

Customer Experience

How can your solution help us improve and amplify the experience of purchasing, using, applying or specifying our products?

Today, less and less products and services are being sold. Clients and consumers want to have memorable shopping experiences, prioritizing the sensations caused when interact with a brand. Therefore, companies today seek to map clients and customers journey, from the purchase decision, until the product is purchased or the service completed.

As a paints & coating company, AkzoNobel operates in several markets, including architecture and decoration, building painting, vehicle refinishes, marine protection, industrial protection, among others.

Due to the diversification of the markets in which we operate, we have different customers, with specific needs, and that is why we are looking for solutions that can address the needs from each journey.

Who our customers are, what their needs are and what we are already offering?

Perhaps those who are not so familiar with the paint & coatings market, may be surprised by the various types of clients and customers we deal with. Therefore, it is important to explore here who they are and what are the main needs we have identified.

Consumer (user-end)

Especially for the decorative paints and vehicle refinishes markets, the consumer is a very important audience, since it is the main decision-maker in several stages of the process and the most interested in the final result.

In decoration, consumers' needs are around the painting process. There are two great opportunities: 1) to position the paint as the first decoration element and not the last in the construction process; 2) to demonstrate that paint not only color but also has the function of protecting surfaces from everyday wear and tear. When done well, the act of painting a wall or a room can represent the cheapest option to decorate the house and when the chosen paint is the correct one for the surface, it can keep the appearance of "brand new" for a longer time.

One of the needs is to have tools that help consumers in **choosing colors**. About 2 out of 3 walls in Brazil are white or neutral, largely due to consumer insecurity in the use of color. Another difficulty for consumers is in **choosing the right product** for each need or surface, since the market offers a wide range of options, with different attributes. On average, Brazilian people paint the residency every 3-4 years. In markets such as UK this happens every 1-2 years. As a result, the process of educating consumers about existing product options becomes more complex.

An important factor in the painting process is the choice of **who will execute it**, whether hiring a painter or doing it yourself. In the first case, when you do not know someone reliable enough to be hired, a barrier is created, and it can lead to cancel the painting process.

The **financial issue** is also present. Considering the long period of time between one painting and another, the consumer may lose the reference of what is the value range practiced by the market, so it is not always in a comfortable position to decide on this. The fact of painting every 3-4 years makes the consumer decides to paint almost all or the entire house, which makes the perception of the total value of the painting (service + product) also high vs an alternative where you would paint annually to renovate one room at a time.

Finally, most people have experienced a house renovation or painting and the first memories are related to mess, dirt, delay in completing the service. The **routine disruption** that the painting process causes in people's lives is really a negative thing, which can also postpone plans or cause them to give up on it. Although many have positive experiences when the final result is completed, the negative side is evident in the memories in most cases.

For the vehicle refinishes market, despite the consumer's experience being closely connected to the chosen bodyshop, there are also similarities in terms of needs. **Color accuracy** is one of the first factors when looking for a car repair. This is also related to the service provided by the bodyshop, that means **who performs the service**. The financial issue is also present, and many times the consumer has doubts about the **real value** for this. Finally, the car repair process also causes a **routine disruption**, since most people in Brazil who own a car, use it daily, in many cases.

Thinking about the consumers' needs, AkzoNobel already has initiatives such as:

- Tools to promote the use of colors in decoration, such as Roller Tester
- Digital color tools, such as Visualizer for consumers and Mixit for bodyshops
- Páginas Coloridas, a portal that connects painters and people looking for services
- Projects in partnership with architects, as sponsored by Casa Cor

Painter

It is not possible to talk about paints and coatings without mentioning the importance of the painter's role. The quality of the final painting result requires not only the best product considering the customer's needs, but also its application, whether in homes, buildings, automobiles, industry or large buildings.

In general, painters and applicators have similar needs. As most of them provide services autonomously, issues related to the **professionalization** of work are challenging, such as staying active and "with a full schedule", in addition to **training**.

Also due to the lack of formal training in the profession, the painter seeks ways **to be and to appear professional** to the customer, whether at home or in the bodyshop. This adds value to the work and can guarantee a larger client portfolio.

Questions related to their **safety and health** also appear as priorities. Paints and coatings are products with chemical components and ensuring the use of safety equipment is essential to protect applicators, as well as issues of ergonomics and physical preparation and their long-term consequences.

AkzoNobel has several training programs for residential service painters – such as Coral Academy, an online painting training platform – and for car bodyshops, in which the above issues are addressed.

Specifier

A very important role in the painting process is the specifier, be it an architect, interior designer, colorist in car bodyshops or any other professional part of the painting journey. This role has the main function of ensuring that the final result **meets the expectations** of the final consumer, so that he is satisfied.

So, it is important that the specifier knows how to choose the **ideal product** for each type of work, considering the wide range of options. **Color** also appears as a necessity. In decoration, there are still few professionals who feel safe in suggesting projects with walls with color paint. In the automotive area, this appears as color accuracy, that is, how to select the right color the first time in the process. Therefore, more and more tools are appearing to help professionals to feel safer and use more color or guarantee its accuracy.

AkzoNobel has several business portals, with technical information available to guide professionals in the best choice of products. It also offers the opportunity for professionals to acquire tools that help them choose colors, such as color pallets, colorimeters, apps, and also the roller tester.

Direct client

AkzoNobel has a network of distributors and customers to make its products available in all of the thousands of points of sale in the country. Therefore, looking at the needs of the stores is also part of what we consider as **shopping experience**, not only directly in a physical store, but also by phone, online, in addition to post-sales service.

For this, store owners have a number of tools and they need to manage their resources very well. The industry offers a series of **incentives for retailers**, but it is important that the store knows how to manage them. **Pricing** is also an important factor, as it is the key to covering point-of-sale costs, have profitability and maximizing return. Here is also the point of product mix and how much the store invests or is able to maximize the sale of products with **higher added value**.

Thinking about the structure of the stores, the question of **labor** appears as a great need, whether to find professionals, train them or retain them.



AkzoNobel's commercial teams work directly with customers and distributors of their products. We offer tools and systems in order to support them in many of the needs identified here.

What we are looking for in your solution

- We are looking for solutions that help us address the main needs of our customers.
- Your solution cannot be just an idea: it needs to present a clear proof of concept that it is ready to be developed for this purpose.

Be sure to also think about possible needs that customers do not even know about it yet! Your idea should help us to go beyond limits and expectations - let's explore it together!

Do you have the solution?

With your support, we want to improve the painting journey of several of our customers and consumers, offering better solutions and addressing their needs in the process.

Share your solution now! If you think your idea will help us answer the challenge question, click on the "submit" button. We will reply to all contacts and look forward to collaborating together!

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Do not forget to add this data to your calendar:

- April 28, 2020: Registration closes
- May 22, 2020: You will receive feedback and will be notified if your submission has been selected for the final event!

Thank you for your time and effort. Feel free to browse other environments and participate in discussions.