

Infographic: I Can't Wait! 18 Ideas for Improving the Customer Experience of Waiting

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Initiatives: [CRM Strategy and Customer Experience](#); [CSCO Strategic Leadership](#)

Wait times exist in any customer experience, but addressing them is often viewed as turning something unpleasant into something "less bad." Application leaders must broaden their efforts beyond just trying to reduce wait times, and instead focus on improving the customer experience of the wait.

Addressing Wait Times: Nine Options for Your Organization And Nine Options for Your Customer

Gartner.

I Can't Wait! 18 Ideas for Improving the Customer Experience of Waiting

When customers complain about long waits, organizations often reflexively try to reduce those wait times, but fail to consider how to improve the wait experience.

The examples below pertain to a customer waiting to enter an amusement park, which you can use to generate ideas in your organization (whether it be product or service, B2B, B2C, D2C, government, etc.) to address waiting.

Nine ways organizations can address wait times

Identify and implement the most promising ones.

Nine ways customers can address their own wait times

Determine which you will support versus discourage.



Reduce wait times

Increase staffing and open more lines/gates.



Provide information to set expectations

Provide monitors with estimated wait times (and be conservative with estimates).



Start another customer journey

Enable customers to place their lunch order while waiting in the entrance line.



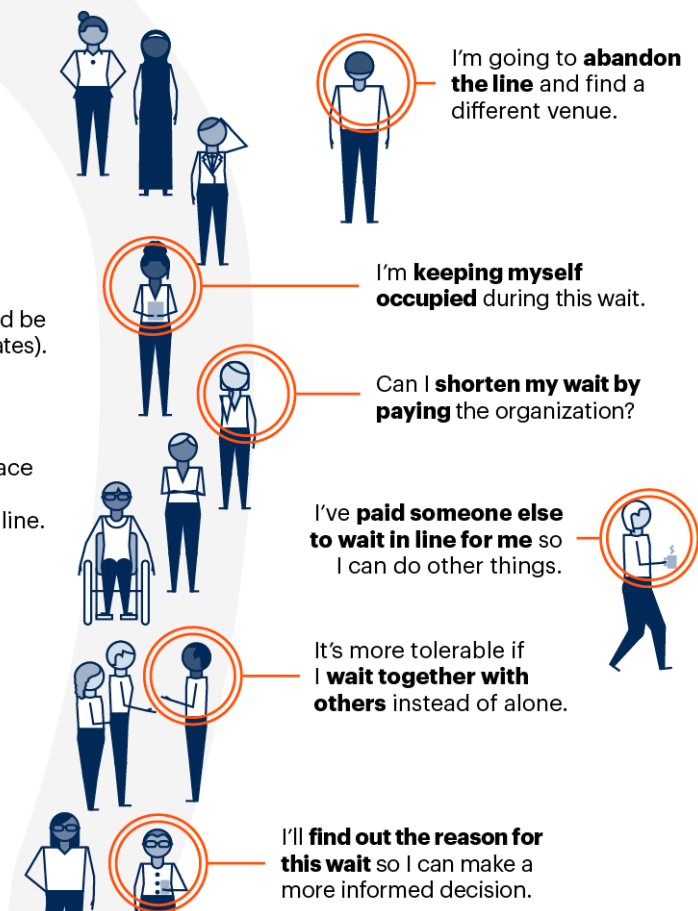
Give the customer control of the wait

Free customers' time by noting their spot in line and sending a text when it's their turn.



Entertain/make the wait more pleasant

Have activities for customers to pass the time more enjoyably.





Show you value customers' time
Eliminate the sight of unoccupied employees.



Show progress
Incorporate a visual akin to a website's "progress bar" showing a task's complete/incomplete rate.

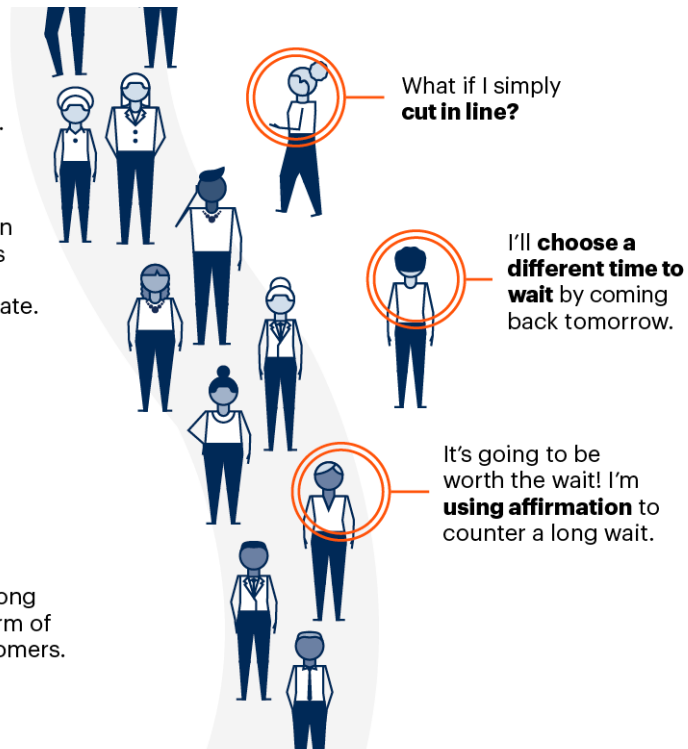


Offer shorter waits to high-value customers
Set up a dedicated line with shorter waits for season ticket holders.



Reward
If there's an unusually long wait, consider some form of compensation for customers.

Source: Gartner



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About This Research

Have you ever noticed how many elevator lobbies have mirrors? By the time you've checked out whether you're looking good today, the elevator has arrived and you didn't notice the wait. The elevator manufacturer didn't need to make turbo-speed elevators to improve the customer experience. Instead, all that was needed was something to make the wait *experience* more pleasant — hence the mirror.

Additionally, wait times need not only be "bad things" that we can only hope to make tolerable. Rather, what your customers go through when they wait can be a strategic asset to your overall customer experience.

Do customer wait times at your organization help or hurt its customer experience? Analyze your key customer journeys and identify where problematic wait times exist for customers. Perhaps these might be where customers have to wait for a long time or, alternatively, where the duration of the wait isn't long but still generates high customer dissatisfaction. Such waits can have negative financial implications: SeeLevel HX's Annual Drive-Thru study shows that an increased wait time of 30 seconds has a significant compound effect for revenue with potential losses per restaurant unit at \$32,091.33 over the course of 12 months (see [Quick Service Must Be Quicker to Retain and Grow Revenue](#) and [2020 SeeLevel HX Annual Drive-Thru Study](#), from SeeLevel HX).

Then, find solutions to your wait times within nine types of treatment options for your organization listed in this infographic, and implement the most promising ones. Further enhance the wait time experience by assessing nine customer responses to wait times as described above — and which you will support versus discourage.

Document Revision History

[The Waiting Game: How to Improve the Customer Experience of Waiting - 4 September 2019](#)

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