Insights Engine Blueprint

Building an Insights-Driven Organization

CGAP

Introduction

In interviews and primary research conducted across industries and geographies, CGAP learned that many organizations are uncertain about how to adopt or fully integrate a customer-centric mindset. We found that organizations both large and small were looking for a resource or knowledge base to help gauge progress and respond to challenges toward this goal.

Our **Insights Engine Blueprint** pulls together insights and practices that have emerged organically within organizations that are driven by an executive commitment to customer centricity. We hope this knowledge fills the gap between the broad aspirations and practical realities of operationalizing – and institutionalizing – customer centricity within your organization.

For Executives

The blueprint offers guidance on anticipating and prioritizing choices and investments that support a broad shift toward customer centricity.

For Managers

The blueprint provides practical examples and guidance as your organization faces the practical realities of shifting team mindsets and behaviors toward customer centricity.

For Consultants

The blueprint provides concrete examples and targeted recommendations that can be adapted to the needs of a wide range of organizations.

Research Process

Analysis and recommendations in the blueprint are derived from extensive phone interviews with academics, senior leadership, and practitioners in customer insights functions. CGAP supplemented this primary research by reviewing 100+ secondary sources related to customer insights, design, and user experience.

Secondary Research (100+ sources)	Academic Publications		Industry Reports	Articles, Blogs, Videos, etc.
	10+		**20+**	**80+**
Primary Research (27 interviews)	Financial Service Providers		Organizations in Other Sectors	Academic / Industry Experts
	12		**9**	**6**
Countries Represented	Brazil Ghana Indonesia Kenya Mexico	Myanmar South Africa Tanzania USA / Global	Finland / Global India Spain UK / Global USA / Global	Global

Contents

1 **Background:** Define customer centricity and its increasing relevance to financial service providers, particularly those that target the poor

2 **Structure:** Key factors that shape the approach to building an insights-driven organization

3 **Actions:** A portfolio of actions that address key challenges in building an insights-driven organization

4 **Profiles:** Profiles of organizations at various stages along the journey to becoming more insights-driven

Chapter 1: Background

Financial service providers are beginning to see customer centricity as a competitive necessity

With competition increasing across industries, customers are now exposed to more options than ever to meet their needs. Expectations are higher for organizations that want to sell products and services, and an emerging set of business cases link customer centricity with competitive advantage.

In 2013, for example, **Asian Banker Research** surveyed senior bankers to determine how banks use analytics to gain customer insights and competitive advantage. The survey found that banks in the region are increasing their focus on data and analytics, driven by the goal of achieving competitive edge through greater understanding of customer needs, cost behaviors, and improved risk management.

OCBC Bank, Singapore

OCBC Bank gained competitive advantage by proactively investing in analytics and building a deep understanding of customers. The bank built an analytical marketing platform that brought data from every source into a centralized data warehouse. This "single customer view" allows the organization to view every transaction a customer conducts across each product and bank channel. OCBC now conducts real-time analytics and recommends the best products for particular customers.

Jay R. Galbraith, USC

"**In order to be a successful and viable firm in the twenty-first century, a company must have a customer-centric capability**. The early movers will gain a competitive advantage, while stragglers will scramble for a competitive necessity."

– Senior Research Scientist at the Center for Effective Organizations, University of Southern California

Background / Chapter 1 Overview

Chapter 1 provides **background** on the increasing importance and relevance of customer-centric business models for financial service providers. It focuses on providers in **underserved markets,** where conventional product-centric models show limited uptake.

> **"Customer centricity is defined as the ecosystem and operating model that enables an organization to design a unique and distinctive customer experience. This architecture enables the business to acquire, retain and develop targeted customers efficiently for the benefit of customers, employees and stakeholders."**
>
> *Doug Leather,* The Customer-Centric Blueprint

Financial inclusion is closely aligned with customer centricity

Financial inclusion thought leaders note that customer centricity is a necessary capability of organizations working to address financial inclusion through targeted products and services. Behavioral insights and data from technology use can help financial service providers understand the needs and wants of the unbanked and underbanked – then design products and services to better address them.

Grameen Foundation, Washington, D.C.

"Financial service providers see great potential in using mobile money to drive outreach and scale. Mobile operators have aggressive strategies to increase market share by capturing new subscribers, which requires deeply penetrating the three billion people who live on less than $2.50 a day. Yet many of the services on offer are not designed around the needs, behaviors, and capabilities of the poor. **We see the effects of this in low usage rates, preventing services from reaching scale and commercial viability**. In particular, services do not appear to be designed around the needs of poor women, excluding them from participating fully in the mobile revolution."

– Representative from the Grameen Foundation

Center for Financial Services Innovation (CFSI), Washington, D.C.

"Our goal is a world of greater financial health…**the core idea is that companies will be better off if their customers are better off**. We can align their incentives and make sure that their success rises and falls together. Behavioral insights are useful because they help us know why people make the decisions they do and how to help them make the best possible decisions. So in the context of financial inclusion, we might know how to develop a credit product and sell that credit product. That is a completely different question than **how do you create a credit product that will help somebody to not become over indebted and will enable them to use credit in a way that advances their life**."

– Representative from CFSI

Empathy is the basis for customer centricity

Practitioners also stress that organizations often see customers as "data" rather than people. For senior leadership and employees, this implies that an empathetic mindset is the key to understanding customer needs. For researchers, it implies that effective storytelling is crucial in conveying customer insights that make an impact within an organization.

Pamela Pavliscak, Change Sciences

"When it comes to data, we tend to think in dichotomies: quantitative and qualitative, objective and subjective, abstract and sensory, messy and curated, business and user experience, science and story.... Using data for design does not have to be an either / or; instead, it should be 'yes, and'."

Data-informed product design

Definitions of customer centricity can vary

"Building products and solutions with customers in mind." ← → "Making business decisions by understanding the potential profitability of different types of customers, and making choices to serve those that are most valuable."

Kapta

"Creating a customer-focused company means listening to your customers' needs and prioritizing strategies and processes accordingly. It involves asking your customers, 'What are you trying to accomplish?'"

– Alex Raymond, CEO and Founder, Kapta

CGAP

"Customer centricity is about providing solutions based on a deep understanding of customer needs, preferences, and behaviors."

– CGAP, Customer-Centricity for Financial Inclusion

eMetrics

"Customer centricity reveals how to increase profits from your best customers, find more like them, and avoid over-investing in the rest."

– Jim Sterne, Founder, eMetrics Marketing Optimization Summit; Chairman, Web Analytics Association

Customer Centricity Explained

Customer centricity defined
- Customer centricity is about building products and services with customers in mind
- Organizations achieve full customer centricity when employees are empathetic and insights drive actions

Advantage of customer centricity
- A superior understanding of customer needs and behaviors is a competitive advantage that drives performance, particularly if the competition lacks a deep understanding of needs or is less agile in responding to them

Customer centricity in financial inclusion
- Unbanked and underbanked potential users of financial products and services are often not fully understood by the organizations that build offerings to meet their needs. This historical exclusion results in a great need for improved customer centricity to achieve better financial inclusion

Process of becoming customer-centric
- Becoming a customer-centric organization is not a straightforward process. It's important to ensure that organizations proactively use customer insights to drive strategy, as well as product and service design

Customer centricity and organizational structure
- Organizations structure themselves in various ways to gather and feed customer insights into strategic decisions, as well as product and service design

Linking customer centricity to innovation
- Three key factors better ensure customer-centric innovation: delegating decision rights; ensuring intensive vertical and lateral communication; and setting incentives to share and acquire knowledge

Achieving a cultural shift and using incentives
- Customer centricity can only be achieved by establishing it within organizational culture
- Setting actionable metrics and linking them to incentives bolsters efforts to ensure customer centricity

End goal of customer centricity
- The end goal of building a customer-centric organization is to ensure that employees understand customers and gain empathy for them. Employees can then anticipate customer needs and respond in a helpful, meaningful way

Chapter 2: Structure

Structure / Chapter 2 Overview

Chapter 2 breaks down **structural** and **organizational factors** that key decision-makers at financial service providers need to consider when crafting an **internal approach to customer centricity**. These factors are analyzed across four major decision-making areas:

Organizational Makeup	Operational Model	Cultural Orientation	Core Capabilities

The following chapter will then present a **portfolio of recommended actions** to drive customer-centric strategy in these four areas. Actions are drawn from the existing experience of the **27+ organizations** that participated in primary research for this blueprint.

Organizational makeup has major implications for customer centricity

Organizations typically departmentalize employees and teams based on business needs. Many use a hybrid system of teams organized by function, as well as by customer type and geography. However, it's rare to see departmentalization based solely on customers – unless naturally linked to a product line (e.g., B2C or B2B).

| Functional	Product	Process	Customer	Geographic
Group jobs by function performed	Group jobs by product line	Group jobs based on product or customer flow	Group jobs by customer type and needs	Group jobs based on territory or geography
Marketing, product development, sales	B2C, B2B	Inbound / outbound sales teams	Income segment, language, location of customers, etc.	Regional focus for various teams or functions

Customer-centric organizations require greater cross-functional coordination

Product-centric organizations are typically structured around product creation and sales. Customer-centric organizations must overcome silos created by the product-focused structure and show "one face" to customers. Communication and cross-functional coordination are key to success in customer-centric organizations.

Jay R. Galbraith, USC

Companies that want to respond quickly to customer opportunities face greater challenges as their strategy increases in scale and scope, which increases the number of organizational units that must be integrated, and thus the degree of coordination needed. These factors determine the strength of customer-facing organizational units. The organization design challenge is to match the right kind of network with the strategic importance of the customer dimension. Some networks are informal, and others are formal with varying degrees of strength. In the figure to the right, the simplest, cheapest, and easiest to use network is listed first. The further up the list (in more customer-centric organizations), the more powerful the networks – and the more costly and difficult to employ them.

Excerpt from **Designing the Customer-Centric Organization** *(edited for length)*

Figure 2.4 Types of Networks for Customer-Facing Units
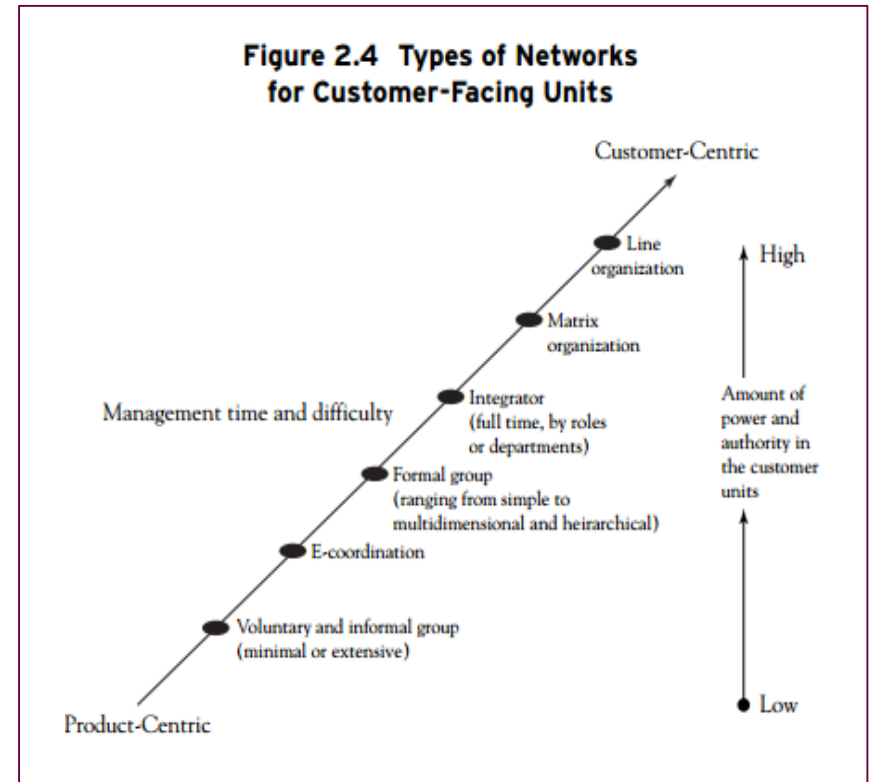
Coordination costs can counteract benefits gained by customer centricity

Studies have looked at the effects of a customer-centric organizational structure on long-term financial performance. Adopting a customer-centric structure enhances performance by increasing customer satisfaction, but damages performance by increasing coordinating costs. The net effect appears most positive where customer satisfaction gains are the likeliest: 1) when few competitors adopt customer-centric structures, 2) when competitive intensity is lowest, and 3) when a firm operates in a highly profitable industry.

Effect of Customer-Centric Structure on Long-Term Financial Performance, Mediated By Customer Satisfaction and Coordinating Costs

Source: http://www.personal.psu.edu/sus55/Papers/MKSC.pdf
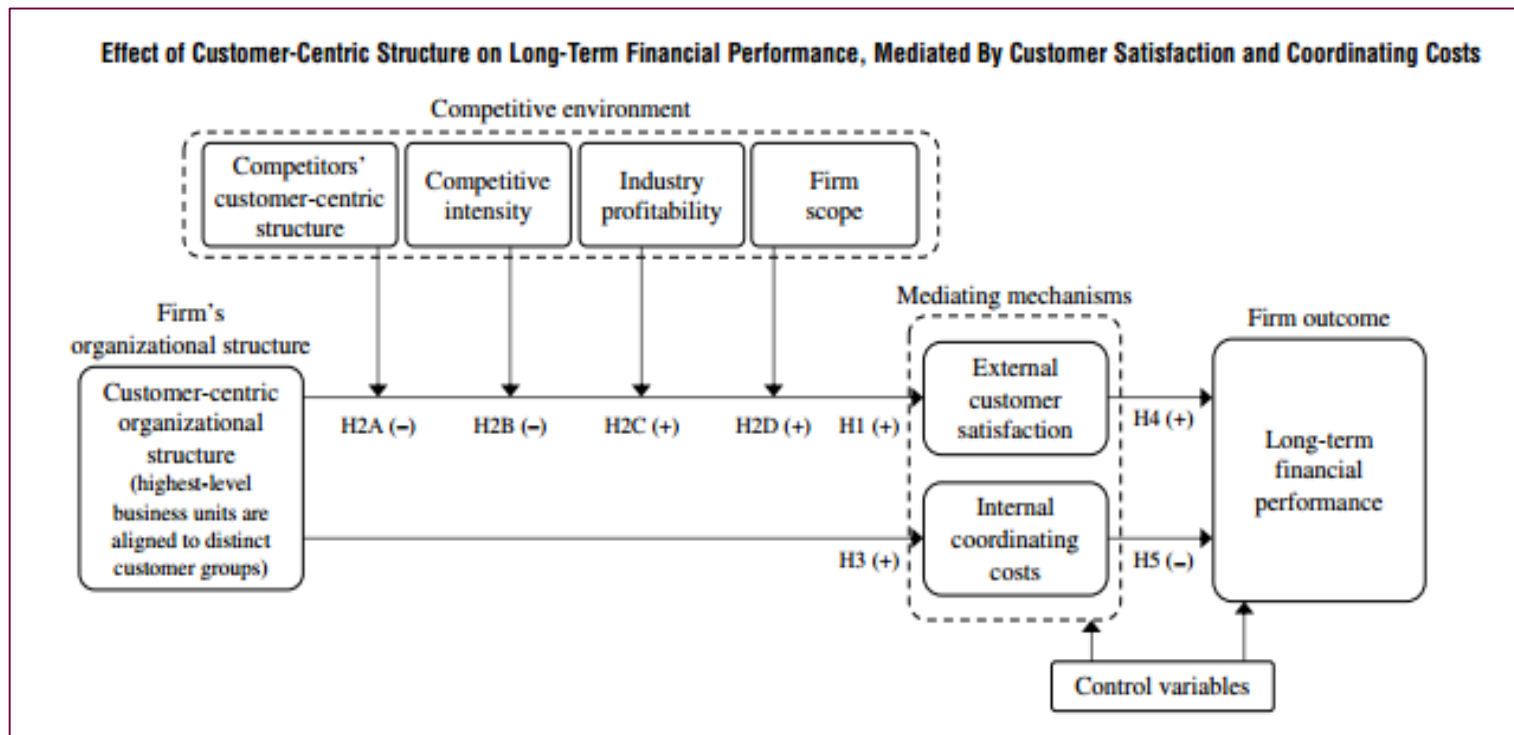
Incentives help establish a customer-centric culture

Incentives based on customer feedback and satisfaction motivate employees to proactively strive to better understand and address customer needs. These types of incentives require:

1) Creating measurable customer success metrics
2) Tracking and measuring customer feedback and satisfaction, such as net promoter scores
3) Short enough product lifecycles to ensure that timely feedback is available for incentive cycles

Most organizations interviewed for this blueprint did not have incentive measures tailored toward insights functions.

Bill Macaitis, CMO, Slack, San Francisco

"If you're focusing on sales metrics, like leads, pipeline and opportunities, instead of customer-centric metrics, like NPS, CSAT and daily active usage, you aren't putting the customer experience front and center…. When you have financially-based metrics, it creates incentives around maximizing short-term value…For instance, if your organization has more sales people than your support team, that's a good data point that you may be focusing too much on the short run…. **Building the infrastructure to measure true customer success metrics, and incentivizing your team around those numbers, is the best way to ensure your brand thinks about the customer first in every decision you make.**"

4 Ways to Become Customer-Obsessed, According to Slack CMO Bill Macaitis

Gerald Hampton

"A variety of approaches can reinforce customer-centricity among non-frontline employees…. In tying compensation – as well as monetary rewards – to customer experience improvement, common pitfalls stem from disconnects with the four basic principles of actionable metrics: connected, actionable, predictive, and sustained…. The key to successful incentives is to track things for which an employee can make adjustments before stakeholders (i.e., customers, investors, supervisors) see the results."

Customer Experience Improvement Momentum: Engaging Employees for Sustained Profitability

Four key factors that influence the design of insights functions

1 **Organizational Makeup**

The fundamental structure of an organization, including number of employees, legacy processes and values, nature of the business and products or services, and impending business challenges.

2 **Operational Model**

There are many variations in specialization and division of insights functions, budget allocation, collaboration with other functions, and utilization of internal and external resource networks.

3 **Cultural Orientation**

A tacit organizational culture that may or may not be part of the formal or visible structure. Observed patterns include how insights are shared, supervision of insights flow, how customer insights are reflected in key decision-making processes, and senior management involvement.

4 **Core Capabilities**

Relevant functions, roles, and skills that contribute to an effective customer-centric business model. There's a wide representation of these skills, depending on the size and type of organization.

1. Organizational Makeup

Factor	Description	Considerations
Organization size	Customer insights functions are typically proportionate to the size of an organization. Size impacts the scale of dedicated functions and the need for sharing and coordination.	• Typically, smaller organizations don't believe they can afford a dedicated customer insights team. • Larger organizations need to invest more in coordination to ensure insights are used: insights sharing, inter-departmental communication, and quality control.
Maturity	Established organizations with existing legacies have a different set of challenges in adopting a customer insights culture compared to startups, particularly startups founded with a customer-centric ethos.	• It will take more effort to implement change if a strong legacy of cultural norms, existing practices, IT platforms, and incentive structures run counter to new customer-centric practices. • In a changing environment, younger organizations often reinvent themselves constantly. This limits the possibility of a deeply rooted legacy.
Business driver	Goals and mission dictate the nature of customer insights functions that an organization may require.	• The nature of a product need or a business driver dictates the ideal type of customer insights required. • Organizations that typically did not previously invest in customer insights look to invest in them more when they're closely tied to understanding business challenges (e.g., difficulties with sales, customer retention, etc.).
Dependence on customer data	Some organizations build products and services based on customer data, while others have no obvious direct link to data or insights.	• Many products are built on customer behavioral data collected through digital systems (e.g., location or movement patterns, app use, social network use, etc.). • Organizations that are able to collect rich data can inform product design through actual behavior (e.g., prior payment of loans, items purchased through e-commerce site, etc.) – in addition to customer insights.

2. Operational Model

Factor	Description	Considerations
Insourcing / outsourcing	Organizations use external resource networks effectively to optimize internal resource commitments, e.g., changing needs of global market research.	• Organizations with established insights functions understand when and how to work effectively with external agencies. Some maintain a list of preferred strategic partners. • Organizations requiring global outreach typically outsource research execution.
Specialization of insights functions	Depending on business mandate and existing organizational structures, insights functions may be categorized and distributed in different ways.	• Some organizations do not have designated insights functions but expect employees to collect and use customer data / insights as part of their overall job. • The high skill level and expertise required to collect or analyze certain types of consumer data (e.g., quantitative research, predictive analytics, etc.) may lead some organizations to designate specialized insights teams or functions. • Even if certain insights functions are highly specialized, some organizations designate roles to oversee insights collection and utilization; others do not have a coordinating role.
Collaborating with other functions	Collaboration with product or strategy teams impacts how efficiently customer insights can be used and influences structure of insights functions.	• Many organizations jump back and forth between centralized and distributed models of customer insights functions, which seems to be a healthy and necessary dynamic. • Track record and individual initiatives affect how informal collaboration networks are formed.

2. Operational Model

Factor	Description	Considerations
Budget allocation	Budget approval and allocation impacts how independent insights teams pursue more strategic projects over reactive, tactical, or problem-solving projects.	• Controlling the budget is power. Organizations that allocate a set budget to insights functions typically also allow room for the function to prioritize which insights they collect, and how. • A set budget may offer room to initiate more exploratory research, but it also increases the risk that insights do not find a suitable internal audience to make an actionable impact.
Incentive and success metrics	Success metrics of insights functions reflect the level of understanding and importance of customer insights within the organization. Incentive structure drives employee attitudes toward customer centricity.	• Incentives specific to customer centricity were not common practice among organizations interviewed for this blueprint. Typical key performance indicators were tied to product or business success metrics. However, the literature review for the blueprint found that individual incentives can greatly impact an organization's shift toward customer centricity. • Correlating research investment with business success (or key performance indicators) can be challenging, even with key performance indicators in place.

3. Cultural Orientation

Factor	Description	Considerations
Insights sharing and use	Existing organizational norms and IT tools reflect how customer insights are shared and information flows. Informal practices such as networking events and office configurations can also impact how customer insights are used.	• Many organizations use internal IT systems to share insights with broader internal audiences and build a knowledge database over time. • A platform or intranet of user research findings and insights is not sufficient on its own, but generally needs to be paired with active outreach and insights socialization with relevant teams and leaders.
Supervising insights flow	Organizations need to monitor whether they're prioritizing and investing in the correct areas to derive distinct visions and evangelize them across the organization.	• When customer insights functions scale up and become established, supervising overall insights activities ensures quality, effectiveness, and return on investment of insights work. A role that "makes sense" of the vast data generated also becomes necessary.
Integrating with key business decision-making processes	Consumer insights rarely have an impact unless they're integrated into key business decision-making processes.	• Typically, organizations that use customer insights effectively have a process that ensures insights initiatives are planned in line with strategy and integrate findings into key decisions. • Visibility of pertinent business challenges motivates customer insights teams to be more proactive in making an impact.
Involving management	Senior management or influential leaders in an organization need to champion customer insights in order to create lasting, broad impact on the business.	• The mandate and behavior modeled by senior management sets the tone for how important customer insights and experiences are to an organization's business and culture.

4. Core Capabilities

Function	Typical Roles	Placement	Contribution to Customer Centricity
Design and User Research	**Design Researcher User Experience Interaction Designer**	Generally belongs to product development although sometimes functions as an independent design organization or is placed under marketing	• Primarily responsibility: gather understanding of customer behaviors, perceptions, current product and service use, desires in new products and services, experience using them, etc. • Also responsible for aesthetics, visual and brand identity of products, services, and retail environments. • In organizations less invested in customer insights, not very involved with insights. In highly invested organizations, works closely with researchers to gain inspiration from users and initiate research.
Product Development	**Product Manager Product Development Engineer Product Architect Quality Assurance (QA) Product Owner / Program Manager**	Product, generally led by a director of product development	• Understand user behaviors, needs, and wants to create the right products/services. • Usability of products and user journeys. • Understand uptake of various features. • Tech organizations tend to find ways to run usability testing systematically.
Information Technology	**Information Technology Manager System and Infrastructure Manager**	Internal department	• Manage internal technology platforms and systems. • Most likely to manage an internal knowledge management platform or all technology used to collect and record customer feedback.
Marketing	**Marketing Strategy Market Research Branding and Communications Growth Marketing Digital Marketing Search Engine Optimization (SEO)**	Internal department	• Define and understand target customers while creating consumer value propositions (marketing messages), product pricing, market sizing, and trend scoping. • Most organizations include a marketing role, at least in association with sales teams, but there are major variations in types of research conducted. • Smaller organizations assume marketing is the natural home for customer-centric initiatives.
Analytics	**Customer Data Analyst**	Generally belongs to product development, although some analytics roles may be in marketing and strategy	• Collect customer behavioral or transactional data. • Raw data does not provide significant value, but intelligent analysis can bring valuable insights.

4. Core Capabilities

Function	Typical Roles	Placement	Contribution to Customer Centricity
Strategy	Competitive Intelligence Channel Strategy Corporate Strategy Market Analyst	Strategy, generally works closely with CEO or senior management	Conduct market and competitor intelligence of key trends across social, technology, and consumer.
Sales	Sales Account Management Customer Relationship Manager	Internal department	Define and communicate value proposition for customers. Understand customer preferences, concerns, and needs.
Customer Support	Customer Support / Service Manager Customer Support Representative	Sales department	Handle customer feedback or complaints after sales. Some organizations systematically monitor customer care feedback to improve current product offerings.
Finance	Financial Management Accountant	Internal department	May be involved in budget allocation. May be involved during strategic decisions that leverage customer insights, e.g., market expansion, etc.
Operations	Project Manager District Manager Sales Operations Project Manager	Internal department	Various responsibilities, depending on type of organization.
Legal	Compliance Officer Risk Manager	Internal department	Conducts own research on legal situations and, potentially, behavior of regulators.
Human Resources	Hiring Manager Recruiter	Internal department	Needs to understand the organization's customer centricity goals and, based on particular skills and experience, hire individuals who can help achieve them.
Administration	Administrative Assistant	Often part of human resources	May interact with customers that call the organization's main phone line, then communicate feedback or questions to specific functional areas.

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Actions / Chapter 3 Overview

Chapter 3 defines the **journey** most financial service providers take to increase the value of customer-centric strategies within their organization. We look at the typical **challenges** they encounter at each stage and **recommended actions** to address them.

All actions in Chapter 3 are drawn from actual, lived experience of the 27+ organizations profiled as part of this blueprint research.

Most organizations use customer insights on a tactical level only

A study by BCG (Boston Consulting Group) identified **four main stages of consumer insights as a source of competitive advantage.** Organizations in stages 3 and 4 benefit from better innovation since innovation grounded in unmet consumer needs insights has high impact. New product introductions also experience lower failure rates due to a better understanding of customer needs and desires. As a result, consumer insights can lead to less risk and higher return on innovation spending.
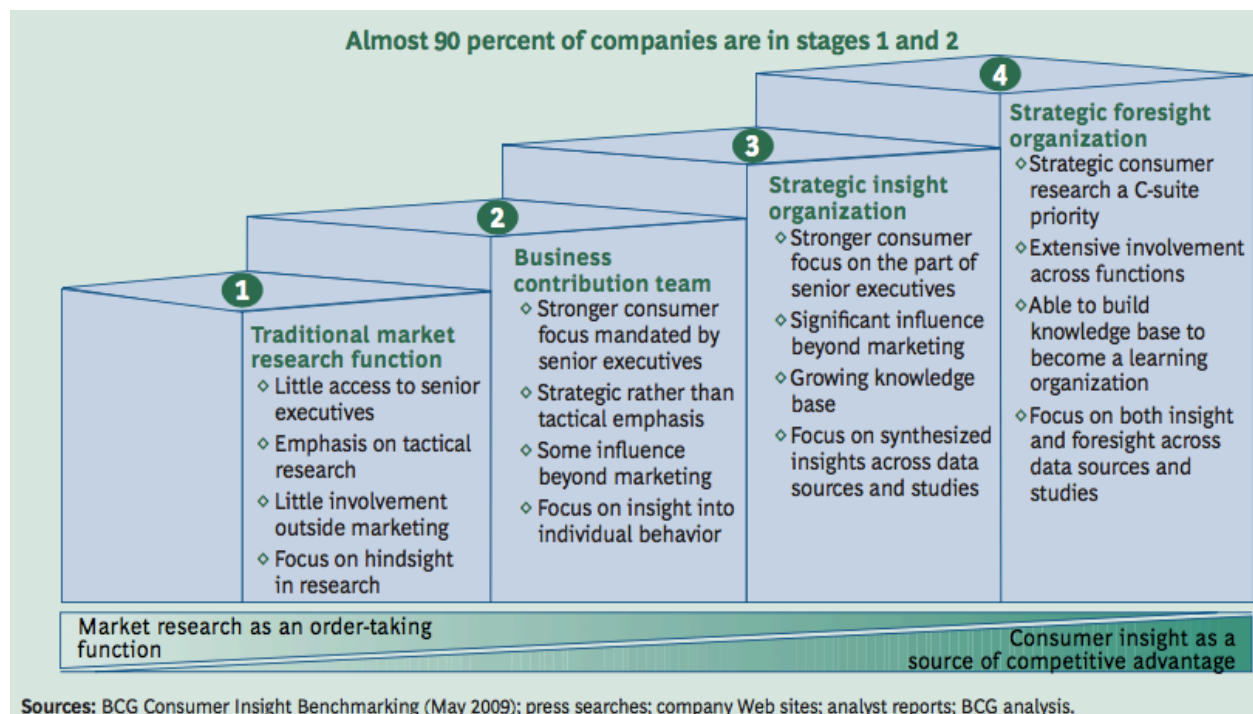
Source: BCG, "The Consumer's Voice—Can Your Company Hear It?",

Almost 90 percent of companies are in stages 1 and 2

1 Traditional market research function
◇ Little access to senior executives
◇ Emphasis on tactical research
◇ Little involvement outside marketing
◇ Focus on hindsight in research

2 Business contribution team
◇ Stronger consumer focus mandated by senior executives
◇ Strategic rather than tactical emphasis
◇ Some influence beyond marketing
◇ Focus on insight into individual behavior

3 Strategic insight organization
◇ Stronger consumer focus on the part of senior executives
◇ Significant influence beyond marketing
◇ Growing knowledge base
◇ Focus on synthesized insights across data sources and studies

4 Strategic foresight organization
◇ Strategic consumer research a C-suite priority
◇ Extensive involvement across functions
◇ Able to build knowledge base to become a learning organization
◇ Focus on both insight and foresight across data sources and studies

Market research as an order-taking function

Consumer insight as a source of competitive advantage

Sources: BCG Consumer Insight Benchmarking (May 2009); press searches; company Web sites; analyst reports; BCG analysis.

Becoming customer-centric is not a straightforward process

The following section summarizes recommended actions for eight typical challenges on the path to customer centricity, and typical challenges organizations may face while running customer insights functions.

Brian Solis

"While every business believes that getting closer to the customer is a top priority...we're just not seeing a change in the infrastructure or supporting metrics or rewards systems.... [Becoming a customer-centric organization] **requires an intentional cultivated culture of customer centricity**.... We must think beyond a reactionary position."

Author, **The End of Business as Usual**

Jonathan Becher, CMO, x SAP

"**Companies often have organizational disconnects that interfere with the customer experience**. The challenge is that each of these channels, from the in-person experience to the website to the call center to post-sales support, are usually developed and managed independently – and often by different groups within the organization.... Given the way business units and functional groups are organized and measured inside companies today, most care only about the slice of the experience they're directly involved with."

Excerpt from **Business Insider**

Organizational Journey to Customer Centricity

Pure Customer Service	Data Collection and Marketing	Integrated Customer Experience	Deep Organizational Mindset

"Customer experience was only a function of the service line and customer complaints."

"The challenge is that a lot of this data isn't connected. My team is working to bring together all those threads to try to create a single story or a single point of view."

"How do you engage, enroll, manage policy, make claims, support the claims? These need to be done in a customer-centric way. Process is what you're selling – and that's our product."

"There's a massive problem of 'short-term-ism' among people who manage products. They look at what can be achieved this year, with this product, for this bonus – whereas a customer-centric approach looks much longer term."

Common Challenges

Challenge #1
We cannot afford dedicated customer insights resources.

Challenge #2
We have a lot of customer data but don't use it to become more customer-centric.

Challenge #3
We use customer insights mainly for marketing rather than to develop products and services.

Challenge #4
We're doing all the right things for customer insights, but customer experience is still poor.

Challenge #5
Customer insights bring little improvement to our products, services, or organization.

Challenge #6
Customer insights are not shared – or are lost in our organization.

Challenge #7
We cannot easily change the existing organization or processes.

Challenge #8
Customer insights work is expensive. We need to make it more cost effective.

Challenge #1

"We cannot afford dedicated customer insights resources."

Solutions

OUTSOURCE INSIGHTS	ASSIGN DUAL RESPONSIBILITIES	PROTOTYPE AND TEST	ENSURE LEADERS UNDERSTAND CUSTOMERS
Look for an **external agency or consultant** that specializes in customer insights research to work with you on specific needs.	Depending on the size of your organization, **assign certain employees the responsibility of gathering customer insights** in addition to their current role. Or make understanding customers every employee's responsibility.	If you cannot establish formal customer insights roles, be sure to **prototype and test products and services with current and potential customers,** and collect feedback.	**Encourage senior management to speak with customers and share their experiences, the insights they gained,** and how those insights impact their leadership of the company.

Considerations and impact on your organization's customer centricity

• Ensure that mechanisms are in place to integrate external research into decision-making processes.	• Assign a role that oversees or is accountable for helping synthesize insights and making sure they're communicated to relevant functions or teams.	• Prototyping and testing can ensure that products and services actually meet customer needs and save money in the long term. Updates are always easier to implement prior to launch.	In organizations with no formal insights function, leadership must take a more active role in operational aspects of customer centricity.

Challenge #2

"We have a lot of customer data but don't use it to become more customer-centric."

Solutions

MAP THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY	ASSIGN AN INSIGHTS EXPERT	COORDINATE INSIGHTS	INTEGRATE INSIGHTS INTO PRODUCT DESIGN
Select a number of customers and speak with them to **understand how they learn about, adopt, use, and perceive your product or service.** Ask about any challenges or pain points they may have.	**Assign an insights expert whose role is to understand customer insights work and implications,** and communicate to leadership so it's integrated into decision-making and strategy.	Assign a dedicated role or team to **systematically coordinate all customer insights work** and help communicate a more comprehensive picture of customers or potential customers.	The **insights expert should ensure that synthesized customer insights are shared with the product team** and that product development addresses key customer needs discovered through customer research.

Considerations and impact on your organization's customer centricity

• What you learn about the customer journey may complement or help explain what you can get out of analytics data. • This research can be conducted by a variety of employees.	• The insights expert must also understand when data analytics can explain behaviors or when further qualitative research is required. • Must be respected by and granted access to top leaders.	• Coordination of research efforts can help eliminate overlap in team efforts by providing oversight on all activities. • This task can also be filled by the insights expert.	• Product team must share analytics so there's a feedback loop with the insights team.

Challenge #3

"We use customer insights mainly for marketing rather than to develop products and services."

Solutions

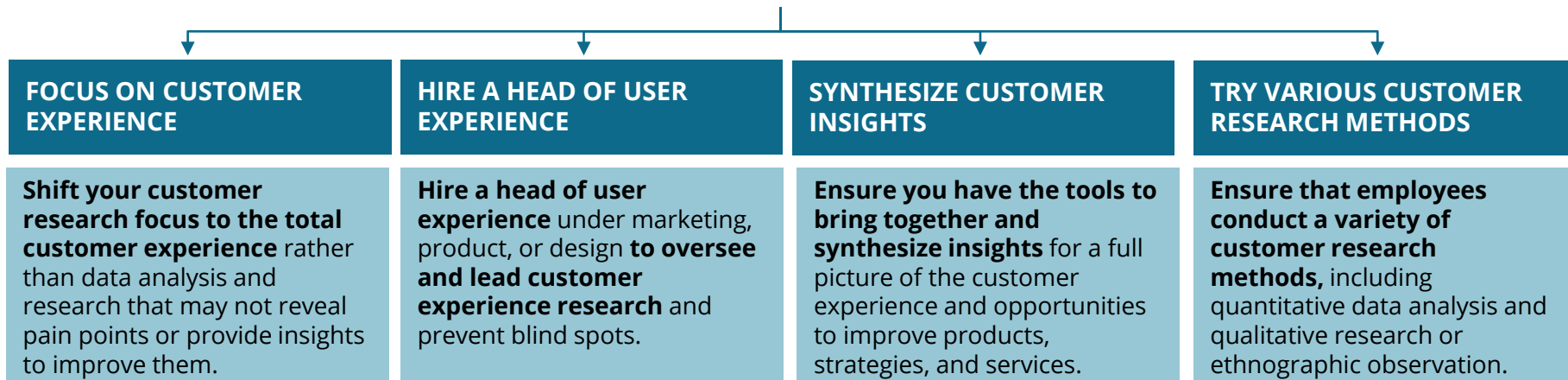| FORM AN INSIGHTS COUNCIL	ORGANIZE INSIGHTS ROLES IN A HYBRID STRUCTURE	INTEGRATE INSIGHTS INTO PRODUCT DESIGN	ESTABLISH A FEEDBACK LOOP
Form a customer insights council of leadership from various functions to ensure that customer research is aligned with business needs and results are used across functions.	Organize insights functions in a hybrid model, with **some team members centralized and others embedded in product development or other areas that rely on insights.**	The **customer insights council should ensure that synthesized insights are shared with product teams,** and that product development addresses key needs discovered through customer research.	Establish a formalized feedback loop, and **set processes for how and when various employees should share customer insights** – and with whom.

Considerations and impact on your organization's customer centricity

• Invite relevant business functions to take part in the customer insights research planning process to ensure that insights are shared effectively across functions.	• A hybrid model provides greater ability to meaningfully support various functions. It also ensures that insights team members can flexibly focus on strategic insights and cross-functional research.	• Adding insights functions to product teams helps ensure that customer feedback informs product features – and that customers test usability.	• Results in a better chance that implications from customer insights research are shared with appropriate stakeholders. • Be sure to publicize new processes and expectations.

Challenge #4

"We're doing all the right things for customer insights, but customer experience is still poor."

Solutions

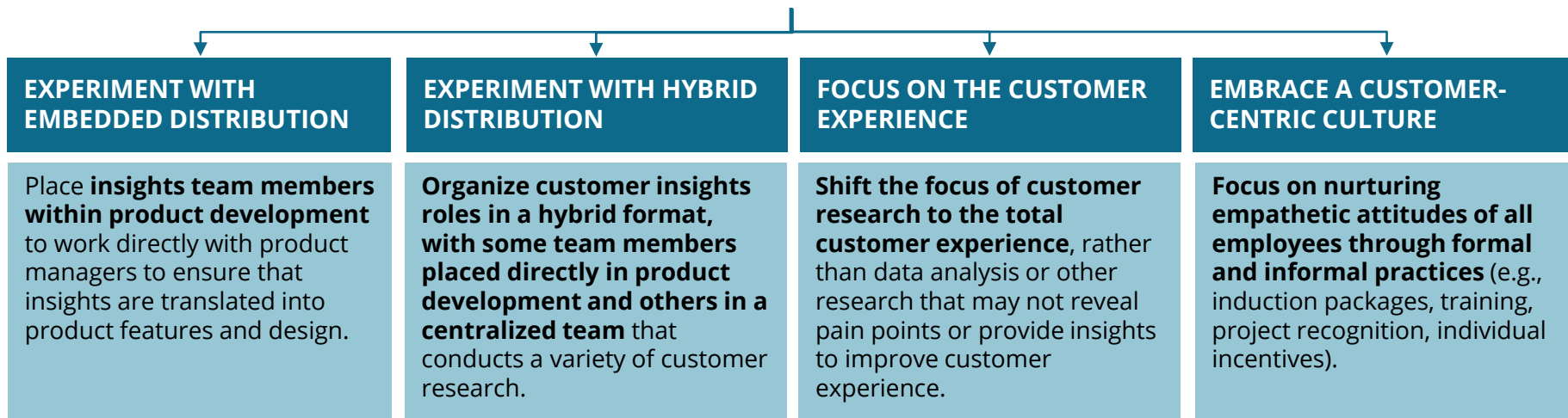| FOCUS ON CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE	HIRE A HEAD OF USER EXPERIENCE	SYNTHESIZE CUSTOMER INSIGHTS	TRY VARIOUS CUSTOMER RESEARCH METHODS
Shift your customer research focus to the total customer experience rather than data analysis and research that may not reveal pain points or provide insights to improve them.	**Hire a head of user experience** under marketing, product, or design **to oversee and lead customer experience research** and prevent blind spots.	**Ensure you have the tools to bring together and synthesize insights** for a full picture of the customer experience and opportunities to improve products, strategies, and services.	**Ensure that employees conduct a variety of customer research methods,** including quantitative data analysis and qualitative research or ethnographic observation.

Considerations and impact on your organization's customer centricity

• A customer experience focus ensures that research and insights center on understanding which products or customer-facing processes need to be added or changed.	• The head of user experience should have practical knowledge conducting various types of customer research and understand how to tie it into strategy and key business objectives.	• Synthesis and communication of research insights can be led by the head of user experience or another employee if there's no dedicated head of user experience role. • Ensure that a sharable list of actions based on insights is created.	• Quantitative data is an excellent way to identify high level trends and behavior patterns. • Qualitative observations of how customers use products and services can reveal more obvious drivers/environmental factors than quantitative data.

Challenge #5

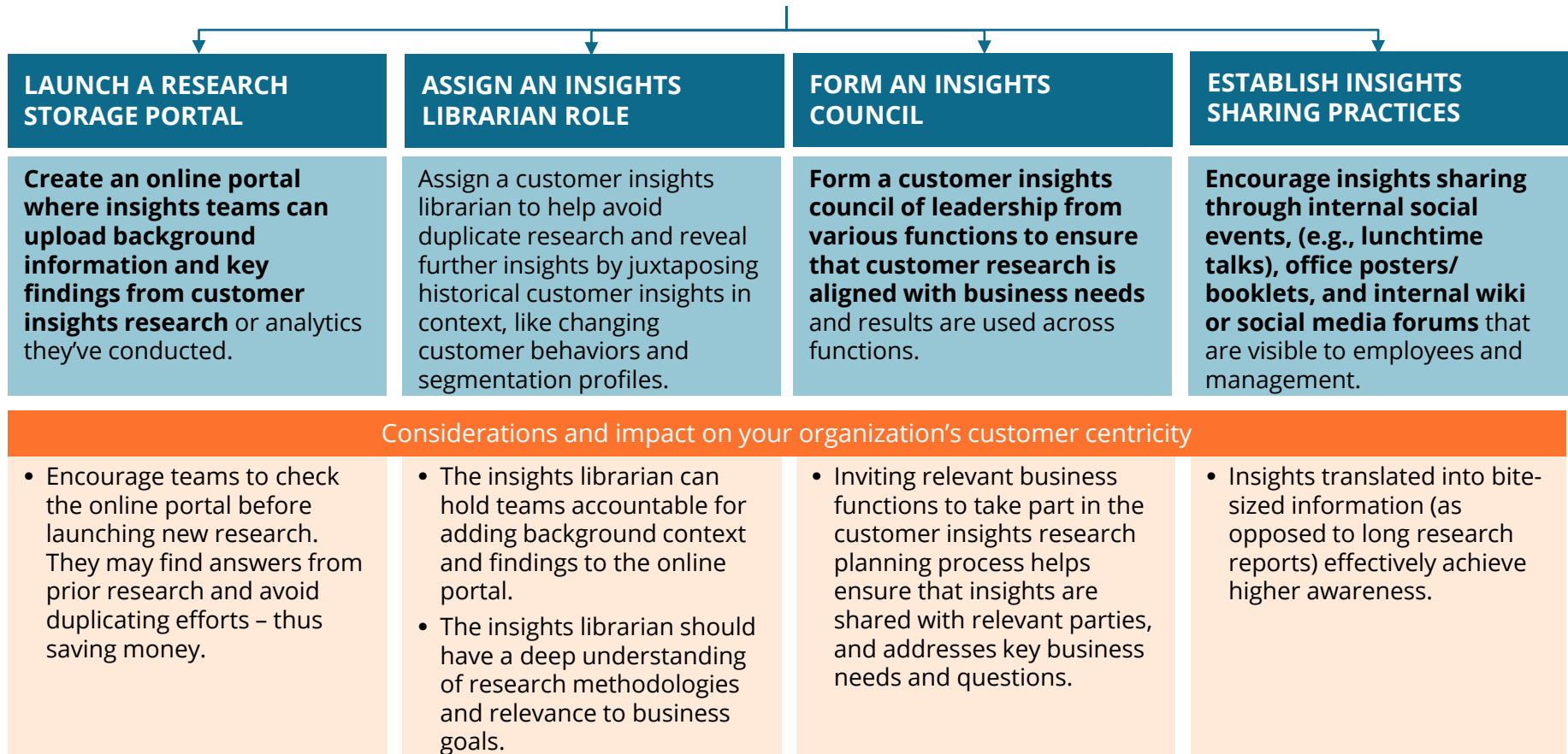*"Customer insights bring little improvement to our products, services, or organization."*

Solutions

EXPERIMENT WITH EMBEDDED DISTRIBUTION	EXPERIMENT WITH HYBRID DISTRIBUTION	FOCUS ON THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE	EMBRACE A CUSTOMER-CENTRIC CULTURE
Place **insights team members within product development** to work directly with product managers to ensure that insights are translated into product features and design.	**Organize customer insights roles in a hybrid format, with some team members placed directly in product development and others in a centralized team** that conducts a variety of customer research.	**Shift the focus of customer research to the total customer experience**, rather than data analysis or other research that may not reveal pain points or provide insights to improve customer experience.	**Focus on nurturing empathetic attitudes of all employees through formal and informal practices** (e.g., induction packages, training, project recognition, individual incentives).

Considerations and impact on your organization's customer centricity

• Making a customer insights expert an integral part of your product team may increase effectiveness of using insights, but may have trade-offs such as career development for this role.	• Many organizations use a hybrid approach where a small, centralized customer insights team or customer insights council helps oversee and coordinate insights functions to ensure that research addresses business and product needs.	• A customer experience focus ensures that research and insights center on understanding which products or processes involving customers may need to be added or changed.	• Successful organizations typically have the endorsement of senior leadership. • Leadership sets an example through actions of the organization and its support of customer-centric activities.

Challenge #6

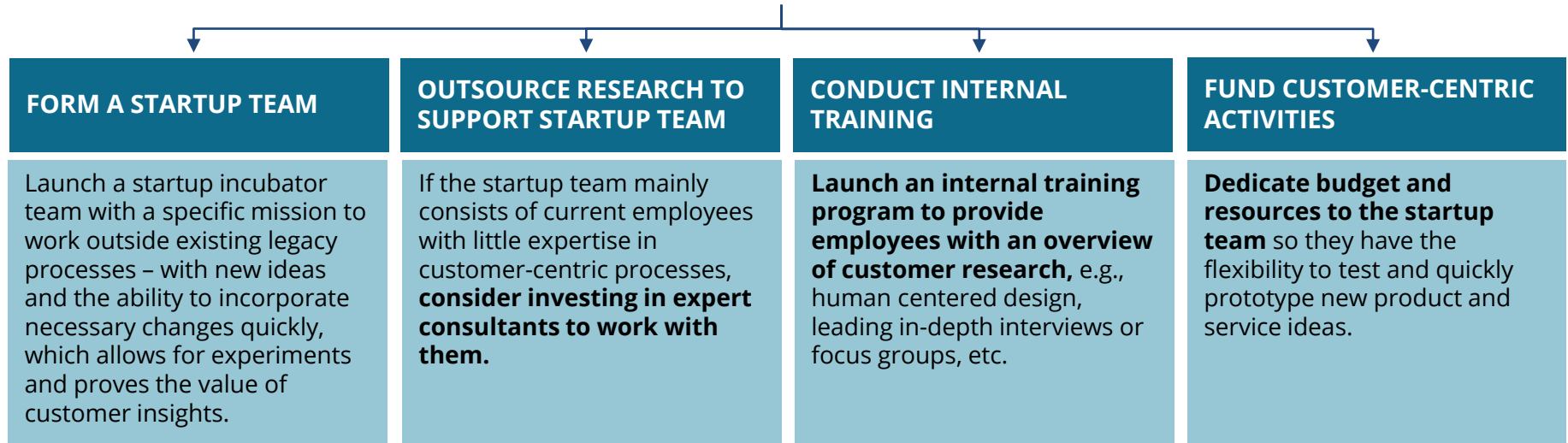*"Customer insights are not shared – or are lost in our organization."*

Solutions

LAUNCH A RESEARCH STORAGE PORTAL	ASSIGN AN INSIGHTS LIBRARIAN ROLE	FORM AN INSIGHTS COUNCIL	ESTABLISH INSIGHTS SHARING PRACTICES
Create an online portal where insights teams can upload background information and key findings from customer insights research or analytics they've conducted.	Assign a customer insights librarian to help avoid duplicate research and reveal further insights by juxtaposing historical customer insights in context, like changing customer behaviors and segmentation profiles.	**Form a customer insights council of leadership from various functions to ensure that customer research is aligned with business needs** and results are used across functions.	**Encourage insights sharing through internal social events, (e.g., lunchtime talks), office posters/ booklets, and internal wiki or social media forums** that are visible to employees and management.

Considerations and impact on your organization's customer centricity

• Encourage teams to check the online portal before launching new research. They may find answers from prior research and avoid duplicating efforts – thus saving money.	• The insights librarian can hold teams accountable for adding background context and findings to the online portal. • The insights librarian should have a deep understanding of research methodologies and relevance to business goals.	• Inviting relevant business functions to take part in the customer insights research planning process helps ensure that insights are shared with relevant parties, and addresses key business needs and questions.	• Insights translated into bite-sized information (as opposed to long research reports) effectively achieve higher awareness.

Challenge #7

"We cannot easily change the existing organization or processes to become more customer-centric."

Solutions

FORM A STARTUP TEAM	OUTSOURCE RESEARCH TO SUPPORT STARTUP TEAM	CONDUCT INTERNAL TRAINING	FUND CUSTOMER-CENTRIC ACTIVITIES
Launch a startup incubator team with a specific mission to work outside existing legacy processes – with new ideas and the ability to incorporate necessary changes quickly, which allows for experiments and proves the value of customer insights.	If the startup team mainly consists of current employees with little expertise in customer-centric processes, **consider investing in expert consultants to work with them.**	**Launch an internal training program to provide employees with an overview of customer research,** e.g., human centered design, leading in-depth interviews or focus groups, etc.	**Dedicate budget and resources to the startup team** so they have the flexibility to test and quickly prototype new product and service ideas.

Considerations and impact on your organization's customer centricity

• Great if your organization has a transformational need, but the startup risks becoming disconnected from business pressures and realities. • Monitor the startup team and engage others that may learn from its processes and methods.	• Incentivize startup team members to learn from experts, and ensure they establish useful new practices to internalize later.	• Customer-centric culture can begin with a broad awareness of what it entails and how it can benefit your organization, even if employee responsibilities don't involve direct customer engagement.	• Depending on organizational policy, it may be best to allow the startup team to bypass time-consuming procedures that hinder agile development and customer-centric practices.

Challenge #8

"Customer insights work is expensive. We need to make it more cost effective."

Solutions

DELEGATE INSIGHTS COACHES	ASSIGN AN OVERSIGHT ROLE	FORM AN INSIGHTS COUNCIL	LAUNCH A RESEARCH STORAGE PORTAL
Hire or train insights team members to serve as internal customer research coaches. Empower them to guide and coach other employees on research methods and goals, working with external agencies, and taking insights through the internal process.	Delegate an insights team leader to ensure that research activities are prioritized, provide best practices, supervise key focus areas, and manage external agencies to reduce onboarding costs.	**Form a customer insights council of leadership from various functions to ensure that customer research is aligned with business needs** and results are used across functions.	**Create an online portal where insights teams can upload background information and key findings from customer insights research** or analytics they've conducted.

Considerations and impact on your organization's customer centricity

• Insights coaches should develop materials that educate new hires about customer-centric practices and goals. • This is an ideal role if your organization is not in a position to invest in a substantial insights team.	• If you have insights teams that operate in separate business functions, an oversight role can help them work more cost effectively and result in better customer understanding.	• Organizations can achieve more cost effective research efforts by inviting relevant business functions to take part in the customer insights research planning process.	• Encourage teams to check the online portal before launching new research. They may find answers from prior research and avoid duplicating efforts – thus saving money.

Summary of Recommended Actions

1 Organizational Structure

- Experiment with embedded distribution of insights team members
- Experiment with hybrid distribution of insights team members
- Hire a head of customer insights
- Organize insights in a hybrid structure
- Integrate insights into product and service design
- Form a customer insights council
- Form a startup team

2 Operational Model

- Fund customer-centric activities
- Launch a portal to store research findings
- Outsource insights
- Try various combinations of customer research methods
- Focus on customer experience
- Map the customer journey
- Prototype and test

3 Cultural Orientation

- Coordinate insights across functions
- Establish insights sharing practices
- Ensure that leadership understands customers
- Synthesize customer insights
- Establish a feedback loop
- Embrace a customer-centric culture

4 Core Capabilities

- Assign dual responsibilities
- Assign an insights expert
- Create an oversight role
- Assign an insights librarian
- Appoint insights coaches
- Conduct internal training on customer insights

Chapter 4: Profiles

Profiles / Chapter 4 Overview

Chapter 4 provides holistic profiles of organizations of various sizes and stages of maturity as they progress toward customer-centricity. Each profile outlines **challenges** the organizations faced, the **actions** they took, and the **results** of those actions.

Profiles are drawn from the actual, lived experience of many of the 27+ organizations interviewed for this blueprint. Please note that each profile is representative of the choices and situations of more than one organization.

Organizational Journey to Customer Centricity

Pure Customer Service	Data Collection and Marketing	Integrated Customer Experience	Deep Organizational Mindset

Common Challenges

Challenge #1

We cannot afford dedicated customer insights resources.

Challenge #2

We have a lot of customer data but don't use it to become more customer-centric.

Challenge #3

We use customer insights mainly for marketing rather than to develop products and services.

Challenge #4

We're doing all the right things for customer insights, but customer experience is still poor.

Challenge #5

Customer insights bring little improvement to our products, services, or organization.

Challenge #6

Customer insights are not shared – or are lost in our organization.

Challenge #7

We cannot easily change the existing organization or processes.

Challenge #8

Customer insights work is expensive. We need to make it more cost effective.

Organizational Profiles

Profile 1 Organizational Ethos	Profile 2 Beyond Analytics	Profile 4 Experience Driven	Profile 6 Knowledge Center
	Profile 3 Product Tool	Profile 5 Insights to Inform	Profile 7 Startup within Company
			Profile 8 Centralized Coach

Profile 1: Organizational Ethos

"We cannot afford dedicated customer insights resources."

SAMPLE ORGANIZATION PROFILE

- Small organization (~180 employees), founded seven years ago

- Provides micro-insurance product via financial service provider and mobile network operator channels

- Data analytics driven, agile product development process

- Almost every employee is a specialist but can take on multiple responsibilities, depending on business needs

- No dedicated insights role but relies on informal methods to understand customer needs

No dedicated insights functions or teams

Small- to medium-sized company

Fairly young in organizational maturity. No strict role divisions in product creation process

Still in customer exploration or product discovery mode

We have a pressing need for customer insights but there's no indication of long-term needs that would justify a new hire or team.

Some employees do meet with customers and would like to use those moments to collect actionable insights.

We want to ensure that the company makes products that satisfy customers, but we don't know how to measure that.

We want employees to share the organization's values and attitudes when dealing with customers.

Profile 1: Organizational Ethos

"We cannot afford dedicated customer insights resources."

SITUATION / CHALLENGES Informal, sporadic customer insights collection	ACTIONS TAKEN BY COMPANY Refocus on customer experience	RESULTS OF ACTIONS TAKEN Empathy for customer needs established as organizational ethos
Informal insights were gathered whenever there was an opportunity to interact with customers, but they were often reactive or not focused on gaining actionable insights.	**Established practices for key employees to meet with customers every month**, based on the example set by the CEO.	Now has much greater insight into customer needs and an established feedback loop that ensures customer insights are shared with appropriate employees.
Product development was mainly driven by analytics, developing algorithms, and refining features based on analytics or customer behaviors.	**Hired an external consultant to create and validate target customer profiles** and understand customer journeys based on human-centered design methods.	Many processes are improved as a result of insights from research, e.g., redesigned claim form.
Products were designed and developed totally by internal teams.	**Started the practice of prototyping and testing** products before they're released to the market.	Saves money by avoiding some of the costs of changing products after market launch.
Founder frequently visited customers to create the initial product. Senior executives called customers directly about issues and problems, but there was little oversight on how employees deal with customers.	**Established a set of rules and guidance on how customers should be treated and their needs addressed**, tailored for sales and customer care teams.	Team members are more aware of best practices for dealing with customers, and aim to exude empathy in all interactions.

Profile 2: Beyond Analytics

"We have a lot of customer data but don't use it to become more customer-centric."

SAMPLE ORGANIZATION PROFILE

- Medium-sized company (~6,500 employees) founded in 1930

- Made a successful transition to an internet business and expanded its operations to 35 countries. Sells electronic parts to other organizations

- Competition is becoming fierce as more organizations find ways to source components directly online

- Various teams gather customer data and occasionally invest in qualitative customer research projects. But there's no coordinated effort to consolidate data and insights to better understand customers

Product development is dependent on customer data (e.g., credit scoring, e-commerce)

Qualitative customer data is only occasionally collected by external subcontractors for special projects

Customer data is only used to quantify business opportunities

Mature organization that has long-established practices and a less innovative approach to insights

Our analytics team generates a ton of customer data, but it's only used when product or business problems arise.

Our marketing and sales teams conduct various activities to collect customer data, but they're not linked.

Our customer data is mostly used to answer specific questions but rarely for key business decisions.

Profile 2: Beyond Analytics

"We have a lot of customer data but don't use it to become more customer-centric."

SITUATION / CHALLENGES Data rich, insights poor	ACTIONS TAKEN BY COMPANY Hired a director of insights	RESULTS OF ACTIONS TAKEN 360-degree insights to guide business decisions
Web analytics, sales, competitor intelligence, and marketing teams all collected different customer data, but there was no coordinated effort to figure out how data points are linked or what they mean.	**Recruited a new director of insights to consolidate and coordinate** data points from various teams, complemented by running separate qualitative and quantitative customer research.	The work of the director of insights helps the organization gain a more comprehensive understanding of customers.
No formalized process aligned customer insights to product development or decision-making processes, so insights roles didn't have a clear mandate to impact the business.	**Formed a new insights team** with employees who'd previously worked in marketing, analytics, and competitive intelligence. Assigned clear responsibilities and processes for sharing insights.	Customer insights are shared much more broadly and communication between different functional groups has improved, leading to better use of customer insights to inform product development and strategy.
Leadership was not directly engaged with customer insights functions and did not demand key insights to factor into business decisions.	**The new director of insights began to attend each business group's regular leadership meetings** to share customer insights and ensure that they're used in key business decisions.	Leadership had a greater understanding of customer insights and visibility into how they would positively impact product and business decisions.

Profile 3: Product Tool

"We use customer insights mainly for marketing rather than to develop products and services."

SAMPLE ORGANIZATION PROFILE

- Large company (~30,000 employees) with an e-commerce platform and online payment capabilities

- Product development mostly done in one country but deployed in multiple locations internationally

- Business strategy greatly influenced by data analytics and understanding how customers make purchases

- Opportunity to better inform product development with customer research

Mature company with longstanding practices, particularly around financial targets

Large company with incentives created around short-term financial performance

Achieved financial growth over time but has dire need to experiment and change

Little competition. Has not been challenged to find new products or services to offer customers

Our customer insights budget is only allocated to marketing since product development relies on data analytics.

We're not sure how to distribute customer insights roles throughout the organization.

Our product development process is only focused on minor, short-term improvements.

Our customer insights functions have no existing relationship with product teams.

Profile 3: Product Tool

"We use customer insights mainly for marketing rather than to develop products and services."

SITUATION / CHALLENGES Customer insights used for marketing	ACTIONS TAKEN BY COMPANY Reorganized, hired head of design research, formed oversight council	RESULTS OF ACTIONS TAKEN Customer insights inform product development
A few customer insights researchers were part of the marketing team where they ran customer studies and informed marketing campaigns.	**Reorganized insights functions into a hybrid model,** with some user researchers and designers in a centralized team and others distributed throughout the company to work directly with product development and other areas.	Reorganization resulted in a much better feedback loop for customer insights into product design and development. The hybrid model also ensures more consistent methodologies.
Insights functions were scattered throughout various departments and mainly provided patchy quantitative data to whoever required it. They had little decision-making power or ability to influence product development.	**Brought together heads of various departments** (user experience, product management, marketing, analytics) into an oversight council that would meet monthly and prioritize customer insights needed to support decisions.	The oversight council makes customer insights much more strategic and prioritizes insights that are most likely to be used by various functions, particularly the product team.
Lack of an oversight function / council to ensure that insights supported key strategic decision-making processes and questions.	**Established a new position – head of design research –** to oversee various insights roles and ensure a feedback loop between user experience researchers and relevant internal stakeholders.	The head of design research is authorized to hold various functions accountable for sharing customer insights and requests or needs that could be solved with insights, which ensures a feedback loop.

Profile 4: Experience Driven

"We're doing all the right things for customer insights, but customer experience is still poor."

SAMPLE ORGANIZATION PROFILE

- Small company (~200 employees) that provides loans through an online application and approval process

- Since its founding seven years ago, the company has gone through several product iterations. The current product offering was developed based on customer insights that helped the company better understand how to provide loans

- CEO encourages all employees to be customer-centric and understand the needs or difficulties customers face in the loan application and repayment process

Company with product creation and innovation teams

Customer insights roles scattered throughout various teams

Has highly specialized insights roles but lacks a role to monitor overall customer experience

Multiple customer touchpoints but no process to view consolidated customer feedback

We have several customer insights and customer care functions, but we still don't get a complete picture of what customers experience when they use our products or services.

We collect feedback from customers but insights are patchy and not easily translated into consolidated action points.

We want to ensure that our products and services meet customer needs, desires, and lifestyles, but we currently only evaluate high-level net promoter scores.

Profile 4: Experience Driven

"We're doing all the right things for customer insights, but customer experience is still poor."

SITUATION / CHALLENGES Multiple functions for customer insights but gaps in customer experience	ACTIONS TAKEN BY COMPANY Hired a head of user experience	RESULTS OF ACTIONS TAKEN New focus on improving the total customer experience
Most customer insights were collected by call center employees, the "customer happiness" (client services) team, and the analytics team, but were not very helpful or straightforward in informing product improvements.	**The CEO recruited a new head of user experience** whose first task was to map out all customer touchpoints and pain points so products, services, and processes could be adapted to improve customer experience.	The head of user experience works closely with the executive team to synthesize findings from customer insights teams and ensure that product and business strategies are based on opportunities to improve customer experience.
Customers could interact with members of different teams but there was no way to know what was discussed or who customers may already have spoken to.	The company **invested in building an internal platform to collect and compile customer communications into a single record** that all employees could reference.	Whenever an employee interacts with a customer, they can now refer to past conversations and points of contact to better serve customer needs.
Nearly 80 percent of customers had difficulty getting through the online application and needed support in person or from the call center.	**The user experience team ran qualitative research on how customers used the online application.** The product development team also participated in the research.	User experience and product development teams come up with new, improved product designs which are again tested on potential customers.

Profile 5: Insights to Inform

"Customer insights bring little improvement to our products, services, or organization."

SAMPLE ORGANIZATION PROFILE

- Large company (~17,000 employees) operating in ~200 markets

- Allows customers to make financial transactions by transferring funds electronically online or through a mobile app

- Company has ~100 designers and a number of other functions that work on aspects of customer insights

- Despite increased investment in customer insights collection, some leadership didn't fully support the transition toward customer centricity through their own actions or use of insights

Large organizations with numerous business units and functional groups

Customer insights functions only serve low-level functions without recognition by leadership

Leadership does not base key decisions or strategy on consumer insights

No incentives in place or recognition for sharing insights or acting upon them

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Our insights team works separately from the product and business functions that have major impact on the organization.

We have many customer insights functions and invest considerably in them, but customer satisfaction is still not ideal.

A large proportion of our employees are sales or field workers and there's high turnover. It's difficult to impact an attitude change on a less stable workforce.

Profile 5: Insights to Inform

"Customer insights bring little improvement to our products, services, or organization."

SITUATION / CHALLENGES Customer insights used to solve problems	ACTIONS TAKEN BY COMPANY Hired a director of user experience, launched programs that encourage customer-driven innovation and product development	RESULTS OF ACTIONS TAKEN Customer insights used to inform key business decisions
The customer insights team was allocated resources by teams that required specific insights. This demand-supply model forced the insights team to work on very tactical, short-term issues only.	**Hired a director of user experience** to oversee design research methodology, the design research community, and skills development of employees who conduct customer research.	The head of user experience ensures that research ties to business needs and focuses on customer experience, and provides a better path to feed insights back to leadership.
Customer insights were only sporadically reflected in key business decision-making processes.	**Changed processes so engineers and product managers were increasingly brought on research trips.** Gaining insights first hand informed product development and was more effective than hearing insights from designers or researchers.	The product development process increasingly takes into account customer insights. Product managers and developers now have greater customer empathy and understanding.
Customer insights were generated and used by lower-middle management for short-term implementation, without a guiding strategy or long-term intent.	**Leadership led a strategic program, "Activate Design," that encouraged employees to use design as a strategic pillar.** The program included design summits and brought in employees from other functions that previously had no contact with design.	Leadership is more appreciative of how customer research and design can positively impact strategy and key decisions.

Profile 6: Knowledge Center

"Customer insights are not shared – or are lost in our organization."

SAMPLE ORGANIZATION PROFILE

- Large company (~10,000 employees), 11 years old

- An internet service business that constantly grows its user base, has expanded rapidly in emerging markets in recent years, and has an increasingly constant need to understand its changing base and new cultures

- As the company grows, its research groups leadership increasingly encourages broader and more creative ways to share and keep insights research records

Large organization with numerous business units and functional groups

Company that invests heavily in customer insights but doesn't have efficiency measures in place

Company with agile, independent product teams that have great autonomy

Company that can benefit from understanding changing consumer behaviors and lifestyle trends over time

We've invested in a lot of customer insights research over the years, but it's hard to identify relevant information in past work.

Customer insights work may be initiated by any team that budgets for it, but they often don't reflect on the needs of other relevant teams.

Teams have little or no incentive to share customer insights beyond their own immediate internal network.

Profile 6: Knowledge Center

"Customer insights are not shared – or are lost in our organization."

SITUATION / CHALLENGES "Not invented here" attitude to customer insights	ACTIONS TAKEN BY COMPANY Launched an online portal to store historical insights, assigned a customer insights expert as librarian	RESULTS OF ACTIONS TAKEN Library of customer insights amassed over time
Customer insights projects were initiated by various product teams, with little overarching coordination or effort to reference previous research for relevant insights.	**Implemented a central repository of insights reports on the company intranet,** making it possible for anyone in the company to search for past insights work.	The intranet insights repository improves the ability of employees to share findings and avoid redundant research efforts.
Customer insights were easily lost once the team that collected them moved on to other responsibilities.	**A dedicated insights librarian was appointed to help guide teams to** effectively cross-reference the existing database for customer insights.	The insights librarian helps teams learn about previous research efforts and share key learnings, and makes recommendations about potential areas to explore further.
Research teams had little incentive to share the insights they generated with a wider company audience.	**The company formed a customer insights council** that required a representative of each business function to approve customer insights research work.	The newly established customer insights council ensures that insights work reflects the interests and needs of all relevant business groups, and subsequently enforces formal and informal insights sharing across functions.

Profile 7: Startup within Company

"We cannot easily change the existing organization or processes to become more customer-centric."

SAMPLE ORGANIZATION PROFILE

- Large company (~140,000) founded in the 1940s

- A traditional commercial bank that has a large network of branches in all major cities and districts. Offers financial products for all types of customers

- Long-established processes and legacy in recruiting, product development, and how branches operate and interact with customers

- Interested in bringing in organizational practices that are more customer-centric, but needs to be cautious in implementing because of investments in budget and time

Mature company with established cultural practices and business processes

Large company that requires huge overhead to implement organizational or process changes

Large company with many stakeholders involved in decision-making and changes to organizational structure

Company that's willing and able to hire experts or consultants to bring in skills and training

We're not sure where to get started because we have a complex, delicate organizational structure.

We don't have an internal expert or suitable team to take on the responsibility of focusing on customer insights.

There's a very limited talent pool in our company or in the country where we operate that specializes in customer insights.

Profile 7: Startup within Company

"We cannot easily change the existing organization or processes to become more customer-centric."

SITUATION / CHALLENGES No tangible customer insights in company processes	ACTIONS TAKEN BY COMPANY Formed an internal startup team to showcase new customer-centric product development processes	RESULTS OF ACTIONS TAKEN Broader adoption of customer-centric product development processes
Leadership recognized the need to infuse new talent into the business to make it more digital but were unsure of where to start. Company policy did not permit recruiting experienced experts.	**A new startup team was set up as a separate company owned 100 percent by the bank,** with the goal to cover every e-commerce-related transaction within the company.	The internal startup team follows more agile development processes and makes decisions more quickly. Its successful processes have been adopted by various teams within the company.
New product development processes were managed entirely by internal teams – without involving customers for feedback until after a launch, which often resulted in failed product experiments.	**An external agency was hired to work with the startup and infuse the new product development process with customer interviews** to aid in understanding needs and use contexts.	The external agency taught internal teams to do more prototyping and testing as part of the new product development process, which has proven to be more cost-effective than launching new products without customer testing.
Customer insights were not explicitly present in the business processes.	After a successful project with the external agency, **the project leader received formal training in human-centered design methods and established a training course within the company.**	Key members of the startup team have set up an internal training program within the bank to more broadly share knowledge.

Profile 8: Centralized Coach

"Customer insights work is expensive. We need to make it more cost effective."

SAMPLE ORGANIZATION PROFILE

- Medium size company (~4,500) with global operations

- The company has various subsidiaries through acquisition, all operating under separate brands

- Each subsidiary had a dedicated insights team, each with its own way of working

- Senior management wanted more overarching insights on business decisions as the company grew and expanded to more markets

Medium- to large-size company in growth stage, with resources to spend on customer insights

Company wants to nurture customer insights capability in a broader employee base

Company that faces competition and invests heavily in customer insights to differentiate

Company with multiple business groups that operate separately

We have several insights teams under various business groups that do not work together.

Our customer insights teams often do not have the knowledge to answer questions posed by senior management.

Insights work is often initiated by product teams. How can we give them more responsibility?

Profile 8: Centralized Coach

"Customer insights work is expensive. We need to make it more cost effective."

SITUATION / CHALLENGES Business units and functions work in silos	ACTIONS TAKEN BY COMPANY Hired a head of insights, started a central insights team	RESULTS OF ACTIONS TAKEN Centralized insights team provides expertise and coaching
Each business group had its own insights team with unique processes and preferred methods, but little collaboration between teams led to redundant research.	**A newly established central insights team reports directly to senior management. The team was given the authority to help other functions** coordinate customer research.	A small but highly specialized team of five customer insights experts establishes centralized guidelines and processes to work with subsidiaries on insights functions.
Global expansion meant that more customer insights research had to be executed by local partner agencies, which increased coordination needs and costs.	**The insights team created a list of preferred agencies to work with** in each country and ensures synergy by providing oversight on various research initiatives.	The team saves money by leveraging agencies only when it's necessary to supplement data and insights that already exist internally or can be gathered by employees.
The company did not actively ensure that insights functions fed insights back to inform strategy. Since teams worked in silos, it was also difficult to generate cross-business insights required by senior management.	**The insights team facilitated cross-business and cross-functional discussions to generate insights on specific business needs by calling for temporary committees** of relevant key contributors under the direct mandate of senior management.	By forming temporary multi-functional teams to conduct customer research, the insights team helps generate cross-business insights to share directly with the CEO and senior management.