

EXAMPLE CUSTOMER SURPRISE WALL

This tool helps teams think through the surprises their customers experience. It guides the group to practical improvements that better align the customer experience with customer expectations. Here's a start-to-finish example.

– 1 –

What surprises our customers?

Have everyone work individually and silently (one “surprise” per note)



– 2 –

What patterns do we see?

Group the notes into common themes, and give each a title

Process and approvals



Time and status



Required information



Communication and guidance



Deadlines and expectations



– 3 –

What do our customers expect?

For each theme, describe what customers are expecting

Process and approvals

Customers expect a straightforward approval process
They expect to know every required step before they begin
Customers expect to understand who is reviewing their request

Time and status

Customers expect to know how long the process will take
They expect regular updates while their request is being processed
They expect to understand what happens next

Required information

Customers expect to know everything they need before they begin
They expect clear instructions about what is required
They expect to be told if something is missing

Communication and guidance

Customers expect one clear point of contact
They expect guidance throughout the process
They expect timely responses to their questions

Deadlines and expectations

Customers expect deadlines to be communicated clearly in advance
Customers expect to know when the process is complete
Customers expect to understand the consequences of missing a deadline

– 4 –

How can we better meet customer expectations?

Identify practical improvements

IMPROVEMENTS

Publish expected timelines and explain the major steps in the process (Develop by July 15, implement by August 1)

Send automatic confirmations and status updates at key milestones (request received, under review, approved, completed) (Develop by July 22, implement by August 15)

Assign one primary contact for each request and make that contact easy to find (Develop by July 18, implement by August 8)

Review all customer communications to clarify deadlines, approvals, and next steps (website, forms, emails, and confirmation messages) (Develop by July 29, implement by August 29)

Remove one approval for low-risk requests (Develop by August 12, implement by Sept 15)