

# Case Study: Nissan Transforms CX And EX Through Seven Customer Journeys

How Nissan Embraced A Journey-Centric Operating Model To Deliver Customer Value And Business Growth

by Joana de Quintanilha  
December 10, 2020

## Why Read This Report

Since 2018, Nissan has been on a path to transform its legacy systems and operating model to create a best-in-class integrated customer journey in order to grow its customer base, reduce costs, and boost retention. Customer experience (CX) pros should read this case study to learn how Nissan overhauled seven key customer journeys and changed how it's organized to rapidly adapt and respond to future customer needs.

## Key Takeaways

### **Nissan Stepped Into Its Customers' Shoes**

Nissan identified a high-level framework of seven journeys that cover the lifetime of a Nissan customer and made the journey structure a rallying cry.

### **Six Journey-Centricity Levers Drove Transformation**

Effectively leading a journey-centric transformation requires being able to pull six operational levers — structure, culture, talent, metrics, processes, and technology — in concert.

### **Nissan's New Operating Model Is Becoming Business As Usual**

The transformation is ongoing — it is not a one and done — but it has already delivered some promising results. Nissan is making substantial progress while recognizing that this is an ongoing journey.

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December 10, 2020

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## Table Of Contents

- 2 Vision: Nissan Wanted To Step Into The Customer's Shoes
- 3 Strategy: Elevate The Car Buying Experience
- 8 Execution: Nissan Pulled Six Journey-Centricity Levers
- 12 Results: Nissan's Ongoing Transformation Is Delivering
- 13 Next Steps: New Operating Model Is Business As Usual

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## Recommendations

- 16 Place CX Transformation At The Heart Of Business Strategy
- 18 Supplemental Material

## Related Research Documents

- [Case Study: Lloyds Banking Group's Journey-Focused Digital Transformation](#)
- [The Customer-Journey-Centric Firm](#)
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How Nissan Embraced A Journey-Centric Operating Model To Deliver Customer Value And Business Growth

## Vision: Nissan Wanted To Step Into The Customer's Shoes

Established in 1933, Nissan was a pioneer in automobile manufacturing. In 2019, the global auto manufacturer sold 4.93 million vehicles (mostly in Japan, China, the US, and Europe), which represented 5.8% of the global market.<sup>1</sup> But the market is becoming more customer obsessed. Hyundai delivers a test drive to customers' doorsteps with Amazon Prime; BMW allows customers to choose vehicles based on finance simulations; and Tesla allows customers to book a service from the driver's seat. Madhu Nutakki, chief customer experience digital officer at Nissan, told us:

“The car industry hasn't changed much toward the customer experience in the last 100 years, historically focused around manufacturing. It is as efficient as possible (the supply chain, the procurement) because it's all about costs. Customers, on the other hand, have changed. They want decisions made on the website to be communicated to a local dealership; they want one integrated app for everything Nissan; and they don't want to be treated like a new customer every time they interact with Nissan because data is not being shared effectively.”

Nissan has been on a path to transform its legacy systems and operating model to create a best-in-class, integrated customer journey in order to grow its customer base, reduce costs, and boost retention. Because of its transformational nature, the program is led by senior executives from business and technology management in partnership with digital consultancy Publicis Sapient. According to Nigel Vaz, chief executive officer at Publicis Sapient, “We helped reimagine Nissan's transformation through a customer-centric lens and holistically combining the SPEED capabilities of strategy, product, experience, engineering, and data, driving both customer and business value.” To achieve this, Nissan focused on:

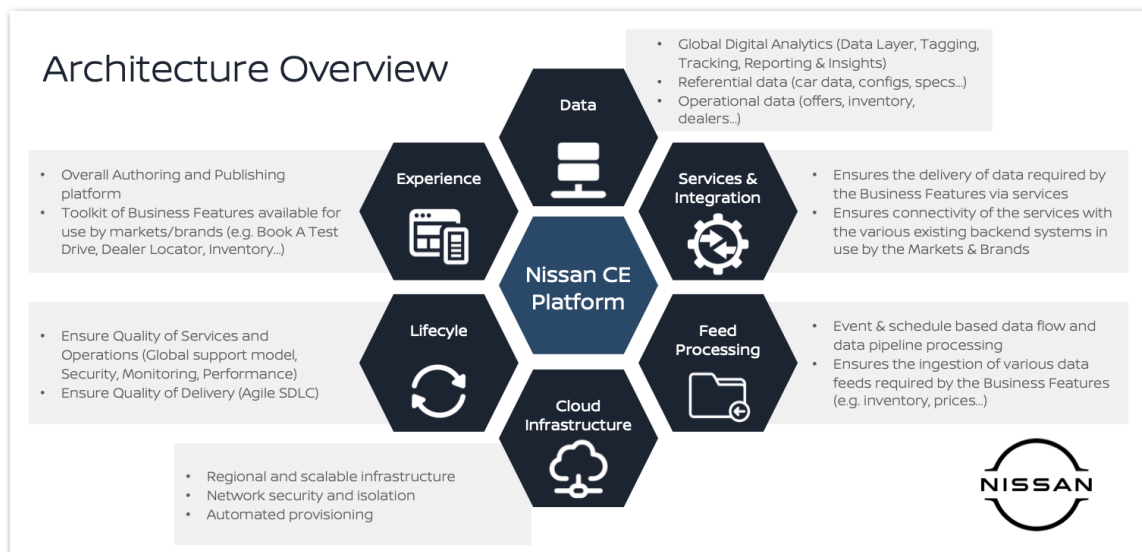
- › **A CX vision to demonstrate ROI and win the hearts and minds of executives.** Nissan created videos to visualize a connected journey for customers and used pictures and drawings to show a day in the life of a customer. “You have to make it very personal, show them practical examples of what customers go through,” said Roel de Vries, former global head of marketing at Nissan. Nissan shared these with the executive committee, comparing the current state with the future or ideal state. It ran workshops and created war rooms with walls full of journeys. “You need to make it visual, show executives the friction points, keep it simple, and, of course, calculate the ROI. This is what customers go through, this is what it costs us, and this is what we lose from not connecting things,” de Vries said.<sup>2</sup>
- › **A new way of working that was journey-first, not just digital-first.** Nissan embarked on a business transformation program to unify all customer-facing touchpoints — digital (e.g., website, apps), car, and physical retail at the dealer — into channel-agnostic journeys. The transformation included a consolidation of more than 200 websites across its 100 markets and a shift from touchpoints to journeys to see the world as its customers do. “[We moved] away from our channel-based, organizational silos to a customer-centric view of Nissan,” said Mike Lavigne, director and head of experience strategy and design at Nissan.

## Case Study: Nissan Transforms CX And EX Through Seven Customer Journeys

How Nissan Embraced A Journey-Centric Operating Model To Deliver Customer Value And Business Growth

- › **The integration of back-end technology and data.** What started off as a front-end experience optimization and brand consistency project expanded to include data integration (online data, car data, configuration data, offers, inventory, and dealer systems); integrations of various back-end systems; and a regional and scalable cloud infrastructure (network security and automation) (see Figure 1). “We started the project a bit naïve; we were initially focused on a consistent front end. But what we needed was a clear vision on how to engage with customers, which could be rolled out globally, and that requires information and data,” de Vries said.<sup>3</sup>

**FIGURE 1** Nissan CX Platform Architecture



Source: Nissan

## Strategy: Elevate The Car Buying Experience

Nissan’s transformation goes deeper than digital experience enhancements. To translate its bold vision into reality, Nissan executives laid out a strategy to:

- › **Transform and integrate seven customer journeys end to end.** Nissan used quantitative and qualitative customer research to identify and understand a high-level framework of seven journeys that cover the lifetime of a Nissan customer (see Figure 2).<sup>4</sup> Each journey is made up of several key moments — steps a customer takes to reach their goal for the journey (see Figure 3). Some moments are shared across multiple journeys (see Figure 4).<sup>5</sup> The journey structure has become the rallying cry.

**Case Study: Nissan Transforms CX And EX Through Seven Customer Journeys**

How Nissan Embraced A Journey-Centric Operating Model To Deliver Customer Value And Business Growth

- › **Establish a new operating model to deliver quality at speed.** Nissan set up a global CX team that included representatives from experience strategy and design; product; implementation (technical delivery); analytics; market and business engagement (focused on regional alignment and country rollouts); and business operations (project management). Seven journey managers determine customer needs and work with a project manager and journey team on delivery. A CX steering committee of senior executives ensure top-down alignment, balancing long-term projects and continuous improvement. Nissan's global digital platform ensures a unified user experience and empowers teams with rapid testing and hypothesis verification.
- › **Drive savings, efficiency, revenue, and retention.** The journey structure aims to make customer engagement frictionless, use resources efficiently, and increase business opportunities. The primary goal of CX at Nissan is to create a positive experience that reduces customer abandonment in the journey and increases conversion from shopping to sales. Other key measures include customer lifetime value, including repeat after-sales service and increased repurchase; improved leads and end-to-end lead management; personalized offers; and new business models. The transformation program is part of the Nissan Next strategy that involves a significant investment of tens of millions of dollars. Nissan manages the budget centrally to avoid constant pressure at the local level. The company expects the transformation to deliver a better customer experience, which, in turn, will lead to millions in incremental revenue while delivering savings over legacy business processes.
- › **Close the gap with competitors and become the best across industries.** With customers already experiencing integrated omnichannel experiences with other automotive brands, Nissan set a goal to close gaps in marketing, sales, connected car, sales finance, and after-sales service. More specifically, Nissan targeted online-to-offline conversion and subpar onboarding rates, as its onboarding process included more than 15 disconnected steps. It aims to follow up with the 65% of customers who visit dealerships but do not buy a vehicle. Nissan also set out to close gaps in car financing and after-sales service, increasing clarity around its service offerings and parts availability. Over time, Nissan aims to be a leading benchmark experience across all industries.

**Case Study: Nissan Transforms CX And EX Through Seven Customer Journeys**  
How Nissan Embraced A Journey-Centric Operating Model To Deliver Customer Value  
And Business Growth

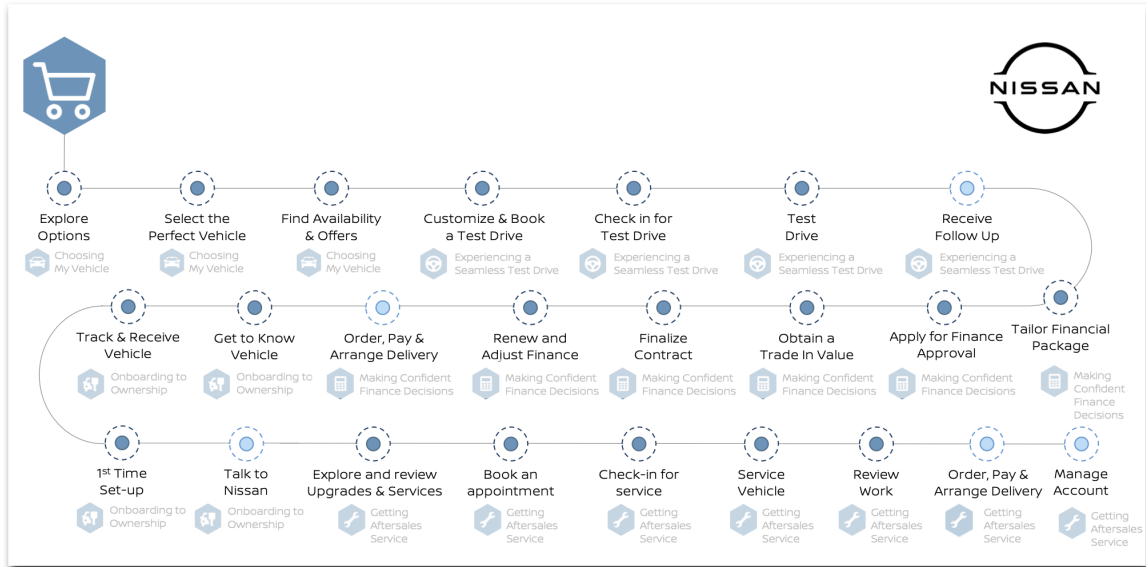
**FIGURE 2** Nissan Identified Seven Journeys That Cover The Lifetime Of A Nissan Customer



Source: Nissan

**Case Study: Nissan Transforms CX And EX Through Seven Customer Journeys**  
 How Nissan Embraced A Journey-Centric Operating Model To Deliver Customer Value  
 And Business Growth

**FIGURE 3** Nissan’s Shopping Through E-Commerce Journey



Source: Nissan

**Case Study: Nissan Transforms CX And EX Through Seven Customer Journeys**  
 How Nissan Embraced A Journey-Centric Operating Model To Deliver Customer Value  
 And Business Growth

**FIGURE 4** Nissan Identified Key Moments And Needs In The Journeys



Source: Nissan



**Case Study: Nissan Transforms CX And EX Through Seven Customer Journeys**

How Nissan Embraced A Journey-Centric Operating Model To Deliver Customer Value And Business Growth

## Execution: Nissan Pulled Six Journey-Centricity Levers

Leading a journey-centric transformation, Nissan partnered with Publicis Sapient to effectively pull six operational levers — structure, culture, talent, metrics, processes, and technology — in concert.<sup>6</sup>

### Structure: Establish A Clear “Why” And Get Broad Executive Support For Journeys

Nissan focused on the fundamentals of structure: 1) getting broad executive support for journeys, 2) developing a list of relevant journeys, and 3) setting a vision for the experience with a core journey transformation team.

- › **Getting broad executive support for journeys.** Nissan used the Japanese concept of *nemawashi* (gradual and collaborative vision building) to build executive support for and alignment behind the concept of journey-centricity.<sup>7</sup> It planned a multiyear transformation. The first year was about getting the journey framework and language in place; the second year was about onboarding multiple business units into that framework and celebrating some early cross-functional collaborations; and the third year was about expanding the framework to the broader ecosystem of dealers and supply partners. “It is like concentric circles: The first circle is the framework, the second business functions, and the third the wider ecosystem,” according to Madhu Nutakki. “When the CEO is able to stand up and speak about CX and the importance of it to employees, it means we have a stake at the table, and that happened at the end of year two; at that point you start to add value to the company.”
- › **Developing a list of relevant journeys and forming a core team of journey managers.** Once it defined the journey framework, Nissan appointed seven journey managers leading cross-functional teams (marketing, sales, finance, and after-sales service) to create accountability within the whole organization.<sup>8</sup> “To ensure we set up the journey managers for success, we made it a very senior and strategic role in the company. They need to be leaders and evangelists for the concept and spread it beyond the function. They need to be accountable for success or failure of those new moments and KPIs in the journey,” said Mike Lavigne.
- › **Articulating a clear “why” for the transformation.** Nissan took many iterations to finalize the seven-journey structure with key moments, micromoments, and associated KPIs. It used war rooms covered with thousands of sticky notes to walk stakeholders through the experience. The first step was to conduct research directly with customers using emotive elicitation, where it asked respondents to describe the emotional highs and lows they experienced during three core journey moments.<sup>9</sup> Nissan then ranked each moment according to the volume and intensity of the pain points associated with it, with high-impact moments deemed a priority. A company roadshow helped refine and socialize the moments in regions and business functions and get buy in from them. The journey and moments framework played a pivotal role by setting a shared language and focus.<sup>10</sup>

**Case Study: Nissan Transforms CX And EX Through Seven Customer Journeys**

How Nissan Embraced A Journey-Centric Operating Model To Deliver Customer Value And Business Growth

**Culture: Foster A Culture Of Customer-Centricity And Create Ripple Effects**

Journey-centricity requires massive cultural change. To build a culture that systematically delivers value to customers, Nissan:

- › **Enabled a mind shift by showcasing successes from the top down and bottom up.** The CX team presented quarterly progress to the executive board and global and regional senior executives. Every month, the CX team also sent out a blog to the whole organization highlighting wins for individual markets. “It is very impactful to measure the ROI of the experience and leverage customer behavior as a leading indicator of business outcomes — we now see product planning teams, manufacturing teams, etc. collaborating to bring their data to us to link it back to the customer journey,” said Dév Rishi Sahani, global head of customer experience data and analytics at Nissan. The company used communication, consistency, and frequency to make sure the journey model stayed on its radar. Stakeholders from the broader CX community and individual markets presented CX wins. Nissan used Slack across markets and time zones, with more than 1,000 very active users. It recognized that it needed to make journey-centricity an enterprisewide capability.
- › **Undertook a significant change management exercise.** To ensure a great CX, Nissan embraced shared experience principles for all journeys: 1) Create effortless flow, 2) make technology human, 3) encourage discovery, and 4) spark excitement. Nissan created an internal hub called “Drive the Experience” that acts as a central asset repository for customer research, personas, journeys, experience principles, web experience guidelines, mobile and web design systems, examples of projects, and ideas to improve CX.<sup>11</sup> To build credibility, the global CX team launched several initiatives in areas that it had control over, like personalization. The car manufacturer used case studies that had worked well in the first phase of the project, articulated in a language that stakeholders would understand, to maintain momentum and persuade more stakeholders.
- › **Incentivized employees to join an extended multiskill CX team.** The core CX team has between 50 and 60 people based in London and Japan and supported by Publicis Sapient and Interbrand. It also includes a broader CX community of several hundred people who are actively working to deliver CX and the seven journeys. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Nissan rallied up to 800 people through its CX community, and they actively worked together and shared best practices on how the community could respond to the crisis. “Our premise is to create a strong community with ripple effects throughout the organization,” said Lavigne.

**Talent: Instill A Journey Mindset, Elevate Roles, And Invest In Support Networks**

To overcome internal silos and respond to customers’ changing needs faster, Nissan:

- › **Prioritized attitude over technical skills.** “You cannot find a large pool of people who are experts in their function and in CX at the same time — that’s the reality. We didn’t benefit from the luxury of people with this mix of skills,” said Stephen Ryden-Lloyd, global customer experience lead at

**Case Study: Nissan Transforms CX And EX Through Seven Customer Journeys**

How Nissan Embraced A Journey-Centric Operating Model To Deliver Customer Value And Business Growth

Nissan. The company took a pragmatic approach, moving fast to describe all the journeys, and started challenging journey managers to develop roadmaps. Journey managers have deep subject-matter expertise in a functional or business area with a cross-functional mindset and passion.

- › **Set a clear scope for professionalized journey roles.** Journey roles need top-down backing and training. Nissan's journey managers are CEOs for the journey — setting the vision and strategy, building a prioritized roadmap, and analyzing the data to optimize the journey. Nissan created a journey manager handbook to enable bimodal thinking: the marathon (incremental improvement) and the transformational leap (innovation). Journey managers set both a one- to two-year plan (based on known pain points, existing data, and KPIs) and a five-year plan (including business model change). They are supported by an implementation team (working with Publicis Sapient) and drive change, persuade senior executives on journey transformation initiatives, and sell ideas to these executives. Journey managers tend to come from functional management roles and are the face of the transformation to the most-senior leaders in the organization.
- › **Set up a project management structure to support the journey teams and standardize.** Six months after it launched the journey framework, Nissan established a project management office to support the journey teams and create consistency.<sup>12</sup> The project management office helped standardize how Nissan gathers and reports on information. It also looks at the connections between journeys, taking a holistic view across parallel and sequential journeys.

**Metrics: Measure Customer, Employee, And Business Value**

Many CX pros still struggle to prove the value or benefits of journey-centricity, which risks alienating supporters and reducing the likelihood of gaining support for future efforts. Nissan has been using a set of key performance indicators to measure the progress of its transformation. To ensure it is using measurement to drive business decisions, Nissan:

- › **Built journey measurement frameworks collaboratively in cross-functional workshops.** Cross-functional workshops helped the CX team select the right metrics for each journey and function, giving it a sense of which KPIs matter to different stakeholders, like those in sales, marketing, and finance. Finance teams helped articulate journey improvements in terms of a cost and benefit analysis. “You have to have the CFO be an advocate for this. Unless the finance arm understands the value of CX, there will always be this view that CX is fluffy and blue sky,” said Madhu Nutakki. The ultimate overall metric is sales, but the CX team also assigns every journey business metrics (views, conversion, and abandonment), operational metrics, and descriptive metrics that capture friction and flow.
- › **Continuously looks for opportunities to evolve metrics and link to ROI.** Journeys are made up of moments, and moments define projects and have metrics associated to them. Nissan is getting more granular in its metrics and evolving its data models to get better at quantifying the value of CX in terms of hard dollars. The goal is to use the data to link CX to the bottom line so Nissan can look at the revenue of each car and allocate portions of that revenue to the quality of the experience.

**Case Study: Nissan Transforms CX And EX Through Seven Customer Journeys**

How Nissan Embraced A Journey-Centric Operating Model To Deliver Customer Value And Business Growth

“We have moved away from lonely KPIs to journey success measures that roll up to the overall contribution from online to sales, going beyond just the ups and downs in the online journey,” said Dév Rishi Sahani.

**Processes: Take The Time To Influence The Ways People Work And Make Decisions**

To fuse journey data, tools, and methods across the ecosystem to extend journey influence within, Nissan:

- › **Factored in the time to roadshow the journey structure and research.** Defining the seven journeys took many iterations. Nissan used war rooms covered with thousands of sticky notes to walk stakeholders through the experience. It made sure to roadshow the results of the journey research over a period of seven to 10 months in every region. Nissan presented the high-level journeys, underlying artifacts, and insights. The global CX team was laser-focused on embedding the customer journey information architecture and language deep into the organization. This phase is very important to shift the language to focus on customer-centric behaviors.
- › **Mapped out regional differences but created a unified roadmap.** Nissan uses a universal journey view (a global description of the journey). The company spent a lot of time segmenting markets to make sure it understood the operational realities and limitations of each.<sup>13</sup> It held seven regional mini summits to define CX priorities and ran workshops across regions to present the universal journey. It then collaborated with a cross-functional group to break the journeys down and add regional specificity. Running the workshops helped Nissan rally people around the framework globally. But it also put in place several rituals, such as weekly review sessions and stand-up meetings, to keep the journeys in sync and journey managers working together. A unified roadmap for all seven journeys, which is coordinated across markets, keeps the CX roadmap aligned.
- › **Intertwined journey and product expertise.** Nissan has paired journey managers with product managers — the journey manager helps prioritize features based on journey insights, and the product manager converts those initial ideas from a short brief to a clearly defined product. The journey manager owns the horizontal; the product manager owns the feature. This form of collaboration links deep product expertise with a more strategic and customer-centric expertise and frees up the journey manager to continue to take an end-to-end perspective on the journey without getting lost in the details.
- › **Allocated budget across markets.** Nissan is a complex matrix organization with a global budget for CX. Japan, China, and the US, the top three regions in terms of sales, all mirror Nissan’s journey structure. “Never budget a CX transformation as a one-off project. Put a good budget at the center, and make sure it is multiyear,” said Roel de Vries.

**Case Study: Nissan Transforms CX And EX Through Seven Customer Journeys**

How Nissan Embraced A Journey-Centric Operating Model To Deliver Customer Value And Business Growth

**Technology: Build For Flexibility And Agility**

To get the most out of technology, firms need to engage stakeholders with it early in a hands-on way. Technology was an important building block and catalyst for Nissan's transformation. Nissan made sure it:

- › **Worked to get its technology house in order.** Nissan focused on integrating content management systems, vehicle data, the dealer data product, dealer inventory, offer information, finance information, leads, test drives, reservations, and e-commerce (3,000-plus integrations across 100-plus countries) into a single technology layer. "This sequence of technology first was not entirely intentional, but it had the benefit of allowing us to deliver the CX vision faster than would have been possible if that work had not been done," said Spencer Bookatz, Nissan delivery lead at Publicis Sapient. "It was not all by design, but the fact that we connected all the plumbing all around the world allowed us to be faster, much more directed and targeted."
- › **Leveraged collaboration, design, and content sharing tools to build communities.** Nissan uses Slack to communicate with the CX community at large as well as within and between journey teams through Slack subcommunities. It has also made other tools available to journey teams. These include Miro boards, to capture experience maps; design tools, for brainstorming, ideation, and prototyping; and Box, to create a repository of sharable content and artifacts. It did not get bogged down looking for the perfect tools but focused on using anything that could foster collaboration and add efficiencies.
- › **Took a data-first approach without falling into data paralysis.** Nissan started connecting data using Adobe and Google Analytics and, in parallel, built a central data lake. "The danger is that people start thinking they need big data, 360 customer data, but what you need is an agile data infrastructure that allows you to merge and slice data and, in parallel, build a data lake; they are two distinct things with overlaps and connection points," said Madhu Nutakki. Nissan developed its data science and journey analytics skills, creating a CX data, analytics, and reporting team. The team includes data scientists who understand journeys and UX specialists who understand the experience. Journey dashboards socialize journey metrics and keep them top of mind. "The dashboards are essential vital signs; it's important that stakeholders see the health of the experience going up and down," said Nutakki.

**Results: Nissan's Ongoing Transformation Is Delivering**

The transformation is ongoing — it is not a one and done — but it has already delivered some promising results, including:

- › **New and improved digital offerings and higher customer retention and vehicle value.** Nissan's worldwide presales site traffic increased by 40% year on year to 600 million visitors, with 40% of all traffic from return visitors. It established e-commerce pilots in China, India, the US, Brazil, Mexico, and France and a voice-of-the-customer program in 13 markets to manage issues faster. Dealer

**Case Study: Nissan Transforms CX And EX Through Seven Customer Journeys**

How Nissan Embraced A Journey-Centric Operating Model To Deliver Customer Value And Business Growth

enhancements are ongoing, and 45,000 dealer staff have been trained as part of the Nissan CX program. Nissan has industry-leading market penetration rates across major markets (US: 60%; Mexico: 48%; Canada: 70%). In the US, 80% of customers who get service are two times more likely to repurchase with Nissan. The average value of a Nissan vehicle has increased by hundreds of euros.

- › **More visibility into the end-to-end journey and customer retention.** Customer retention is Nissan's key long-term focus. In the past, it had little visibility into how many people started a journey. Nissan knew how many people saw advertising, viewed web pages, and clicked on emails, but it lost sight of what happened next. For instance, if a customer configures a car, do they follow through and go to the dealer? Nissan's data-first approach shows the end-to-end journey through retention and repurchase. "This focus is enabling us to transform from a transactional company with limited data into a customer- and data-driven company with an ongoing connection with the customer — more like a subscription model. We can now measure all of that," said Roel de Vries. Nissan can continuously identify opportunities to reduce abandonment and increase conversion and engagement.
- › **A data-driven experimentation culture and more dealer contacts.** As part of its transformation, Nissan created a culture of continuous test-and-learn across all top Nissan markets. It completed more than 100 journey experiments with more than 50 contributors worldwide and had a two in three success rate. These experiments have led to tangible business results. Examples include a 386% increase in online reservations in Mexico, an 86% increase in car configurations in the UK, and a 28% increase in test drives in Japan. These improvements have also resulted in regional accomplishments, including Nissan becoming the number one Asian brand after gaining five ranks in the Psyma automotive ranking.
- › **Employee engagement and the connection between CX and EX.**<sup>14</sup> "First of all, many employees were skeptical about working on the transformation and in CX; now we have hundreds of people directly focused on customer journeys, and they really enjoy working in a cross-functional way and are motivated," said Roel de Vries.

## Next Steps: New Operating Model Is Business As Usual

For Nissan, the transformation is ongoing and never-ending. The vision is clear and deeply shared, and the company has integrated less than half of all journey moments. Journey projects are in place and have a clear visibility and roadmap, but there is still more to do. Nissan will be focusing on:

- › **Tracking the progress of markets against a journey maturity ladder.** To progress from the current state to an ideal state that is the industry benchmark, Nissan created a maturity staircase for each journey. The maturity staircase includes a starting point as well as a basic, growth, and mature phase and describes what the customer can do at each stage. For the car financing journey, the maturity staircase starts with paper-based financing. It then moves from online loan

**Case Study: Nissan Transforms CX And EX Through Seven Customer Journeys**

How Nissan Embraced A Journey-Centric Operating Model To Deliver Customer Value And Business Growth

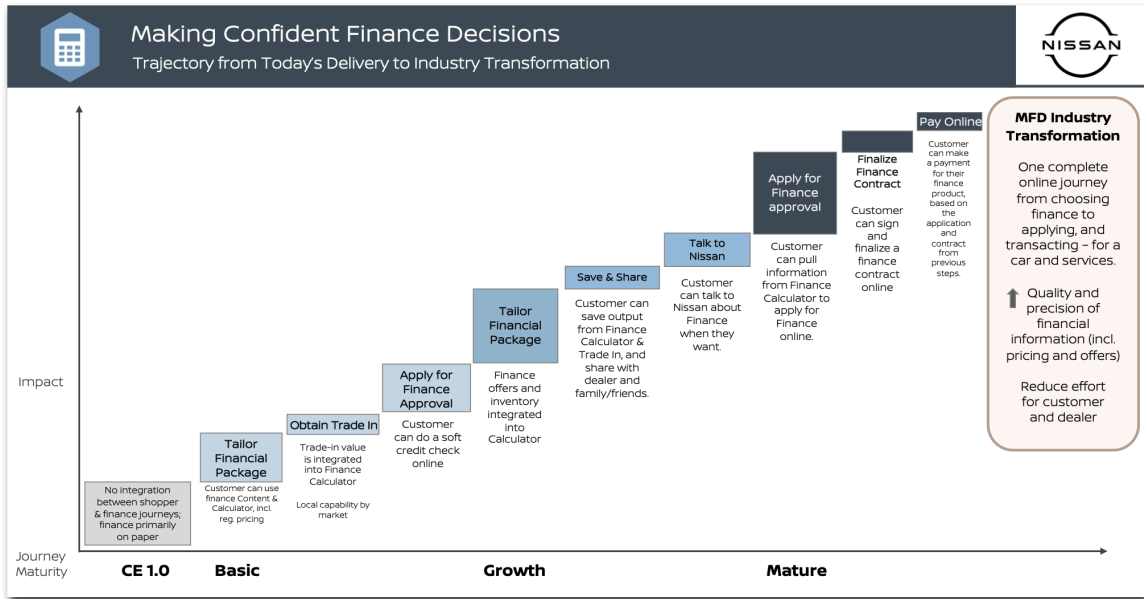
calculators and credit checks to an end state that seamlessly integrates all the previous steps into the final payment (see Figure 5 and see Figure 6). Journey staircases create clarity about progression and help Nissan progressively increase CX maturity in the different markets as well as evolve KPIs. Nissan has a consolidated roadmap for all journeys across maturity levels in the seven journey staircases.

- › **Tackling increasingly complex cross-functional and cross-channel problems.** Nissan will continue to go beyond the low-hanging fruit to solve stickier challenges like car financing and handoffs from online to offline. “Across the organization, there is a much better understanding of the impact of digital, but the ultimate goal is to optimize the entire journey, also based on that last-mile impact. In the first half of the current financial year, online shoppers contributed to 11.5% of our total sales in the top four markets, which has solidified the impact but also made a clear case for understanding the contribution from each journey toward operational outcomes,” said Sahani. Nissan has started integrating more finance capabilities into the shopping experience. It has also been working with R&D and engineering to connect the online experience (including the connected car experience) and the offline (dealer) experience. “We have been able to move on these big, tricky challenges that require an intense level of partnership — the biggest reward is making a difference in those projects which are complex but ultimately benefit the customer and business,” according to Lavigne.
- › **Building business resiliency through better crisis preparedness and recovery.** Having the journey framework and supporting data has helped Nissan see the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on customer behavior. Nissan has been able to translate insight about customer behavior (e.g., preferences for transmission types, like automatic versus manual) into the supply chain and vehicle production to adapt in the moment. Data helps Nissan identify problems with suppliers of parts like leather seats. The CX transformation program and the Nissan CX platform will continue to inform the executive team on how customers are reacting to the pandemic, helping Nissan adjust product backlogs and prioritize customer and dealer experience improvements.<sup>15</sup>
- › **Reevaluating journey depth and breadth.** While the seven journeys represent a good cut-through of the purchasing cycle, Nissan will reevaluate them. What is mature today will not be mature two to three years from now. Nissan will refresh the journeys every three years but also look to add new journeys.

### Case Study: Nissan Transforms CX And EX Through Seven Customer Journeys

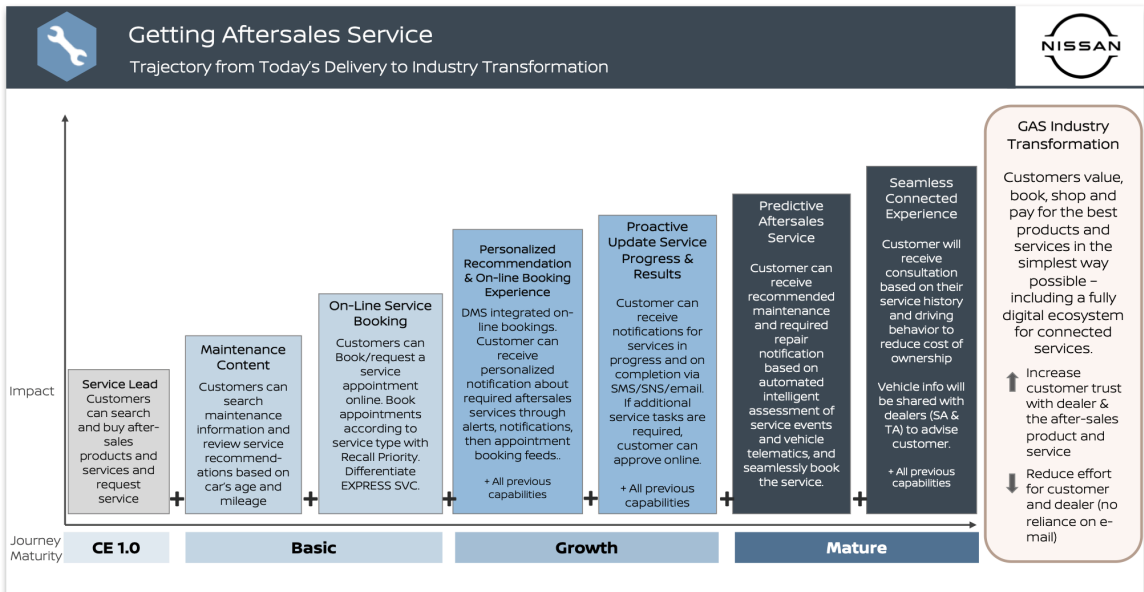
How Nissan Embraced A Journey-Centric Operating Model To Deliver Customer Value And Business Growth

**FIGURE 5** Nissan's Journey Maturity Staircase For Making Confident Finance Decisions



Source: Nissan

**FIGURE 6** Nissan's Journey Maturity Staircase For Getting After-Sales Service



Source: Nissan



**Case Study: Nissan Transforms CX And EX Through Seven Customer Journeys**

How Nissan Embraced A Journey-Centric Operating Model To Deliver Customer Value And Business Growth

**Recommendations**

## Place CX Transformation At The Heart Of Business Strategy

The scope and budget of the transformation at Nissan may seem overwhelming. However, the company's experience demonstrates that large and complex organizations can use journey-centricity to achieve their vision of delivering value to customers faster. CX pros should:

- › **Shake things up by hiring a cross-industry leader.** It is very difficult to transform the environment that you have been in for years. Madhu Nutakki came from the outside and brought a different type of leadership to Nissan. You need someone to recognize the need for change and be the catalyst. “In year one, we were kind of like the pirates — we were brought in to seed the transformation. But by year three, we had built more of a navy. The biggest win has been this transition from pirates to a navy model,” said Nutakki.
- › **Reframe spend and articulate financial benefits.** Nissan quantified what it was spending on individual websites by marketing teams, hundreds of vehicle apps, CRM systems, advertising tools, ad tech, and marketing technology tools. According to Roel de Vries: “In many countries and for many years, every time we hit an obstacle, something local was developed as a quick fix. That’s the reason for the complexity — it was like a spaghetti junction; nobody knew what was connected to what. It was costing us a fortune, and there was no clear vision or strategy about how we wanted to engage with our consumers.” Rather than thinking about the transformation as “incremental spend,” Nissan viewed it as an opportunity to redirect inefficient spending to improve CX.
- › **Budget a CX transformation as more than a one-off project.** According to de Vries: “Never budget a CX transformation as a one-off project. Put a good budget at the center, and make sure it is multiyear. If you look at our marketing budget, the money is not the problem, and the returns are so enormous if you get it right. The tricky part is to get the projects going, the engine moving, find the resources and identification of the right things to do, and the sequence to do them in. People often say, ‘We do not have the money,’ but the money is not the biggest problem. Having a clear vision, strategy, skills, and capacity and people to do it is.”
- › **Use a Trojan horse to create a catalyst and appetite for change.** Nissan essentially used a technology upgrade as a catalyst for a broader CX transformation. The transformation started as a technology consolidation project to build a global digital marketing platform (primarily from a cost-saving perspective). “Sometimes you need a Trojan horse that shows people results and builds a belief and willingness to change — you need to demonstrate change is possible,” said Spencer Bookatz. Later, the CX team leveraged its global platform as a conduit to broader change. Once it built the platform, it was able to change the CX in a more rapid, agile manner.

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- › **Make CX everyone’s responsibility and accept change is a constant.** “First thing we wanted to do was not make CX just the responsibility of the CX team. We could only move forward if we combined CX skills and functional expertise — brought the world of functions into CX rather than the other way,” said Stephen Ryden-Lloyd. A CX transformation of this scale involves the whole organization. You can’t always predict what will happen, and you will discover things you didn’t expect. The education never ends, people leave and join the company, and it takes time to reach the whole organization. Nissan is still explaining what CX is to some parts of the organization — that it’s a process, not a goal.
  
- › **Cut through the CX bandwagon noise and select the right partner.** “It wasn’t easy in the beginning. What became very clear is that everyone wants to help but also sell something. Consultancies want to help strategy and vision; agencies want to sell products; consultancies want to project-manage. There are so many players,” said de Vries. Nissan worked with external partners to kick-start visioning and strategy but quickly moved that capability in-house. It worked closely with Publicis Sapient throughout the transformation, from strategy to delivery and implementation, leveraging a deep integration with the Publicis Sapient team as well as solutions from Adobe and Salesforce.

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## Supplemental Material

### Companies Interviewed For This Report

We would like to thank the individuals from the following companies who generously gave their time during the research for this report.

Nissan

Publicis Sapient

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Source: "Global Sales Results," Nissan (<https://www.nissan-global.com/EN/IR/INDIVIDUAL/GLOBALSALES/#NI-overall01>).

<sup>2</sup> "Every time we hit an obstacle, something local was developed as a quick fix. We had old platforms with high maintenance costs, bills from local agencies. It was like a spaghetti junction. We didn't know what was connected to what, how it was connected, and it was costing a fortune," according to Roel de Vries, former global head of marketing at Nissan.

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- <sup>3</sup> Nissan delivered a global platform for accelerating CX that connected seven customer journeys to its market and business operations (including publishing new cars and models, managing imagery and videos, generating leads and test drives, updating prices and offers, and managing inventory and the dealer ecosystem).
- <sup>4</sup> Each of the seven journeys represents a key action that customers take when interacting with Nissan. Whether customers are booking a test drive, receiving help when making financial decisions, or choosing their dream vehicle, each journey helps them meet a specific goal. Ultimately, this needs to be one integrated journey.
- <sup>5</sup> Shopping through e-commerce differs slightly from the other six journeys, as it is a foundational journey with supporting journey moments spread throughout the other six journeys.
- <sup>6</sup> See the Forrester report “[Journey Centricity: Learn From The Leaders.](#)”
- <sup>7</sup> In Japanese business, nemawashi means building a consensus using one-on-one discussion with each member of a decision-making group. It is usually conducted prior to a formal meeting with individuals or small subsets of the participants. This provides an opportunity to introduce the proposal to them and gauge their reaction, allows for more frank discussion, and is a good chance to hear their input. High-ranking people in Japan expect to be let in on new proposals prior to an official meeting. If they find out about something for the first time during the meeting, they will feel that they have been ignored, and they may reject it for that reason alone.
- <sup>8</sup> The seven journey managers are responsible for setting the roadmap for their journey and own the success of the journey.
- <sup>9</sup> Participants selected figurines that express the emotions that best represent how they feel during a moment and told stories about what was going on during that moment to make them feel that way. Respondents were then asked to rank a list of predetermined pain points from smallest to biggest. Each of these pain points — as well as new ones identified through emotive elicitation — were associated to a core moment.
- <sup>10</sup> Nissan spent the first year socializing and evangelizing the journey framework, explaining the rationale, and bringing to life the key moments and pain points, over time making the model more tangible and translating it into a roadmap of initiatives.
- <sup>11</sup> The global CX team includes a function called market and business engagement. It is responsible for liaising directly with CX teams in each of the major markets and regions to share knowledge and deliver global direction in all the markets.
- <sup>12</sup> Even though each journey has a deputy journey manager, a capability owner, UX specialists, research and insight specialists, and data specialists, Nissan realized the journey teams were struggling to provide enough structure.
- <sup>13</sup> For instance, smaller markets were on board with the idea of change but could not deliver. One team was trying to work on a real-time test-drive experience for the customer with the journey team in Thailand, but the systems could not handle the change, wasting a lot of time and energy. Nissan realized it needed to be smarter about where it piloted and implemented changes based on market reach, readiness to change, brand recognition, and operational capabilities. You need to focus on where you can make the most difference and have the most chance of success.
- <sup>14</sup> EX: employee experience.
- <sup>15</sup> These five macro shifts will alter business and technology forever: 1) Customer expectations will shift on the spectrum of safety and convenience; 2) businesses will use digital engagement to create hybrid experiences; 3) firms and governments will invest in the once-impossible to drive the future of work; 4) smart firms will retire technical debt fast and then ride the tech disruption wave; and 5) business resiliency will become a competitive advantage. See the Forrester report “[The New, Unstable Normal: How COVID-19 Will Change Business And Technology Forever.](#)”

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