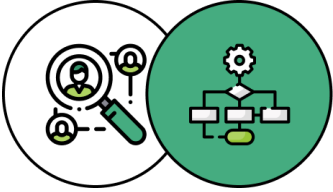


The customer centricity playbook

What it is, why
you should
care, and how
to achieve it

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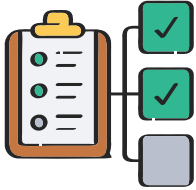
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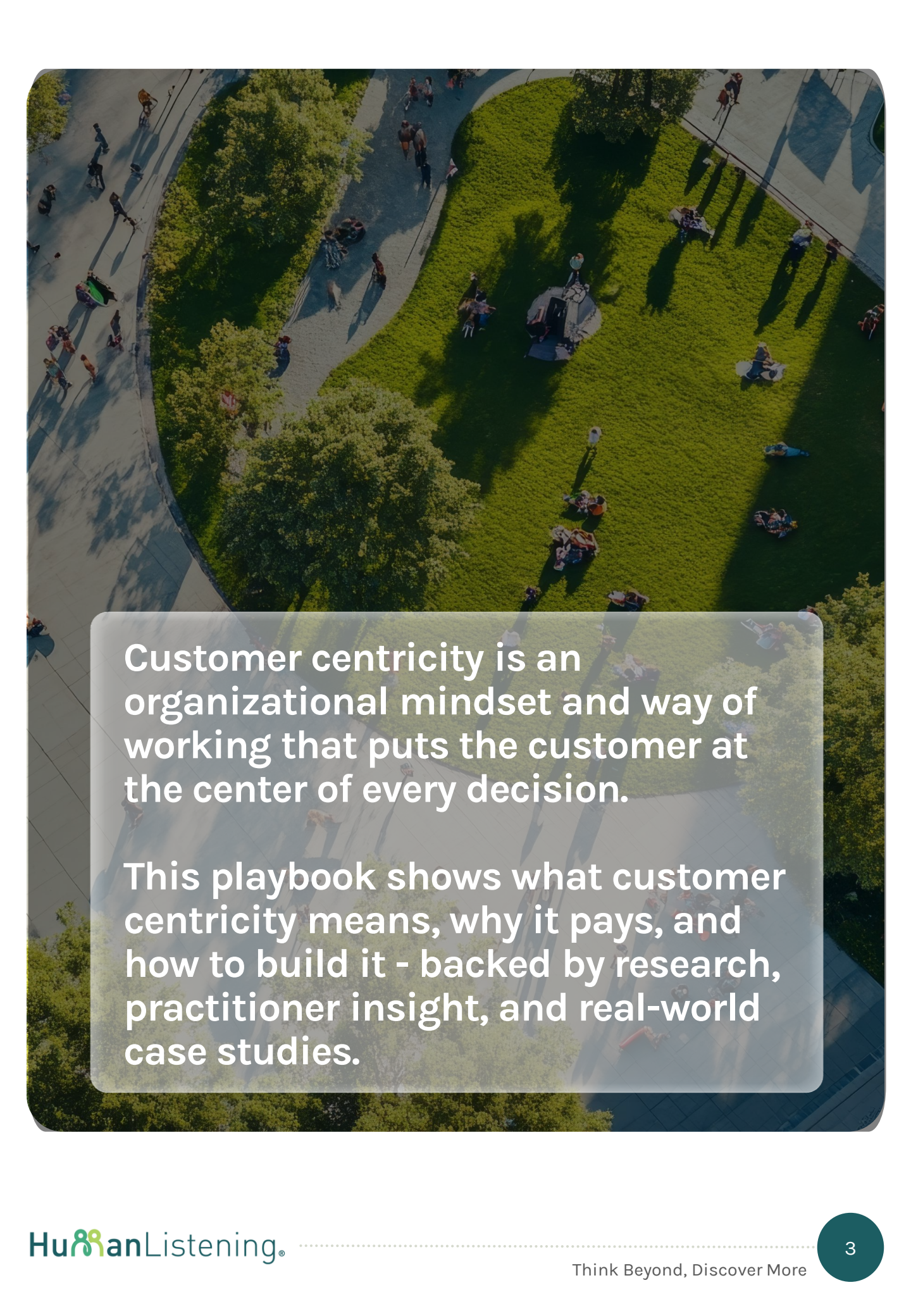
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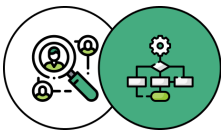
An aerial photograph of a park with a paved path, green grass, and trees. People are seen walking and sitting on the grass. The image is used as a background for the text.

Customer centricity is an organizational mindset and way of working that puts the customer at the center of every decision.

This playbook shows what customer centricity means, why it pays, and how to build it - backed by research, practitioner insight, and real-world case studies.

What is customer centricity?

Customer centricity is more than just offering good customer service – it is a framework for how to run your business and a cultural setting for what your people do at work.



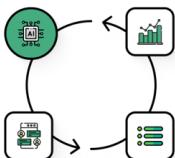
Outside-in, not inside-out: Align strategy and operations with the needs and values of the customer rather than around products or internal silos. As author and marketer Seth Godin said, “Don’t find customers for your products, find products for your customers”.



Organize around customers: Use deep customer and market understanding to guide everything, focusing each part of the organization on delivering and profiting from customer value. In practice, this often means breaking down product-based silos and reorganizing around customer segments or journeys with similar needs.



Create value that lasts: Rather than pushing products, focus on delivering solutions that meet customers’ needs and thereby drive customer loyalty, retention, and lifetime value for the business. Treat customer satisfaction as a leading indicator of long-term profitability.

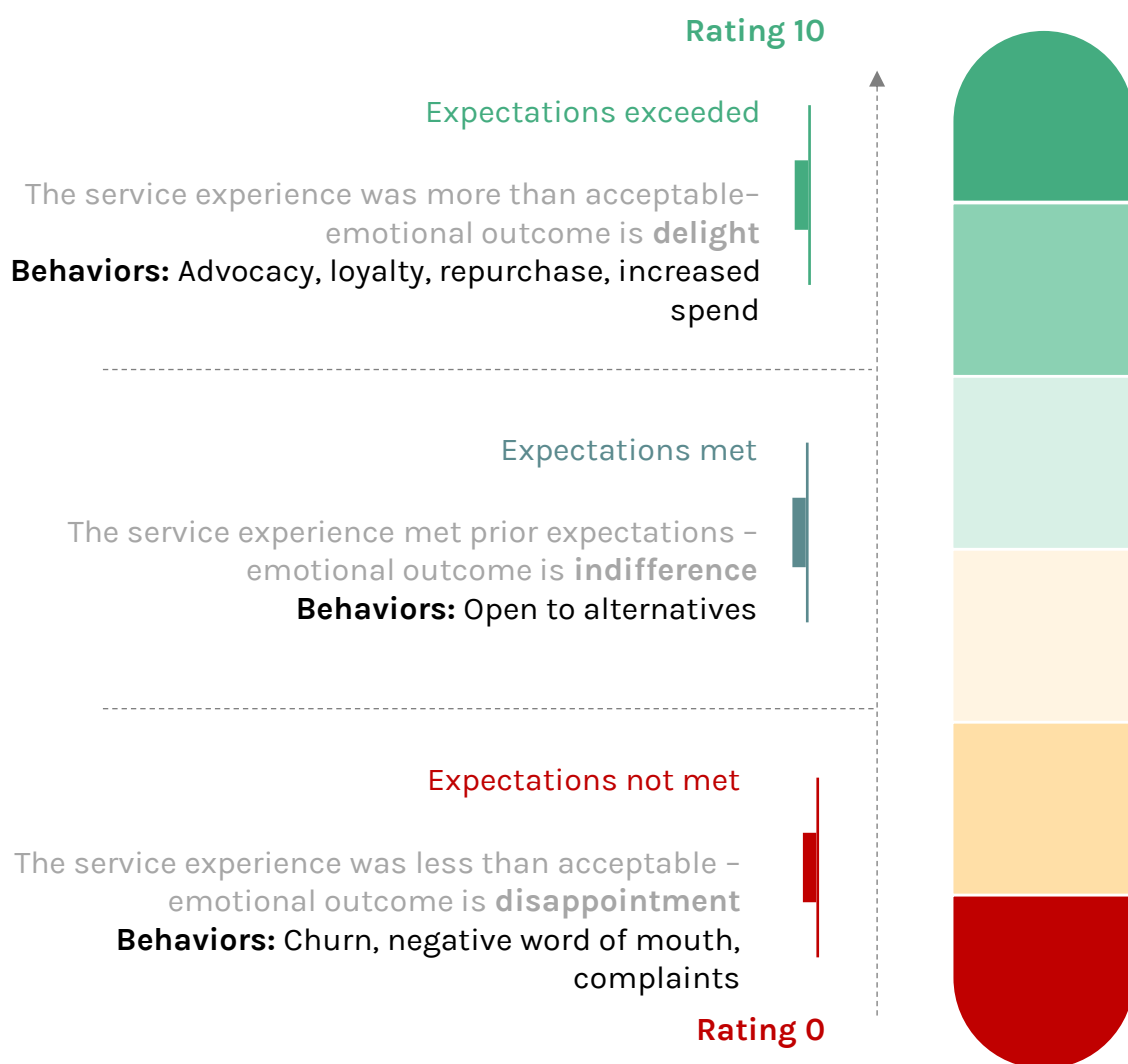


Make it cultural: It is ingrained into the way people think, make decisions and respond to challenges. Use cross-functional teams and avoid highly hierarchal structures to keep everyone close to real customer needs.

Understanding customer expectations

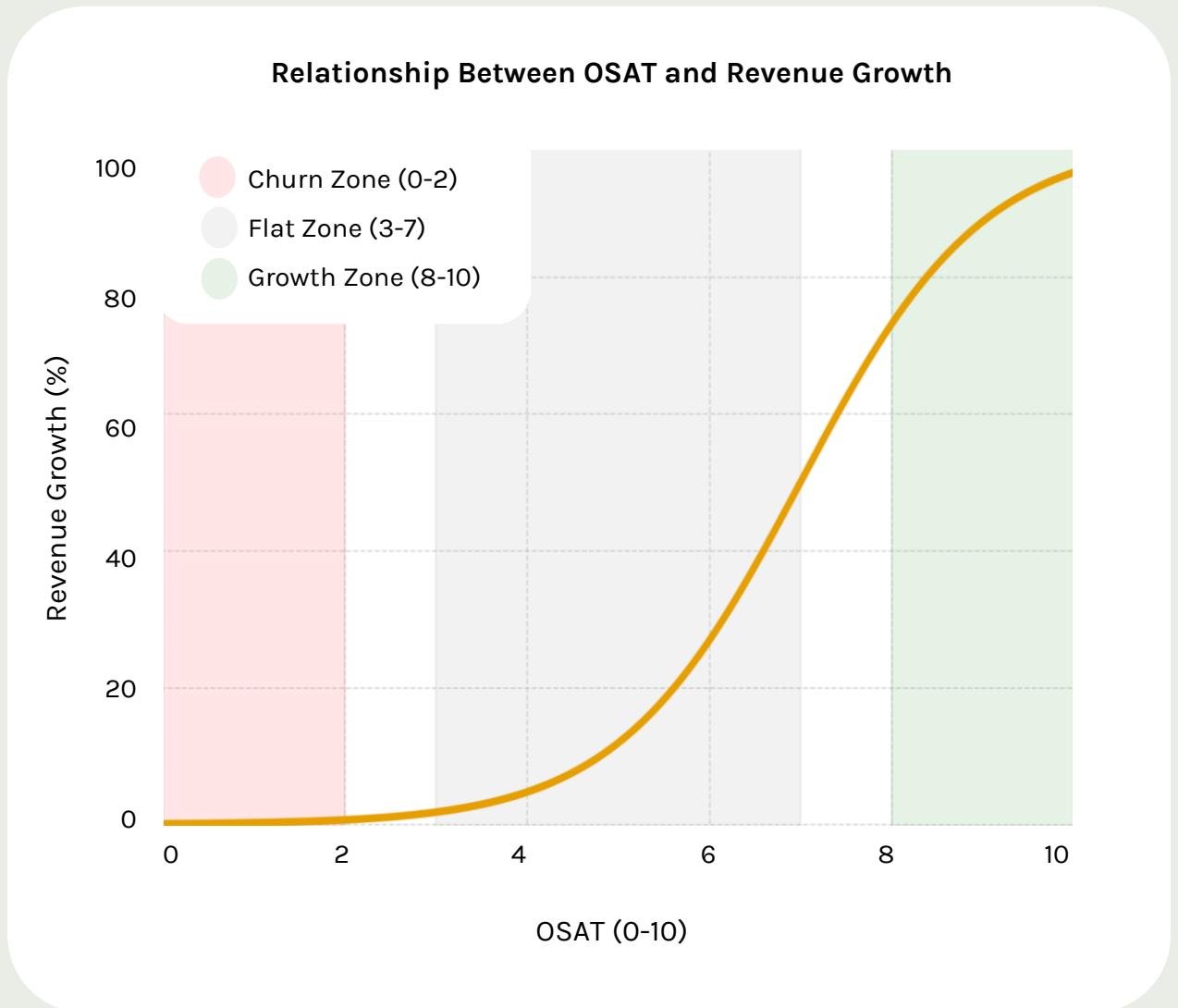
Customer centricity means making the **customer's success and satisfaction the foundation of business strategy, structure, and culture**. It's a ground up, all in belief that is proven to yield long term shareholder value. Let's have a look at its relationship with customer expectations.

Overall, would you say that the experience you had exceeded, met or was below your expectations?



The importance of meeting customer expectations

The Zone of Tolerance model* defines the range of performance standards that customers find acceptable and provides clarity on how service delivery ultimately drives behavior (churn, repurchase, advocacy). The relationship between customer satisfaction and revenue growth is clear: **meeting or exceeding customer expectations is where the magic happens.**



* Oliver, R.L. (1990). *A cognitive model of the antecedents and consequences of satisfaction decisions*. Journal of Marketing Research, 17(4), pp.460-469.

How customer centricity drives financial performance

Growth

Research shows that companies delivering superior customer experiences achieve **5.7 times more revenue than those offering poor experiences**, and **72% of satisfied customers share positive experiences**, fueling word-of-mouth marketing and reducing acquisition costs¹.

Loyalty & retention

Prioritizing customers boosts satisfaction, leading to repeat business and reduced churn. Fred Reichheld showed that **increasing customer retention rates by just 5% can elevate profits by 25%–95%**. Conversely, **89% of consumers will switch to a competitor after a poor experience** – underlining the cost of *not* being customer-centric².

Operating efficiency

Companies with strong customer focus significantly outperform. Deloitte found **customer-centric companies are 60% more profitable** than those that aren't³. McKinsey reported organisations adopting customer-centric strategies achieve **10–15% annual revenue growth** on average⁴.

1 - Temkin Group (2018) *ROI of Customer Experience*. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/roi-customer-experience-2018-temkin-group-report-bruce-temkin-ccxp/>

2 - Reichheld, F.F. and Sasser, W.E. (1990) 'Zero defections: Quality comes to services', *Harvard Business Review*, 68(5), pp.105-111.

3 - Deloitte (2017) *Customer-centricity: Embedding it into your organization's DNA*.

4 - McKinsey & Company (2021) *The growth triple play: Creativity, analytics, and purpose*.

Do's and don'ts: Growth

But if it's so good, why isn't every company customer centric? Firstly, it takes effort and buy-in across the *entire* organization and secondly, it takes time to see the rewards - which can be challenging to justify in a world that's focused on immediate gratification.

Marketing

Do:

- Create customer personas to guide campaign development
- Change the brand book and style guide to mandate communication of end benefits in customer language

Don't: Push products without understanding customer needs and communicating end benefits

Sales

Do:

- Implement a VOC program that is tied to a plan of action
- Make Customer Satisfaction, or similar, a KPI
- Reward retention, revenue expansion and acquisition

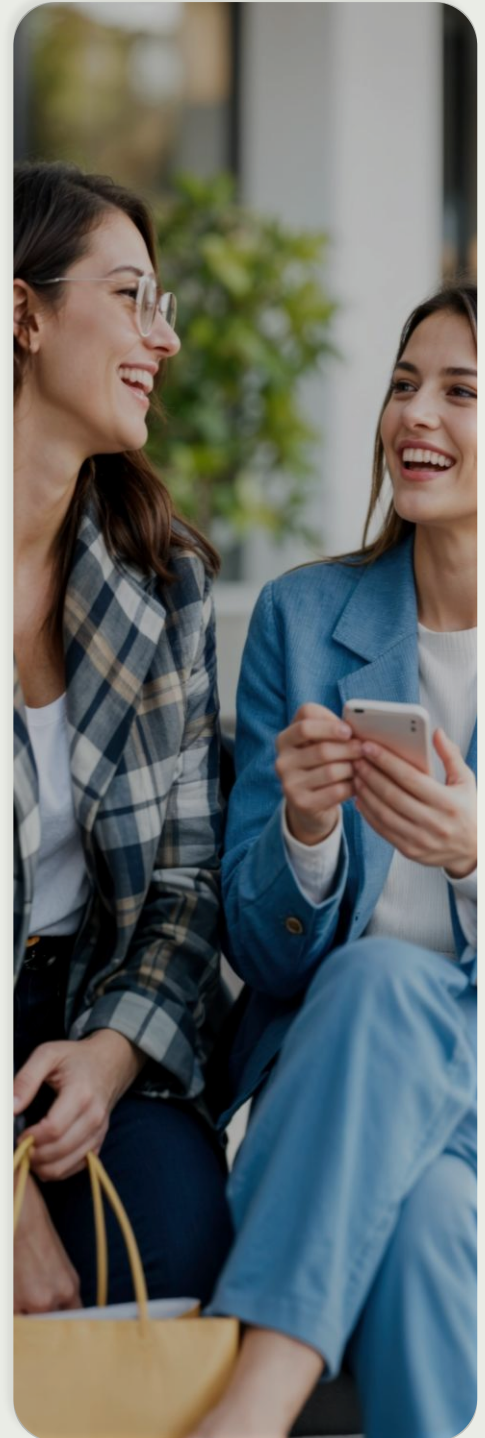
Don't: Prioritize short-term revenue targets over building long-term customer relationships

Product

Do:

- Get customers involved in product design early, test ideas
- Capture complaints, read them and use them to guide your product remediation and concept development

Don't: Design products based on internal assumptions or keeping pace with competitors



Do's and don'ts: Loyalty and retention

Service & support

Do:

- Aim for first contact resolution
- Do root cause analysis on contact reasons and drive service improvements to mitigate support drivers
- Always close the loop

Don't: Treat service as a cost center, leading to slow responses and focus on throughput not outcomes

Leadership

Do:

- Set strategic goals focused on customer lifetime value
- Communicate a clear vision of customer-centricity to employees across all levels – consistently, repeatedly, in clear language

Don't: Set goals focused solely on shareholder value instead of the factors that drive it – especially happy customers



Do's and don'ts: Operating efficiency

Operations

Do:

- Focus on customer effort as a key driver in process design
- Reduce bureaucracy and complexity where possible

Don't: Treat internal efficiency as counter to customer convenience and positive experiences. They are two sides of the same coin.

Finance & commercial

Do:

- Price for value as reflected not just in sales but renewal
- Track churn and spend time understanding it
- Identify and analyze growth pathways - spend on them

Don't: Implement rigid pricing models and policies that ignore customer flexibility or fairness.

IT & technology

Do:

- Put simplify first as a design goal
- Use agile or at worst 'agile fall' in development
- Use analytics to predict and meet customer needs proactively

Don't: Build systems for internal control rather than for ease of use and personalization for customers.

Supply chain

Do:

- Build partnerships with suppliers that share customer-first values
- Provide feedback to them regularly and transparently
- Treat them as partners not commodities, motivate them financially to co-innovate and invest in your relationship

Don't: Prioritize cost-cutting and discounting over building motivated and responsive partners in a resilient supply chain



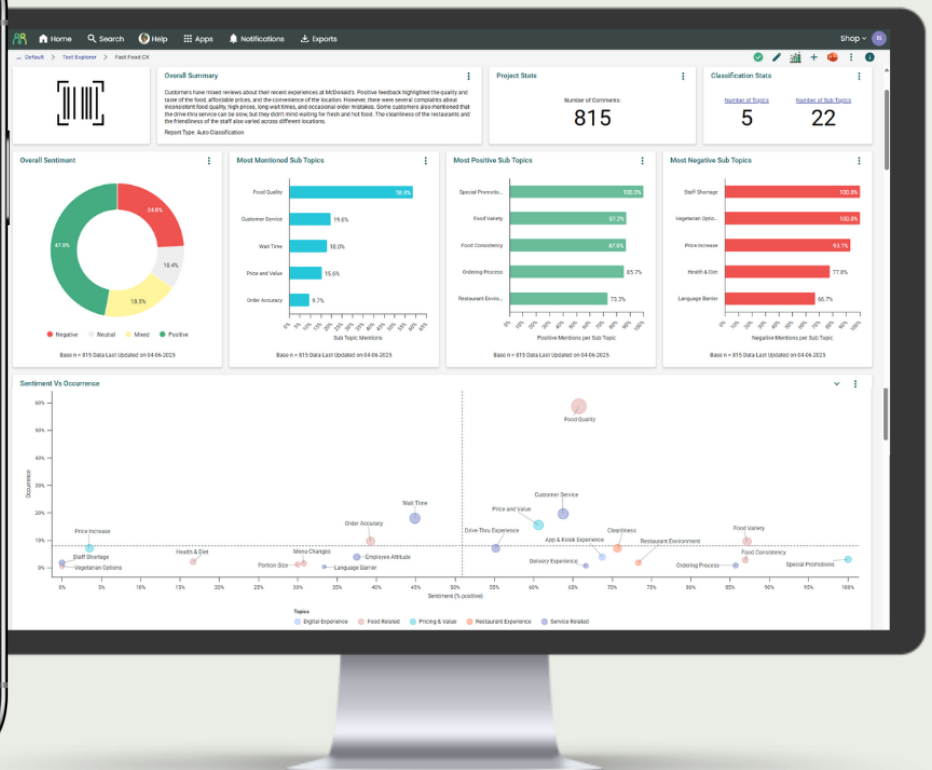
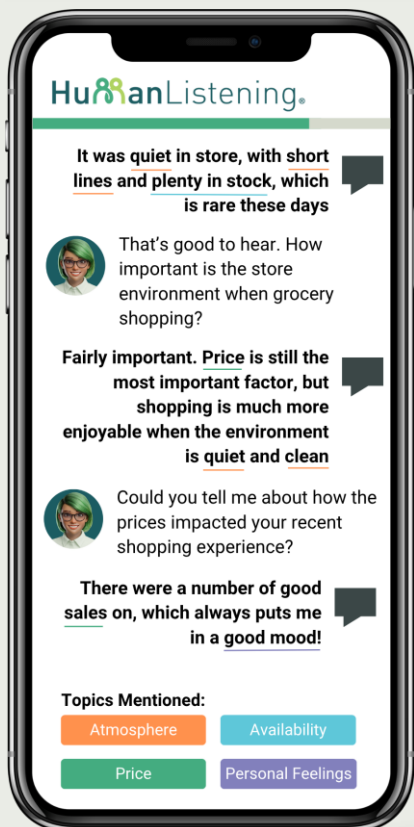
Your customer centricity superpower

HumanListening brings teams together around the customer with AI-powered, human-centered analytics - combining the breadth of Quant with the depth of Qual. Qual AI enables you to truly listen at scale, capturing customers' own words to reveal what matters and why. Instead of validating internal hypotheses, you surface new needs and opportunities - so customers, not assumptions, call the shots..

Our consultants design the VOC program; our enterprise-grade platform brings it to life. Using a proven VOC framework - strategic, episodic, and transactional - we interpret meaning, reveal drivers, surface opportunities, and nudge customer-centric behaviors.

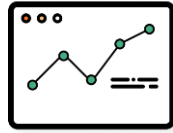
HumanListening's superpower: breaking silos and connecting insights across marketing, sales, product, and operations. Leaders get real-time visibility. Frontline teams get clarity to act. The result? You anticipate needs, build trust, and create experiences that drive loyalty and growth.

This isn't tech for tech's sake - it's a cultural shift powered by intelligence, empathy, and action. Think beyond, discover more.



Customer centricity meets VOC in HumanListening

Track performance over time



Track key performance indicators for customers. Track all relevant measures for service delivery and customer journeys across the lifecycle.

Bring customer data to the table



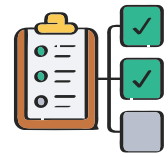
Deliver teams an easy to use and informative dashboard to support operational excellence i.e. put a customer CX metric on their list of KPIs.

Understand drivers of performance



Understand drivers of key performance indicators including CX metrics such as satisfaction and loyalty, that affect your bottom line.

Protect customer relationships



Automate identification and responses to at-risk customers that need an escalated response from management.

Link actions to customer impact



Describe, define, quantify and track action against identified improvement opportunities. Provide a system to track how actions drive improvements and roll up to organizational benefits.

Drive culture of customer centricity



Mobilize people to improve customer experiences and develop a culture where teams truly understand the impact of great customer outcomes, supporting innovation and product development.



[HumanListening's] innovative approach and customized platform help us better connect with our customers. We value the team's attention to detail and their ability to adapt to our evolving needs, always ready to adjust to ensure that their solutions meet our unique requirements.



Maartje van Diepen

Director, Customer
Insights and Analytics
Southeastern Grocers

HumanListening®

Get in touch