



SITUATION

With a lack of digital options and other common conveniences that customers had come to expect, this money transfer service was no longer providing a stellar customer experience. A combination of storefronts, franchises and individual providers required we look thoroughly at both external and internal customers to truly understand what experiences they were having—and what they were missing. Government regulations and the rules of banking institutions added to the complexity of this project.

WHAT WE DID

From consideration of solution provider to confirmation of transaction, we looked at the entire journey and customer expectations at each step. Different customer segments had different needs, so we developed personas for each, such as a 30-year old IT worker in the US who wants to transfer money to his bank account in India. For each segment at each step, we asked:

What does a positive experience look like? What does a negative experience look like? Completing ethnography exercises, observing customers standing in line at stores and listening to calls into call centers added depth to our information gathering. We also conducted a focus group exploring the emotional aspects: What does it mean to you to transfer money? We then talked directly with customers to gather qualitative data and lastly conducted a large survey via Web and phone to gather quantitative data on how important aspects were and how satisfied customers were with them.

WHAT WE UNCOVERED

Several customer needs surfaced as highly under-served. Choices of delivery methods, status updates on transactions, and lack of privacy within stores were concerns for many. For example, when filling out forms, people expressed nervousness about all the questions and unfamiliar language, and if they didn't fill out the form perfectly, the agent would ask questions in front of often long lines. For repeat customers, they might endure this experience many times a year.

We also saw how people had deep emotional connections to transferring money. One focus group participant drew a picture of a house when he was asked, "What does it mean to you to transfer money?" He was sending

funds to his mother to build a home—an honor and privilege in his home country.

Among these findings, there were several contradictions we discovered. The company wants to make sure it gathers all the regulatory information needed, but also wants to protect the privacy of its customers. Franchise agents operate out of physical locations, but customers also want a digital presence. Repeat customers want convenience in providing their information, but they also don't want their information saved and used.

By identifying such contradictions, we were able to look at the constraints and develop solutions that could resolve them.

RESULTS

From the outset it may have seemed obvious that customers wanted easier forms or more transaction options. But instead of guessing what their unmet needs were, we used the information gathered through customer experience mapping to identify the best opportunities for both the customer and provider. We were also better prepared to formulate solutions because we had spent time observing customers and listening and learning from them.

From several thousand ideas generated, the client implemented dozens of concrete concepts, such as status updates, customer profiles, a smart phone app, and money transfers through multiple sources (bank account, checkbook, cash) and channels (physical location, call center, smart phone, Web).

Based on these innovations, this company was able to create an entirely new market segment for growth, improve the customer experience, and dramatically increase customer loyalty.

A contradiction map was used to discover contradictory requirements of the end-users and providers, and resolve them to generate breakthrough solutions rather than a trade-off compromise.

