



## Putting the customer first

Establishing a customer panel  
at Wellington Water

# Why create a customer panel?

To improve our understanding  
of customer service.

Why does a brand that built a global business on delivering the same thing everywhere, suddenly start selling choice?



Social media. The biggest disruptor in customer service since writing.





## “Customer at the heart” What does it mean?

Starting with the end in mind

Knowing what’s important to the customer at  
each stage of the process

Service outcomes + working with us = customer  
experience





## Why worry about delighting customers when you're the only show in town?

### External factors

- Improves service – give customers what they want
- Improves transparency – show them what we 'll do
- Improves trust – so they'll listen to us
- Strengthens society and the democratic process

### Internal factors

- Business improvement and efficiency
- Service planning – testing our thinking
- Stay ahead of regulation

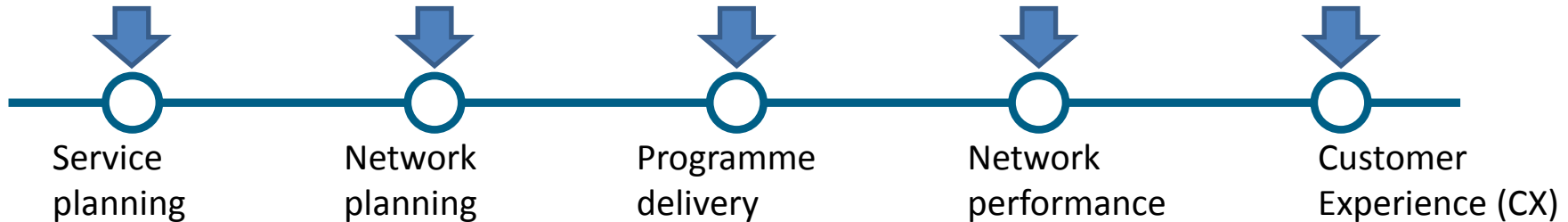




## Why create a customer panel?

Bringing the customer into the business

- Improves engagement with others
- Builds community understanding
- Moves us away from focus on pipes, to focus on people



How we created a panel



Geographic and demographic representation

How we created a panel



Geographic and demographic  
representation

Everyday people



How we created a panel



Geographic and demographic  
representation

Everyday people

Not quite! But didn't want technical  
or issue-based distraction

## How we created a panel

Personal invitation with an incentive

Structured conversations

Behavioural observations

Short-listing

Follow-up confirmation

Procedural issues



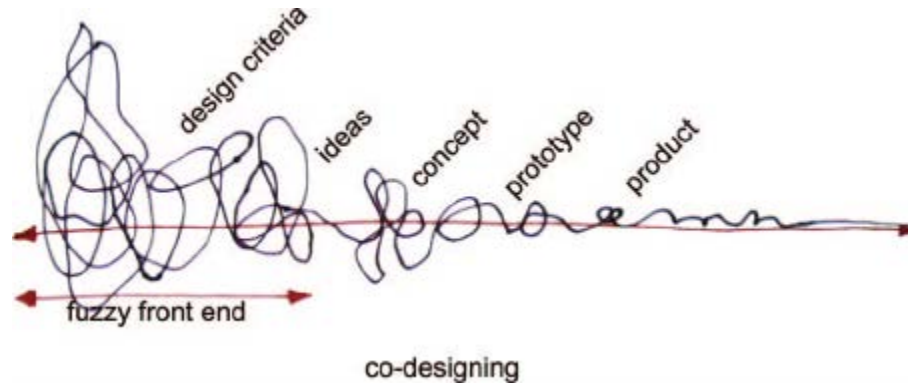
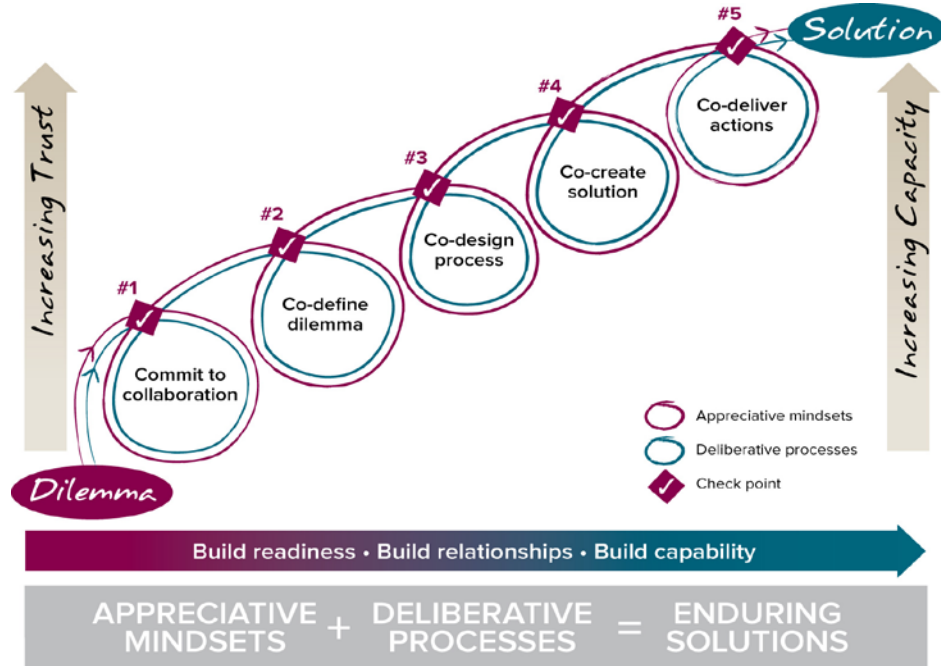
Would they play nicely together?

# Co-creation

Collaborating on an equal footing

Designing the way of working together

As well as the outputs



# Customer Charter

Great Customer Service doesn't just happen – we must create it!

## Outputs

Customer charter

Education priorities

Campaign testing

Ways of working together

Learning:  
Service planning  
Industry issues  
Funding

## Our Values

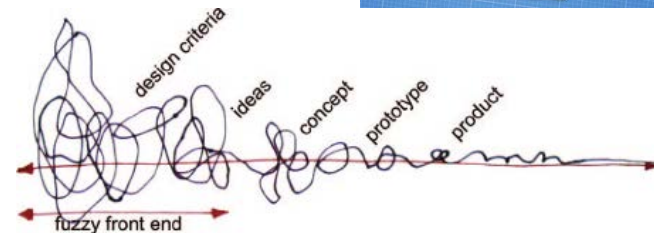
- We want our customers to be happy with the care they receive
- We will give our customers our full attention and listen to them
- We will act with empathy and understanding of communities' needs
- We hold ourselves responsible for our actions and their outcomes
- We build trust by being honest in our dealings with all customers and each other

## Customer Commitment

- We'll make it easy for you to find out what our customer level of service is
- We're here for you every day via phone, email, and Facebook
- You'll receive clear, friendly, straight-forward and honest advice from us
- We'll ensure the services we provide are timely
- Your voice really matters - we'll actively seek your feedback about how well we've done
- If we can't solve the problem, you'll know why and what your choices for next steps are

## Summary

- There are external and internal drivers for improving customer knowledge
- *External*: customers expectations; building trust; regulation and the threat of more;
- *Internal*: business improvement: service delivery and decision-making; reduced cost of re-work/complaints;
- There are a number of ways to improve knowledge: Surveys; feedback; journey mapping and service design;
- Wellington Water's customer panel is an attempt to bring the customer's viewpoint into the business, to help hold the business to account for its service deliver along the value chain



## Next steps

Three stage evolution:

- Explorers
- Advisers
- Advocates



## Integration into company processes

