participate, because each one of them is responsible for parts of the customer experience. When the strategy and the goals of the Omni-channel get understood, the creation of the experience will start. This means that the whole company will participate in the creation of a model which will have to be connected with many channels in order the customers to have an easier and consistent interaction. These departments are:

- ✓ Customer Service

- ✓ Marketing

- ✓ Executives

- ✓ IT

- ✓ Staff directly involved in the experience (Agius, 2015)

The problem starts when organizations try to perform the strategy. They have to deal with the massive quantity of data and choose the important ones, the technology revolution which is very fast since everyday new software, architectures and channel designs are emerging.

Furthermore, there are many difficulties as far as the regulatory guidelines, the security, the compliance and the privacy are concerned. Moreover, companies trying to follow the technological revolution, create business models that they do not know how to use, instead of improve and integrate the existing ones.

If companies want to implement an Omni-channel strategy, then they have to identify the customer's behavior and interactions with the touchpoints. Actually, there are three principles which must be in their minds:

1) Find cost effective solutions that add value to the customers

2) Make easy, friendly and uninterrupted touchpoints

3) Identify the customer's emotions in every interaction (Orckestra, 2014)

Although Omni-channel approach is very profitable for the organizations, they do not invest on it. For instance, *"70% of the retailers in our universe offer smartphone apps that allow consumers to check stock of an item online, only 17% of retailers allow consumers to check in-store availability online."* Moreover, "*on only 23% of our store visits did a staff member offer to check availability of an item on the retailer's web site, and when the mystery shoppers suggested that clerks check online, the figure only rose to 33%."* (Achim Berg, 2015)

So how an organization can implement an Omni-channel approach? Companies which want to take this step think that is challenging since this is a threat to their base business. For that reason organizations must create a team, which will be independent, will have a distinctive background and talents and will not be afraid of the innovation and integration. (Rigby, 2011)

 According to Darrell Rigby (2011), one way for organizations to avoid the risk, is to attract employees with innovative ideas, with technological knowledge and more importantly young people with fresh ideas. Companies can find these people either within the organization from different departments or from the universities. This is something that most companies did not do in the past, but now because of the massive competition they try to be integrated. (Rigby, 2011)

4.5.   6 Elements of an Omni-channel Management Strategy

Below we present the six elements that an Omni-channel Strategy should have in order to be successful.

"Change the focus from getting it done to meeting the needs of the customer"- Customers want their complaints to be heard and solved, without any delay, long waiting time and call backs. It is not surprising that 71% of the consumers believe that the good service is the one which respect the customer's time. Companies should use processes that guarantee customer's satisfaction and increase the company's profit and sales. Moreover, organizations should focus on adding value to the customers, which means keeping them in the core of the company's strategy.

"Give your agents the tools and information they need to deliver the best service."- Employees should have all the necessary problem-solving information for customer's complaints and service. Actually, it would be convenient that this information is available to them, in case they

want to self-service. Otherwise, there would be a negative impact to the customers and the companies, since they will lose many customers as 75% of them prefer to change channels if the online services are bad.

"*Do not lose information about your customer – across agents, across channels, or across time."*- It is crucial for the company to have and keep personal information for the customers. Also, it is necessary to have a history of customer's interactions with the company, in order to avoid annoying the customers for constant confirmation as 42% of them admit that it is frustrated.

"*Normalize interactions and use consistent processes, with consistent information, across channels."*- Companies should separate the processes which concern the contact with the channels and interactions. In that way the company can easier predict the potential issues that customers might encounter and minimize them.

"*Eliminate technology islands. Use a consistent, integrated set of management tools for every channel"*- Organizations should find new ways to collect data from the customer's interactions with the brand. It should be wised to follow the technology but with some limitations in order to avoid the risk of unnecessary expenses for the company and dissatisfaction of the customers.

"*Consider customer contact drivers, and current and future channels when considering technology upgrades."*- It is important not only to follow the technological evolution, but also to understand how it can provide support to the channels now and in the future. Moreover, as the customer journey begins to affect the business, more and more channels are going to be created for the customer's satisfaction. (McDougall, 2014)

Companies should start and use the Omni-channel approach, because as Marketo, Marketing Automation provider, cited "*Marketers now need to provide a seamless experience, regardless of channel or device. Consumers can now engage with a company in a physical store, on an online website or mobile app, through a catalog, or through social media. They can access products and services by calling a company on the phone, by using an app on their mobile smartphone, or with a tablet, a laptop, or a desktop computer. Each piece of the consumer's experience should be consistent and complementary."* (Newman, 2014)

An Omni-channel approach not only should assure organization's survival, but also bring a new era in the customer experience and how companies confront their customers. Moreover, it is time for organizations to understand that digital and physical interactions are not enemies but they have to exist with each other. Customers can express their needs and create ideas and innovative solutions for the firms to follow. Only then companies will achieve to satisfy better the customers with cost-effective and profitable ways. (Rigby, 2011)

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5. Digital experience

In previous years, internet seems to provide companies with two solutions such as the creation of the e-mail and the organization's website. Now, companies have a lot more options in order to interact with their customers and capture their thoughts. Moreover, departments which were occupied with web solutions and software like IT, now give guidance to other departments that participate in the creation of the customer journey such as Marketing. (Bamforth, 2015)

However, many organizations are afraid of the digital revolution and as a result they do not attempt any action in order to integrate their strategies and motivate their customers. In a research that conducted in many organizations about their feelings for the digitization, the following were found:

- o *Almost 60% of respondents say that analysis of digitally-derived customer data is the key to their company's innovation efforts.*
- o *Fewer than 30% of respondents believe their customers' digitally-mediated experience and engagement with their companies could qualify as "high quality"; a quarter believes it is no better than "fair."*
- o *Approximately 42% of respondents said that customer and data analysis is not a key element of their innovation efforts, and 47% don't seem to be focused on creating personalized services.*
- o *Fewer than 20% of respondents use analytics generated by application programming interface (API) traffic to understand their customers' online and offline purchase journeys.*
- o *Just 41% of respondents in the retail industry say they will be effective at analyzing customer metadata by 2017.*
- o *A mere 42% of respondents say they have adequate tools and skills to analyze digitally generated data.*
- o *Only one-third of respondents have made adjustments to their business model to pursue strategies driven by digital information about their customers.* (Pring, 2014)

As we noted in previous chapters, digital channels can be found in every touchpoint during the customer journey which helps companies to better support the customer service. But with Multi-channels it is very difficult to keep customers satisfied and create an end-to-end strategy, since these channels derive from multiple technologies, each with its characteristics. In order to achieve a good experience, organizations should have quality management and open-minded employees.

An end-to-end customer experience is very significant for companies. Not only assures that consumers will enjoy a positive experience, but also assures that they stay loyal to the brand, talk about their experience with other customers and as a result the organization will have increased profits and sales.

There are many reasons that customers are connected to the digital customer journey, and some of them are presented below:

- One reason is the technological revolution which motivates the customers to use digital channels and touchpoints for their convenience.
- Another reason is that customers who had a digital experience from certain industries, now they seek these experiences in other organizations.
- Last but not least, the way customers use mobile applications in order to save time and money from their purchases.

Despite the fact that customers do not care about how an experience is created and what tools and techniques are used, for marketers and organizations is the number one priority, since it is responsible for the company's profitability. Furthermore, there is a gap between what the customer expects from a brand and what he experiences. For example, there is a difference between service that customers receive via the internet and in the store.

Organizations who want to be at the top preferences of the customer must pay attention to this gap and particularly to the following issues:

1) The customer's behavior in every point of interaction with the brand.
2) The kind of equipment the consumer uses in order to make the interaction.
3) The places where these interactions happen.

4) Distinguish between the channels and their characteristics such as social media and e-mails.

Despite the differences there are some points which digital and customer experience have in common:

- *The customer experience (expectations) of a digital-savvy customer who uses more digital technologies and channels.*

- *The customer experience across various digital touchpoints.*

- *The digital technologies organizations can deploy to enable customer interactions (the front-end) and to improve the customer experience (back-office).*

- *The experience regarding digital services and products as such. This is one area where the Internet of Things comes into play: smart digital devices that 1) are built by brands and thus influence the perceptions of those brands, 2) come with an entirely different type of experience and 3) offer opportunities to improve customer experiences within the device and/or based on data regarding the usage of the device.* (McGovern, 2014)

An improvement in the customer journey does not only mean good touchpoints, good connections and convenient places. It is something more; the improvement of the processes and generally a change in the culture of the organization in order to proceed with improvements. Generally, many organizations concentrate on the technology and processes that are faceless, without showing the appropriate attention to the customer as a person. This is vital for the companies because customers are the most important factor that an organization survives and keeps operating. (McGovern, 2014)

5.1. Digital transformation

Organizations who will proceed to the integration step must notice important elements about customer experience and digital transformation. The most important of them are the following:

"**People first – the customer experience and digital transformation priority**"

As a part of the improvements that organizations must perform, tools that assist customers to complete their purchases and journeys should also be integrated. New tools and techniques or improved ones must attract customer's attention and especially if they are cost effective. These tools such as touchpoints and channels will make the customer experience easier and more consistent.

"**The responsibility for the customer experience**"

The customer journey first must be organized in a way that the strategy and the goals of the customer's experience will be captured. In that way it would be easier for the steps to be implemented with every necessary detail in order to achieve a customer journey without flaws.

"**Customer experience optimization and process optimization must go hand in hand**"

Despite the fact that technological improvement (business and IT, agility, prioritization) and customer experience are not the same they have to work together and achieve a successful journey since people are the most important factor for a firm.

In Table 6 are presented the factors which define an organization's success.

Factors	Percentages
"*Accurate, consistent and compliant customer communication*"	38%
"*Fast response to customers an all fronts*"	34%
"*Providing a customer experience to match the best in our industry*"	34%
"*Process automation to unify customer transaction processes*"	27%
"*Scaling the business without greatly increasing overhead*"	23%
"*Coordinated customer response across all channels*"	20%
"*Using the customer/transaction data we have to target web business*"	14%
"*Connecting with the customer on their device and at their location of choice*"	12%

Table 6

Source: White paper AIIM and Kodak Alaris (http://www.i-scoop.eu/digital-transformation/digital-transformation-deep-dive-customer-experience/)

According to the World Federation of Advertisers, 74 percent of organizations are not prepared to take the next step and enter the digital era. But in 2016, more and more companies will accept this major change and will provide better services to their customers in order to keep them satisfied. Moreover, as PCA Predict and Springboard cited, the transactions in stores fell by 7 percent, but online transactions increased by 16 percent. This means that consumers have a growing relationship with digitalization since they are always connected not only for purchases, but also for being informed.

Simple insights alone cannot constitute a good baseline for the creations of a customer journey. It will need the assistance of the social media data and customer and market data in order to be completed. Companies from these data can predict customer's wants, why they are not satisfied from the competitors in order to attract them. Customers are the reason that marketing survives and always finds ways to evolve as customers do so. (Humby, 2015)

In a survey that conducted from PAC in the summer of 2015 in German, UK and France, 455 companies were interviewed via Computer Aided Telephone Interviews. Some of the questions were:

1. *What is the state of the digital strategy in European companies and is someone overseeing all digitization efforts?*
2. *How strongly do companies invest in digital channels and analytics, and to what extent are they able to use them effectively?*
3. *How do companies deal with the exploding amount of customer data and do they have an integrated view along the entire customer journey?*

The findings of the survey were the following:

Although everyone discuss about digitization, few implement strategies for the customer experience improvement. 69 percent of the companies have not a particular department for digitization processes and only 14 percent has a Chief Digital Officer. Moreover, 70 percent of the companies have a customer experience strategy derived from the top level of management and 36 percent recognizes that some actions must take place in order to have a more complete approach of the experience.

Another issue is that the customer experience needs the collaboration of all the departments. Despite this, 50 percent of the organizations do not include this cooperation with the departments and a bigger percent 65% does not have someone responsible for the supervising of the interactions at the touchpoints. Furthermore, as we saw in previous chapters, channels are the means of interactions between the customers and the brand. Channels such as mobiles, social media in the future will be necessary for the transactions and insights. However, only 40-45 percent of the organizations admitted that are in a sufficient stage as far as the management of the channels is concerned and 60 percent admits that still has a long way until being ready for this integration. ((PAC), 2015)

5.2. Twelve ways to improve customer experience in online shops

According to Jennifer Lonoff Schiff, there are twelve ways that firms with online shops can improve the experience that they offer to their customers and they are presented below:

1. *"Make sure your site loads quickly, whether on a computer or a mobile device"*
   Because of the fast paced way of life in recent years, people do not have time to waste. So do the customers, since they want to check websites easy and conveniently. This means that they have to have access either from the computer or their mobile. There are many cases where organizations lost their customers because their websites were too slow. For instance, *"Amazon has shown that every 100 milliseconds of latency cost them 1 percent in sales, while Walmart reports conversion rates rise 2 percent for every second of reduced load time."*

2. *"Focus on navigation – and don't forget about site search"*
   Except for quick access on the websites, it is necessary to also offer a quicker navigation on the websites. Organizations must keep their customer's interest and not turn to the competitor's website. Moreover, companies should have a good site search technology in order to keep their clients loyal.

3. *"Remember that a good photo can be worth a thousand words (and maybe a thousand dollars)"*
   Organization's websites should have enough images of the products from every angle and the possibility to zoom. This approach helps customers to better understand the

product they want to use. Moreover, the images must have good quality and be real without deceiving the consumer.

4. *"Less is often more when it comes to content"*
The content of the website must be simple and easy to understand how to navigate it. It is better for the customer no to contain many videos and images because at the end he loses the experience.

5. *"Include customer Review"*
Companies must provide reviews and comments from other customers who experienced their brand. This must be accessible from every channel in order to convince the consumers about the quality of their purchases. According to a Power Reviews study in 2014, *"more than 86 percent of consumers see reviews as an essential resource when making purchase decisions, and 56 percent of shoppers specifically seek out websites with reviews."*

6. *"Use color psychology"*
Websites which utilize booking engines, organizations should use green for the checkout or payment button. Green stands for 'go,' just like a traffic light, and will have a positive association in the customer's mind.

7. *"Let customers know if an item is in stock, or what the backorder date is, right on the product page"*
Websites must include in the product's page if an item is available, since it is frustrated when customers find their product and in the end they ascertain that the product is no longer available.

8. *"Make it easy for customers to contact you, get a quote or sign up for email."*
In addition with the above, customers should be easy to find contact information of the organization such as e-mail and contact number. They must be in an obvious place so that the customers will not waste time in order to find this information.

9. *"Offer live chat"*
Organizations should install in their websites live chat software. In this way customers will have the opportunity to ask any question related to the products and take an answer in a short period of time.

10. *"Provide a self-service option or FAQ page"*

   "In a research conducted from Aspect*," 73 percent of consumers said they should have the ability to solve most product or service issues on their own.*

   Moreover, over two thirds of them also said that they feel really good about both the company and themselves when they are able to answer a question or solve a problem without having to talk with a customer service agent."

11. *"Make checking out simple – and allow shoppers to save their carts."*

   For a positive customer experience this step is very important. Websites must offer an easy process to the cart that allows to the customer to purchase his product. Moreover, it is necessary to save the products which are in the cart in order to purchase them at another time.

12. *"Offer free shipping"*

   Every customer wants free shipping. It is a strategy against the massive competition and a better chance that guarantees a positive customer experience. (Schiff, 2015)

In Table 7 are presented the most effective methods to identify customer experiences issues.

Methods	% of companies considering most effective
"Information contained in customer emails"	43%
"Calls to the customer service teams"	45%
"Online feedback tools"	35%
"Usability testing/heat maps"	40%
"Digital experience (session) replay"	57%

Table 7

Source: https://econsultancy.com/blog/10066-understanding-online-customer-experience-four-key-trends/ (Charlton, 2012)

In Table 8 are presented the methods that organizations use to track the right stats in order to assess the customer experience on mobile.

Methods	Percentages
"Companies who track which devices and platforms are used by mobile visitors."	88%
"Companies who track the value of mobile visitors."	43%
"Companies who track the behavioral differences of mobile visitors."	24%
"Companies who look at the influence of mobile on online channels."	22%

Table 8

Source: https://econsultancy.com/blog/10066-understanding-online-customer-experience-four-key-trends/ (Charlton, 2012)

Except for this, interactions should be automated in order organizations to get better results that capture the customer's behavior. Despite the fact that social media play a significant part in the way companies perceive the customer's needs and want, in a recent research that Capgemini conducted social media dropped in importance in the customer journey between 2012 and 2014. (Bamforth, 2015)

Companies who want to dominate the competition should create strategies focus on customer experience and digitization. In fact, some key points that they have to focalize are presented below:

"Customer"- Consumers need to be understood and feel that their needs and wants come first. Moreover, every touchpoint and channel during the customer journey should be planned in order possible inconveniences to be avoided. And the most important is that companies should accept customer's complaints in real time without very long waiting.

"Content"- organizations should invest on digital experience since it is the best way that customers use to express their thoughts, but with prudence. Furthermore, employees who fully understand the goals and visions of the organizations should be empowered and rewarded.

"Context- Go beyond simple tailoring to the individual and pick up the context that surrounds them. The information is available, but needs to be harvested and aggregated so that smart decisions can be taken automatically to align more closely with customer needs."

"Integration"- Organizations need to be sure that processes and employees are integrated and informed about the goals and strategies that they follow. They need the cooperation of every department. The insights they have and the important data, in order a useful customer map to be built according to customer's needs. (Bamforth, 2015)

5.3. "Technological trends of customer experience in 2015"

"Mobile-first support"

Customers are beginning to use their mobiles and smartphones as tools for their communication with the brands and for their purchases. Mobiles are considering not only just channels which help the consumer, but also means through which consumers expressing their opinions since they have multiple uses such as social media, chats, e-mails and sms. From 2014 until now more and more companies have adopted this kind of experience for their clients, like Starbucks and Citibank.

"The Darwinian customer experience"

As 7 out of 10 organizations believe that customer experience plays a significant role in their business's success, we can understand how important its improvement is. Consumers constantly change their needs and expectations and they want the same thing from the brand; to adapt in change. Particularly, companies have a misconception of customer's point of view for them, since 88% of all businesses believe that they deliver "excellent" customer experience but unfortunately, only 8% of their customers believe the same thing.

"Proactive customer care"

In the past, companies did not care about solving a problem before it even appears. In 2015, this has changed and organizations start to be more proactive for the convenience of the clients. For instance, *"Airlines have been working this way for decades, proactively rebooking customer tickets*

if they miss their connecting flights due to bad weather or airline-related delays. In 2014, Amazon went a step further, with care agents proactively engaging with customers once an order is placed to provide estimated time of arrival for the delivery, and to introduce themselves, highlighting their willingness to help, should the customer need them."

"Smart machines make their mark"

Because of the large number of customer's information that organizations have in their archives, a more personal customer journey cannot easily be designed. So, now it is the time to change the way companies treated their big data and adopt smart machines which can manage these data and interpret them to useful information such as what every single customer desires from the brand.

"Re-humanizing care"

Employees, who work at the department of customer care, usually use automated replies since they take orders from the top management, and as a result customers are not satisfied from the interaction. Now, companies invest on their employees in order to be more humanized and respect the customer's emotions and opinions and be friendlier to them.

"The virtual reality renaissance"

Virtual reality intruded in our lives years ago. In 2015, customers not only can imagine but also actually see how their houses could be with another color on the walls or different furniture, before they make any changes. This opportunity offers a positive customer experience, since any disappointment is avoided. (WDS, 2015)

"Emotion as a decisive factor"

Results from a recent study that conducted by Forrester Company, showed that consumers are based on their emotions and they decide if they will stay loyal to the brand. So companies must invest on that factor and take directions from consulting companies, which know how to treat consumers in order to gain them. (Davey, 2015)

5.4.   *"Technological trends of customer experience in 2016"*

"The customer experience becomes a competitive advantage"

In recent years, companies seek new ways to survive the competition. On the other hand, customers want a more personalized contact with the brand in order to feel that they are a part of the product's production and give feedback to the organization about their actions. So, companies must follow the customer's needs since according to Gartner, *"89% of executives believe that customer experience will be their primary mode of competition by the end of 2016."* Moreover, Accenture from their executive survey found that *"81% of respondents said that user experience was in their top 5 organizational priorities."*

According to Accenture, *"companies that crack the code for how to manage and scale personalized experiences are going to be in the most profitable long-term position."* Below we present three methods which firms can use in order to personalize more the customer experience:

1. Design a website which will recognize if the visitor is a client or a potential one. Furthermore, the site should correspond to the demographic and geographical data.
2. Create an experience with the assistance of an employee for a meaningful interaction with the brand.
3. If there is an online shop, the company should improve the methods of shipping and delivery packages for the consumer's convenience.

"Measuring and valuing outcomes over transactions"

As the world getting smarter customers must follow the lead. It is not a secret that consumers care more about the value they receive from the purchase of a product or a service than the same product or service.

Organizations which are aware of this situation and have the technology to measure the value given to the customers through their products, they can easily adapt the company's vision and goals in order to succeed. Furthermore, there are plenty of ways to achieve this. Two of them are 1) concentrate on the background of the purchase, for example why the consumer need this

product and how it will help him and 2) find the value that customer receive from the products in order to adapt the price.

"Reimagining how humans and machines work together"

Machines and humans must learn to cooperate for the sake of the businesses. Machines can assist employees gathering all the appropriate information and separate it from the useless ones. They consist an ally for the employee, that make his work easier and without mistakes. (Rusonis, 2015)

"Video customer service becomes popular"

A really innovative idea would be employees from customer care service to communicate with the customers via video calls. This would be an excellent way to capture customer's emotions and needs, and eventually to be satisfied from their experience with the organization. For instance, *"Amazon pioneered video with their Kindle Mayday offering, but this is just the beginning. American Express Co. brought video help to its iPad app in February, using technology from Cisco Systems Inc. that supports both one-way and two-way video. Like Amazon, American Express trained agents to inject their own personality into calls."*

"Workforce technology makes on-demand contact centers a reality"

Nowadays many companies, in order to keep satisfied their customers adopt a different method. This means that agents from the customer support can work anytime from everywhere and they are flexible and willing to service the customers.

"The internet of things explodes"

"The Internet of Things is the network of physical objects or "things" embedded with electronics, software, sensors, and network connectivity, which enables these objects to collect and exchange data" (Wikipedia).

"Artificial Intelligence is the intelligence exhibited by machines or software. It is also the name of the academic field of study which studies how to create computers and computer software that are capable of intelligent behavior" (Wikipedia).

The above definitions are the future of customer's care. According to Blake Morgan's (2014) visit in NYC, he realized that an IBM Watson Lab was able to capture and manage millions of

information and find potential solutions to customer's problems. This technological innovation is extraordinary if someone can imagine just how convenient and cost effective this could be for customers and organizations too. Moreover, Tim Joyce, Chief Innovation Officer of Xerox Customer Care points out that, in order artificial intelligence to bring results in the future, machines should realize from a description, what the problem is and decide its solution in accordance with the customer's needs.

"Big data becomes useful"

The significance of the data is massive for the organizations. Without them they do not identify the potential problems and be proactive or have in mind what customers want. This is actually the feedback that the interested departments of an organization seek in order to offer products and services adjusted to their client's expectations. (Morgan, 2015)

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6. Lean and Customer Experience Management

Lean is one of the most popular process improvement methods that focus on eliminating the non-value adding processes in wait time, productivity, defects and other. But the respondents of all these are the consumers and their positive or negative feelings. On the other hand, the customer experience is an also popular business improvement method, which focuses on the customer's emotions. Both approaches have a part that they are missing and they can fulfill it one for each other. (Abilla, 2012)

For instance, Lean can assist customer journey mapping by eliminating all the wastes in the processes where marketers use to identify the touchpoints which the consumer will meet during his journey. In that way they can prevent every channel or touchpoint that does not create value to the end customer giving him the perfect experience. Additionally, the customer experience can add one more aspect to Lean's philosophy; the customer's emotions, since no consumer cares about the process of a product or a service. The only thing that matters is if they receive the quality and the satisfaction they expect. (Abilla, 2012)

As (Abilla, 2012) points out, *"Satisfaction is a judgment that a customer makes and that judgment is based on a feeling, memory, or an emotion. It is almost never mechanical in its nature, and is almost always qualitative."*

As we said in Chapter 2.2, Lean is a very powerful tool in the hands of every organization since it concentrates on the customers and the value of the processes and products. Its tools such as Value Stream Maps and 'Voice of the customer' (VOC), can assist companies to know the customer's needs better and create add value products according to their expectations. For that reason many companies are using Lean's management philosophy and especially the concept of "**work cell**". According to the book "*The Machine That Changed the World*" by Womack, Jones and Roos, *"a work cell is an arrangement of resources in a manufacturing environment to improve the quality, speed and cost of the process. Work cells are designed to improve these by improving process flow and eliminating waste."* (Driek Desmet, 2015)

However, in order companies to have these outcomes, they must truly understand Lean's culture and function and most important how consumers perceive the meaning of value.

6.1. *"Defining Value"*

The one thing that Customer experience and Lean management have in common is the Value. According to Michael Boyette (2011), *value is the benefit to your customer over cost. In equation form, value through the eyes of your customer looks something like this:* **Benefit - Cost = Value.** Because customers act differently according to their thoughts and emotions, there is one way that organizations can add value to them; they must capture what customers define as a cost and benefit and how they understand the value. For instance, some consumers believe that they gain from the interactions by not spent a lot of time on waiting or receive many information e-mails. For others, this would mean the opposite since they want to feel that organizations care about their needs and want to be in a constant contact with them.

Lean management can assist organizations to identify what is valuable for the customers. There are some tools that can lead to this identification such as Quality Function Deployment in order to identify value according to the customers and Value Stream Mapping and process mapping to capture the different steps in the business processes and highlight where the value is being added. (Bice, 2011)

In order organizations to be competitive and not to dissatisfy their customers must recognize how they define the value equation. Below there are some questions which will help companies on this effort:

- ✓ *"How much value does he or she place on these benefits?"*
- ✓ *"What does this customer consider a cost?"*
- ✓ *"How big are those costs?"*
- ✓ *"Based on the customer's value equation, how can I add benefits without increasing costs?"*
- ✓ *"How can I reduce costs without cutting benefits?"* (Boyette, 2011)

Organizations very often misunderstand the meaning of cost. They considering it only to be the money that customers spent for a purchase or the money the company spends for the manufacturing, the marketing and operations. Every transaction between the customer and the firm has a sacrifice from the customer's part such as, money, time, quality or convenience.

In other words organizations which want to survive the competition should minimize the factors which could lead the customers to purchase the competitor's products. That is another one of the positive factors using the Lean management.

6.2. "Lean customer values"

"Lean Customer Value Principle #1":

No customer can understand if the process of a product is cost effective and without wastes for the manufacturers, so they are not willing to pay in a higher price. They use other criteria such as, the brand, the price compared to the competitor's price and the quality.

"Lean Customer Value Principle #2":

The value of a product or a service depends mostly on any customer's thoughts and actions. This means that a customer would be willing to pay a big amount of a product that he likes either to impress with his wealth or to be satisfied, but another customer may not be able to afford giving this amount of money. So, the true value must be objective.

"Lean Customer Value Principle #3":

Customers evaluate their purchases since they do not only spent money but also time and energy. For instance, one customer is willing to wait in a long line in order to purchase a product that is valuable to him, or if the brand name is very popular. Despite the fact that there are actions that are valuable for the organization customer contact information, word-of-mouth, marketing, and brand loyalty, at the end the consumer is the one who decides if his interaction was worth it.

"Lean Customer Value Principle #4":

With every choice there are consequences. There will always be something that the customers are willing to sacrifice in order to be satisfied. For example, if someone buys a small house in order to gain some money, there is a chance not all of his furniture to fit inside.

"Lean Customer Value Principle #5":

At customer's decision making emotions play an important role. As we said above the meaning of value is subjective and differs from one consumer to another. Organizations cannot predict the customer's intentions since they cannot control his emotions.

Actually, companies should invest more on things that add value to the customers and not so much on reducing wastes. Being Lean means to find ways to be distinguished from the competitors and attract as many consumers as possible. (Velaction, n.d.)

6.3. "How Can Organizations Reduce Cost Without Cutting Benefits?"

As Mark Preston (2014) points out, organizations have to ameliorate their processes in order to create value for the customers, with lower costs and without losing any benefits. He also presents a series of questions helping companies to create value from the customer's side:

- ✓ *"What benefits do my competitors offer that I don't? Are these viewed as costs?"*
- ✓ *"What benefits do my customers receive when buying from me? How many of these are unique benefits?"*
- ✓ *"How much value do my customers place on our current portfolio of benefits?"*
- ✓ *"Are there any additional benefits we can offer or expand without changing or raising our costs?"*

Companies after understanding what value means to their customers, must communicate it to the whole organization. The goals and vision of the business should be focused on the customer's expectations and how the organization will respond to them. Employees must also be trained in order to give the appropriate attention to the customer's complaints and problems. This should be the new culture that companies must adopt since the benefits will be the improvement of the customer experience and the reduction of the unnecessary costs. (Preston, 2014)

 As it was presented in previous chapters, *a process is Lean if it uses only the absolute minimum of resources (material, machines and labor) to add value to the product.* Everybody involved in the process performs only value-added tasks so there is no waste. Kimberly Watson-Hemphill and

Jim Fishbein give another definition of value: *"Value is defined as an activity or step the customer cares about and is willing to pay for when done right the first time".* Lean's core concept is that every process which does not add value to the product and as a result to customers, is considered waste and must be eliminated. (Jim Fishbein, n.d.)

According to Brent Bice (2011), companies which have websites and many processes for continuing development should follow these four principles that are presented below:

"Principle 1: *Eliminate Waste"*

Every process that consists of another process and can be eliminated without causing any problems in the general procedure is a waste, just like any process that is not used by the customers and mostly is not adding value to them. Some other wastes are:

- *"Bad code not built around a framework"*
- *"Involving team members who are not directly contributing to the project"*
- *"Unclear requirements"*
- *"Bureaucracy"*
- *"Lack of communication"*

"Principle 2: *Give power to the people"*

People just like customers play an important role in the Lean management. So, an organization's culture should communicate decisions and work from the top level to the production workers, build a team of employees focused on the customer's satisfaction and value, motivate employees to solve any problem and find before it occurs, encourage employees to be occupied with multiple tasks and procced with transparency and constant learning.

"Principle 3: *Decide as late as possible. Deliver as quickly as possible."*

Results based on facts cannot be questioned. So organizations should be wiser to:

"Delay crucial decisions until they can be made based on facts"

"Work in iterations to reduce the amount of complexity and uncertainty"

"Adapt to change and correct mistakes"

When management makes crucial decisions, they must be delivered and communicated to the whole organization as soon as possible in order to:

"Maximize the flow of information and delivered value (communicate early and often)"

"Deliver the product without considerable defect"

"Gather customer feedback and iterate"

"Principle 4: *Optimize across organizations"*

As we said above, the whole organization together with the customers must concentrate on the same goal and understand the processes. In other words optimization is what needed in order companies to succeed. The characteristics of an optimized company which perform Lean are:

- *"Structure around teams that maintain responsibility for overall business value, rather than intermediate measurements such as their ability to speculate and pad estimates"*
- *"Structure around delivering increments of business value, with all the necessary skills on the same team"*

He also concluded that, *"it takes a shift in mentality, personnel, and process to create a Lean environment. But once the shift is made you will realize that true value-based design and development not only increase internal productivity and profits, but also provides your customers with truly valuable features at a lower cost and faster time to market."* (Bice, 2011)

6.4. "Eliminating Non-Value Adding Processes"

T. Earley (2015) cited two questions for organizations to ask, when examining a process in order to see if it is a non-value adding process and eliminate it:

1. *"Is this step changing the form or character of the product?"*
2. *"Does this step meet an explicit customer requirement?"*

Then he continues, if there is a positive answer, companies can ask if there is a more cost effective way. This is the moment where Lean and its tools can help companies to create value without sacrifice any benefits and eliminating all the wastes. (Bice, 2011)

At the time of digitization organizations must create simpler processes for the customer journeys, since they increase the customer's satisfaction. Actually, according to a research, *"faster mobile-phone sign-ups raised a telecommunications company's customer satisfaction by 20 percent and reduced costs by 30 percent. For a European lender, time for account opening and loan approval fell from days to minutes, customer-engagement opportunities rose from once a month to three or four times a week, and IT became far more agile, delivering new releases in a month instead of a year."*

6.5.   Implementation

In order companies to change their culture for delivering more positive experiences, the whole organization must be trained improving the talents and capabilities of its employees. They must develop innovative ideas about how consumers can be better satisfied. However, there are not many employees who combine knowledge and strong capabilities, so the company can use other methods in order to succeed this. For example, *"one large retailer acquired a few specialized technology companies. A telco relied on a large digital agency to augment roles in areas such as enterprise architecture, while in parallel it hired external talent and trained internal employees. A bank took an even more comprehensive approach by setting up an internal academy to teach a combination of leadership, digital, and execution skills."*

Organizations find it quite difficult to cooperate with the consumers, since they have to understand every moment what are their feelings and thoughts. According to Amazon.com, *"when an e-commerce customer returns something, they want their refund right away; they do not want to wait for the item to get back to your warehouse and be "processed for a refund"—by which time the refund has missed your credit card's current billing cycle."*

As (Solomon, 2014) claims, Lean principles if applied properly in the customer experience management and mostly in companies which are focused on customers, they can be the perfect method to give valuable experiences. He also gives an example in order to be understandable: *"Customer service can be improved by Lean methodology by allowing you to speed up service response times by removing wasted time and motion, improve the variety of our offerings by having appropriately scaled processing equipment located throughout your facility; and enhance morale*

and profitability by reducing the time your staff spends waiting around with nothing to do, nobody to serve."

(Agarwal, n.d.), after presenting an example of how organizations with customer service and especially call centers can use Lean in order to be more effective, they cite 8 steps for its successful implementation.

"Capture the voice of customer (VOC)"

Voice Of the Customer, as one of Lean's tools can assist organizations to listen to customer's voice and identify the problematic spots that need improvement in order to deliver more positive experiences.

"Define the problem statement"

In this step, the company can design a map for better capturing the problem and have an overall idea about the changes that must occur. Moreover, in that way managers can calculate the costs of the whole procedure.

"Map the value stream"

All the touchpoints that participate in the customer's journey are captured in a map in order to distinguish those that add value to the consumers from those that do not. Actually we are talking about the Value Stream Mapping another Lean tool which is *"a strategic improvement and planning tool that can help identify and measure waste in an inbound or outbound call. The purpose of VSM is to look at the flow of conversation, the systems in use and the time required at each stage from the start of the call until the customer hangs up."*

"Identify waste"

Lean is the best method to identify wastes and eliminate them. After applying the Value Stream Mapping the organization is able to identify according to Lean the waste in the entire value chain and isolate them in order to eliminate them. Another scientific technique that can be used for separate value adding from non-value adding processes is the Time and Motion Studies[9].

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[9] Definition: "Time and motion studies focus on standard workers and a concept of rating for capturing the standard time to do a job" *(Agarwal, n.d.)*

"Eliminate waste"

At the end and after the waste elimination, a control plan would be helpful in order to check that every process will remain improved and that will last. According to American Society for Quality (ASQ), *"A control plan is a written summary that describes what is needed to keep an improved process at its current level. This includes human resources and training requirements, actions that should be taken if measures are outside the specified range, and reactions needed to ensure process owners sustain the gains of process improvements. The purpose of the control plan is to ensure that performance improvements made by the project team are sustained over time. The plan is created during the improve phase of the define, measure, analyze, improve, control (DMAIC) approach or a similar phase of other methodologies. The project team should create the control plan along with the process owner and representation from all areas involved in the process. As the process changes or process knowledge increases and as measurement systems and implementation methods are evaluated and improved, the plan should be updated."* (Quality, n.d.) *(Agarwal, n.d.)*

"Harness the power of big data"

As we pointed out earlier in previous chapters, today there is a technological revolution that permits companies to gather big amounts of information about what the customers want and moreover, this information can result in the waste elimination and process improvement.

"Cross-train to increase productivity"

The employee's training is necessary to balance the work time among them in order to have the same chances to help customers with their potential problems or questions. In this way the negative experience will be avoided and the productivity will be increased.

"Creating a lean culture"

It is important that everyone in the organization to participate in Lean's implementation and mostly the employees. They are the ones that interact with the customers, hear their expectations and needs, and try to give solution to their problems in order to satisfy them. According to (Ross, 2013), Lean is more important for services and specifically for customer –led operations. It gives the opportunity to the employees to think out of box for keeping satisfied and loyal the consumers and solve every problem before it even occurs. (Standard, 2012)

Lean if applied to the world of services, it can reduce costs, errors, and increase responsiveness and off course consumer satisfaction (Standard, 2012). But only this is not enough, unless the organization's culture is not governed by continuous improvement, learning and innovation. (Driek Desmet, 2015)

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7. Conclusion

Customers are the core of organizations and the reason they survive through the years. Specifically, the consumers have the power to give a competitive advantage to companies or sink them since every organization works for the customers in order to increase their profits.

There are many ways that companies can be in a strong position as far as the competition is concerned. As we presented, the customer journey mapping is one of them and generally the customer experience management and tools combined with Lean's management philosophy. Customer journey mapping must be implemented from organizations if they want to close the gap between what the customer expects and what he receives from a product or a service. Actually, in recent years where almost every organization has websites, the creation of touchpoints and channels is crucial.

According to this procedure, touchpoints and channels which are more likely customers to meet and interact with through their journey are being identified by the marketers. The reason is to find and improve potential obstacles through the experience before they occur, in order consumers to enjoy a positive experience. Furthermore, customers want to be heard and create a trustworthy relationship with every organization they come in contact with. Both companies and customers want this relationship to work since there is a double benefit; organizations gain loyal customers and as a result new ones and consumers gain a positive experience and the expected satisfaction from the received products or services.

As we pointed out earlier, value is in fact the basic element that companies should create for customers and on the other side that customers seek from their purchase and not the actual product or service. In other words, all the processes and resources that are used for the final product must add value to the end customer.

In this part, Lean management and its philosophy is useful to the companies. Since Lean management is focused on the customers and the value that is created for them, can assist the organizations using its tools and techniques, to distinguish the value adding processes from the non-value adding and eliminate them.

In previous chapters, we presented that every process is considered waste if it is not create value to the end consumer. With this approach, companies can prevent unpleasant conditions during the customer's interaction with the brand, by eliminating them and finally by offering to the consumers positive experiences with quality.

Unfortunately, there is not a lot of information for the combination of Lean management and Customer experience management in the literature, despite the fact that in recent years the quality and leanness is more necessary than ever, since the competition between the companies is strong and customers are seeking for the best and less cost-effective solution.

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