## 18 Ways to Better Understand Your Customers

Go beyond your employee mindset and adopt a customer mindset. Use the 18 ideas below—organized into basic, intermediate and advanced methods—to build understanding and empathy for your customers.

### Basic
- **Analyze feedback on comment cards.**
  - Form-analyzing customer reviews, what an organization can learn about its products or services, and what users think of its products or services.

### Basic
- **Review customer qualitative data.**
  - Examine rating/review questions on survey, product analytics, web profiles, cell phone, performance metrics, etc.

### Basic
- **Basic**
  - **Talk to a customer-facing employee about customers.**
    - What are the most common customer complaints, feedback about your product, or improvement ideas?
  - **Have a one-way conversation with a customer.**
    - Do you need to talk to your customer? Listen to customer calls — live, recorded, or transcribed — and review live chat sessions.
  - **Review customer qualitative data.**
    - Assess what customers are saying or writing. Review free responses in surveys or social media comments.

### Intermediate
- **Intermediate**
  - **Study underserved and noncustomers.**
    - What prevents them from becoming customers? Why does your organization not engage with them? What do they use instead?
  - **Have a two-way conversation with a customer.**
    - When was the last time you spoke to a customer? If the answer is “never” or more than 30 days ago, it’s time.
  - **“Be a customer” for your competitors’ products.**
    - Go through your competitors’ customer journeys to explore why customers might choose you or them.

### Intermediate
- **Intermediate**
  - **“Be a customer” for your competitors’ products.**
    - Buy, use and obtain service for your product — ideally incognito as a “mystery shopper.”
  - **“Be a customer” for your competitors’ products.**
    - Go through your competitors’ customer journeys to explore why customers might choose you or them.
  - **Observe your customer using your product (“Go and See”).**
    - Where do they struggle or get frustrated? Where are they excited, satisfied or surprised?

### Advanced
- **Advanced**
  - **Run an ethnography study.**
    - Spend time with customers in their real-world environment — “walking a mile in their shoes” to understand motivations and behaviors.
  - **Build a prototype.**
    - A hotel builds a “Go and Do.”
    - Examine feedback on comment cards.
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