



The customer journey

These days centres need to put a major effort into staying ahead of the competition by understanding who their customers are and what's important to them, writes Peter King, Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre CEO.

At the Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre (MCEC) that has meant a specific initiative focusing on the customer journey that we undertook two years ago. It was a game changer for us, and a project that has generated great interest amongst other venues around the world. In fact, it is a piece of work that provides insights that impact all customer-facing businesses.

MCEC had built a thorough three year plan encompassing all parts of our business, resulting in a detailed series of goals, objectives and delivery strategies designed to help MCEC remain ahead of its competition. This is nothing different from what most businesses do these days. However, in our view, one critical element was missing, MCEC's customers. We were historically operationally focused and prescriptive in the way we interacted with our stakeholders.

This needed to change. We felt we

needed to become completely customer centric, with the needs and expectations of our customers driving every decision we made. This proved to be the most important decision we have made and has transformed our entire business, our relationships, our understanding and our structure, including even our event delivery model.

The Customer Journey project had a very clear scope and sequence, which was to accurately define our key customers; outline their needs, desires and influences with respect to events; map how they currently make decisions and interact with MCEC; and use those maps to identify clear opportunities to improve the customer experience.

Ultimately, we wanted to deconstruct our customers and their needs with precision, so we could determine the best way of satisfying their requirements. As a result of our findings, we reorganised our structure

to ensure we provided assistance and support to customers at critical times in their particular journey with us. Our team has received constant positive feedback since this change, and we know that they now feel more empowered to provide immediate outcomes that satisfy our customers. Across the business, our post event survey results are at the highest levels we have ever seen.

Of course, the customer journey project is an ongoing one. We recently announced the launch of our customer portal, myMCEC, which aims to ensure customers continue to find it easy to do business with MCEC. We are also soon to begin stage two of our customer journey understanding, as we all know our customer and visitor expectations are evolving very quickly. We have to reset our teams, continue to challenge them and improve our delivery performance every year. 