

## THE CX NORTH STAR APPROACH CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE STRATEGY

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Utilities are beginning to change the ways they interact with customers, the products and services they provide to customers, and the control they offer their customers. The customer experience is a visible outcome of the utility's commitment and investment to customer engagement, care and service.

This commitment requires an overarching and unifying philosophy that is filtered through the lenses of both customer and company and provides a sustainable platform for change. In similar transformational situations, other firms have turned to the concept of a "North Star" to drive their strategy for change.

Travelers and explorers have always relied on Polaris, the North Star, to navigate long before the era of GPS. Its unique position and visibility provide the direction of true north. For a utility, the purpose and commitment of the organization, the promises it makes to its customers, and the brand image it develops in the market represent the North Star by which it is navigating.

The North Star allows the organization to rally around a key attribute and behaviors which define how utilities want their customers to think and feel during key interactions. In addition to "providing reliable, competitive, and safe utility

services," the North Star defines how these services are delivered and perceived.

Each brand promise (e.g. "to become easy to do business with") is associated with a set of guiding principles to help "steer" the organization in the direction of the North Star. These guiding principles define specific behaviors and actions measured in every transaction to ensure the desired customer experience: personalized, seamless, proactive, transparent, compassionate, and consistent.

North Star strategies require a deep understanding of customer needs and perceptions. The North Star strategy also requires an understanding of workforce challenges and expectations in order to engage and inspire the front line employee. These stakeholder inputs provide a sounding board for the organizational promises and will keep the North Star framed in a responsive environment.

Development of the North Star strategy embraces the customer perspective and involves a series of interactive exercises which West Monroe calls a “CX Visioning Framework”:

- **Exercise 1: Crafting Your Burning Platform (STEER CX)** - Discuss the macro-economic environment that makes CX a priority now
- **Exercise 2: How do you differentiate?** – Discuss your primary source of differentiation and what strengths make (or will make) you unique
- **Exercise 3: The “It Feels/It Means” Framework** – Define the target experience your organization seeks to deliver
- **Exercise 4: Defining Guiding Principles** – Define the key activities your employees and partners must execute to deliver your brand promise

The true value of the North Star customer strategy is realized through measurable improvements in customer satisfaction. These improvements allow utilities to re-think the

business they are in, to realign key activities and moments of magic, to leverage the data and feedback they receive from employees and customers, and to move the needle on key parameters in industry and peer benchmarked indices.

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