

THERE ARE JOBS TO BE DONE

How Journey
Mapping Can
Move Us Past
Experiences
to Opportunity



How might we use customer journey mapping to innovate in service of the great decarbonization? We provide a few pointers for exploring the customer's journey to identify opportunities for innovation.

Customer journey mapping has emerged as a hot topic in energy programs and services over the past five years. And while widely adopted and discussed across the industry, we have largely reduced this approach to a diagnostic tool for fixing process and transactional issues.

Unfortunately, this narrow view of journey mapping misses one of the most valuable applications of this tool: new service and solution identification.

Often used in the early “empathy” building stages of the design thinking process, journey mapping is a key component in the design thinking toolkit.

When placed in that context, journey mapping is best seen not as a way of diagnosing what's not working in a particular offering, but as a means of identifying new, untapped opportunities to improved service, products, access, or engagement.



Expand your view of the customer journey.

When we develop a product or service, we tend to take an egocentric approach. That is, we assume the customer's journey begins and ends when they are interacting with us. Yet consumers do not magically arrive at our proverbial doors.

By working with customers, utilities have an opportunity to explore the experiences that predate their engagement with your services to gain a more complete picture of their needs (and your opportunity to serve them).

Let's play out an example. If you are an electric utility looking to support customers with residential photovoltaic (PV), you might choose to focus only on the current moments in a customer's journey when they transact with you – namely during interconnection and the time of pay/billing.

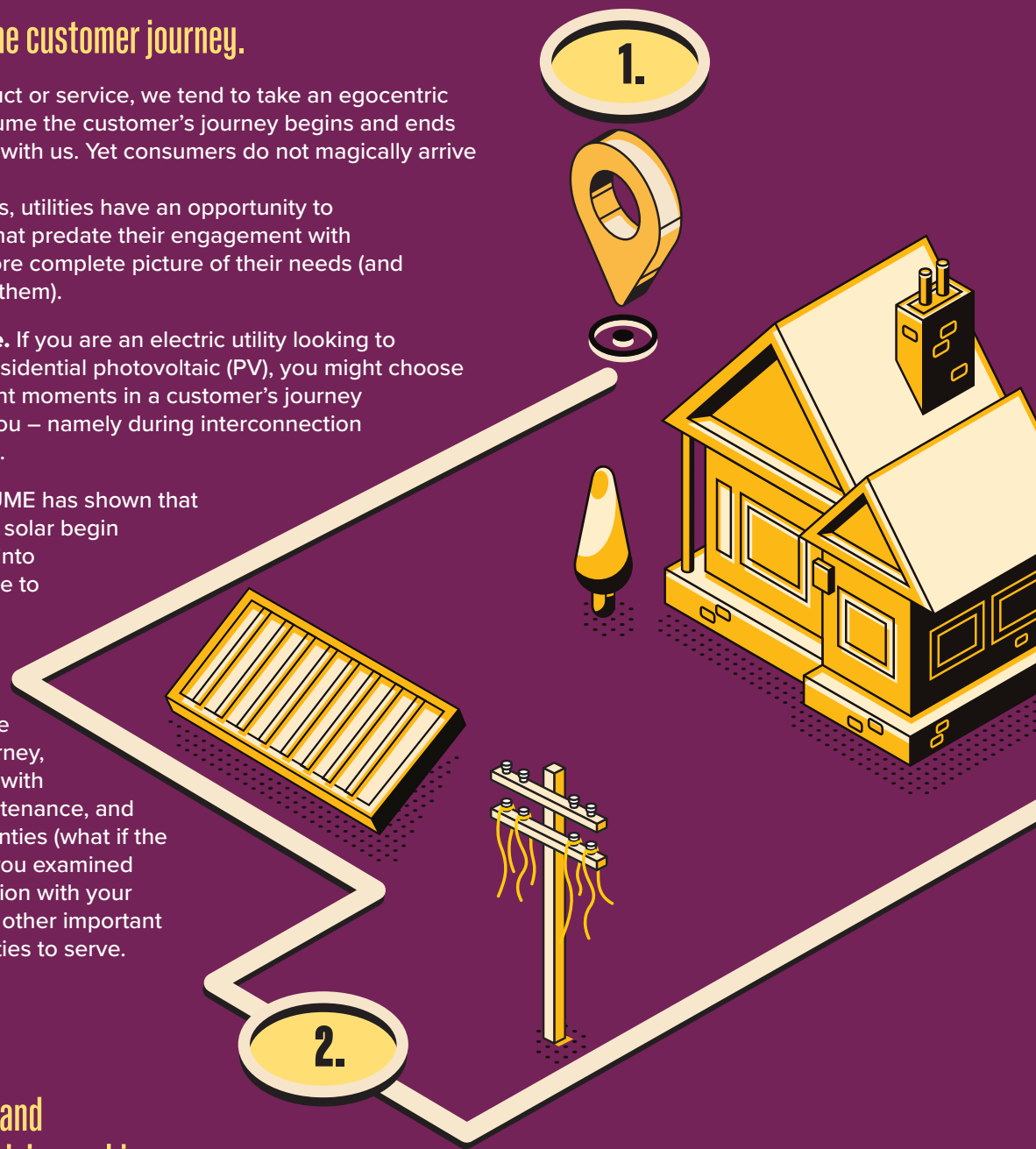
However, our work at ILLUME has shown that customers' pain points for solar begin as soon as their research into solar does. People struggle to understand what solar PV systems to install, how to size those systems, and how to identify and engage with reputable providers. Later in the journey, customers are concerned with continuity of service, maintenance, and the integrity of their warranties (what if the provider goes under?). If you examined only the points of transaction with your company, you would miss other important challenges and opportunities to serve.

Understand the social and cultural context of decision making.

Every decision we make is influenced by a complex social environment. Understanding your customers' most important values, beliefs, and cultural norms (and how they differ by segment) is critical to determining what "jobs" you need to help them manage (more on jobs on step 3).

Continuing with our example of PV solar adoption, our research suggests that familiarity with solar is often an important predictor of likelihood to install PV solar. Seeing solar around the neighborhood or knowing family, friends, or others in a community who have adopted solar may impact how people orient themselves to PV as imaginable for their home. Similarly, people's previous experience with their utility may impact if and how they look to the utility for support.

For instance, people who are looking into solar solutions to address persistent/repeated power outages and ensure a more reliable source of electricity to their home may be unlikely to opt for utility solar services. In those cases, individuals and families may have lost trust in the utility after persistent experiences with outages.



Identify the functional and emotional “jobs” that consumers are trying to solve.

As an industry, we often focus on the technological challenge that needs to be solved—be it carbon-free generation, smarter demand management, or simply reducing consumption through energy efficiency. However, most people do not make choices for a single, isolated reason. They are looking to solve a functional problem and often an emotional one (this is described well by Anthony W. Ulwicks’s book *Jobs to be Done*). For example, if we are looking to develop a new energy management solution, we might explore the customer’s journey to installing a new thermostat. However, if we focus only on the technical needs (say, being able to control the temperature) we may miss important emotional needs, such as ensuring a comfortable home or keeping the peace around thermostat wars. These emotional insights might lead us to smarter customization, such as helping customers identify a “comfortable” temperature for the family or creating a set number of “overrides” each family member is allowed from their app to help them solve household arguments.

Identify the gaps between consumers’ ideal experience and their actual experience.

By exploring the breadth of a customer’s experience, we are better able to identify important gaps in their current state that help us find solutions for their future state.

Let’s revisit the solar PV example. By looking at the entire customer journey, we discover that there are huge gaps in the customer experience from upfront research, to warranties, and on-going service and maintenance. Taking a close look at these gaps—and understanding the needs of customers—we might explore how to serve as their third-party solar concierge. At first this role may seem counterintuitive. Why would we help customers procure generation from another supplier? Yet helping customers identify reputable providers, vetting sales offers, and providing extended maintenance and warranty plans would retain customer engagement.

Know the strengths and limitations of your brand. Most people have a clear understanding of who they trust to support them for different needs in their life.

As you explore the customer journey, aim to understand who does—and does not—have the customer’s trust (or permission) to fill gaps in their journey.

While it can be tempting to take this question head-on by asking people what companies and brands they trust, it is better to start with a broader view. Engage in a dialogue with the customer about what attributes a trusted actor would have. These attributes may include technical proficiency, reputable references, a long history of work in the community, etc. Exploring the attributes of trust will help you better assess whether your brand can meet—or can extend to meet—these needs.