7 CUSTOMER ONBOARDING STRATEGIES THAT DRIVE EFFICIENCY


G GUIDE^{CX}

Why Is Efficiency So Important?

When you think about the processes in your company, what are the goals that come to mind? You want internal procedures to be effective, of course, and to be financially sound. But how often do you evaluate your company's processes and workflows for **efficiency**? And when it comes to your customer-facing processes, such as onboarding or implementation, are you prioritizing efficiency there?

In many companies, efficiency is an often-overlooked metric. It shows up in mission statements and performance evaluations, but it's not evaluated or prioritized as frequently as other metrics relating to revenue, growth, and customer satisfaction. However, efficiency plays an essential role, and it can significantly impact your company's profitability, your team's morale, and your customers' experience.

Statistics show an organization's internal inefficiencies can cost as much as **30% of annual revenue**. And inefficient processes are costly in terms of time as well; employees spend up to 26% of their days on tasks that are unnecessary or could be automated.
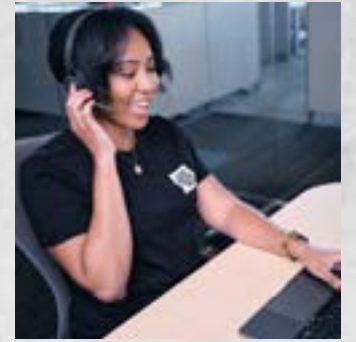
Internal inefficiencies can have external consequences. If your **organization's** procedures are slow and overly complex, your team won't be able to serve your customers well. Furthermore, your organization's processes often directly influence your customer's workflows. If you can't deliver your products or services quickly, it wastes your customer's time and impacts their productivity and profitability.

Customers who become frustrated with inefficient processes are likely to leave; if you want to reduce customer churn, you must identify and address inefficiencies in your internal and customer-facing processes. Likewise, it's crucial to proactively increase efficiency whenever possible; doing so will have a positive impact on your employee satisfaction, capacity, and bottom line.

In short, efficiency matters; it affects profitability, productivity, customer satisfaction, and retention.

What Does Efficiency Mean?

The first step to increasing efficiency is identifying exactly what it means. An efficient organization can use minimal resources to produce maximum goods, services, and results. Improving efficiency often involves removing unnecessary tasks, money, and materials without compromising the quality of the work or deliverables.
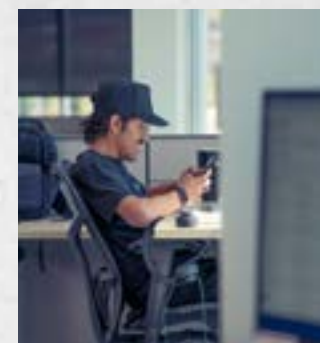
EFFICIENCY STARTS DURING CUSTOMER ONBOARDING

While it's crucial to improve efficiency across every aspect of your organization, the best place to start is with your customer onboarding process. When your company's internal inefficiencies affect your customers' productivity and profitability, your clients aren't likely to stick with you. Inefficiency frequency contributes to **customer churn**, which can happen early in the provider/client relationship — sometimes even during the onboarding process.

An inefficient onboarding process slows down your customers and prevents them from seeing the return on their investment sooner. They may spend weeks or months slogging through confusing procedures and ineffective training courses, all the while wondering when they'll actually be able to fully integrate your products into their workflows. And the longer it takes for them to complete implementation, the more frustrated your customers become — and the less likely they are to remain loyal to your brand.

However, an inefficient onboarding process doesn't just affect your customers. It can negatively impact your company's profitability as well. The longer it takes to transition from sales handoff to go live, the more time your company must wait to start seeing full revenue from the customer (especially in subscription-based industries such as SaaS). Additionally, a complex, drawn-out onboarding process reduces internal productivity and limits capacity. Your implementation team won't have the bandwidth to take on more clients simultaneously, reducing revenue even further.

The solution is clear: Start by developing an efficient onboarding process. Doing so will allow you to serve your customers better, giving them an outstanding experience from day one. So let's look at some customer onboarding strategies that can increase efficiency for your organization and your customers.

Customer Onboarding Strategies That Drive Efficiency

1. Create a Good First Impression to Increase Retention
2. Reduce Onboarding Time to Lessen Time-to-Value
3. Expand Capacity to Serve More Clients
4. Maintain Transparent Communication
5. Leverage Automation to Save Time
6. Eliminate Implementation Roadblocks
7. Analyze and Improve the Onboarding Process

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1: Create a Good First Impression to Increase Retention

Retention is crucial in any industry, and customer service is the foundation of loyalty. Clients aren't going to stay with a provider that doesn't prioritize their success and their overall experience.

In fact, **59% of customers** say they would leave a company after several unsatisfactory experiences, and nearly one-third (32%) would leave after a single bad experience. Your customer's experience with your organization starts on the first day of implementation, so it's easy to see why it's essential to optimize customer onboarding.

Developing an effective, positive onboarding experience helps ensure long-term retention, which is itself a measure of efficiency. It costs **5 to 25 times** more to acquire a new customer than to retain an existing customer, so reducing churn increases efficiency by minimizing resource expenditure.

What's the key to a successful onboarding process? Understanding your customers and finding ways to **support their success**. Instead of focusing on the generic benefits of your product or service, identify your customer's unique pain points and showcase the solutions you provide.

One of the best ways to truly support your customers is to walk through the onboarding process from their point of view. See how it feels to view the experience from the outside, and when you find places that are confusing, inefficient, or needlessly complex, fix them. Spend the time to listen to your customers and treat their goals and challenges as your own. By doing so, you'll help your customers feel understood and supported.

Once you've made that initial impression as an organization that truly cares about its customers, continue earning your clients' trust by guiding them through a clear, streamlined onboarding experience.

"Simplicity and clarity are what we need for our customer base. GUIDEcx is an intuitive, point-and-click PM tool that's robust and sophisticated. We introduce our customers to GUIDEcx immediately after we set up the project."

- Mike Shea, Director of Professional Services, ShipHawk

#2: Reduce Onboarding Time to Lessen Time-to-Value

Onboarding can be a frustrating time for the customer. They've invested time and money in your product, but they have to wait until it's fully implemented before they see a full return on that investment. Depending on the customer's business model, a long onboarding process may also reduce their revenue because they can't serve their customers as well.

In general, the longer it takes for your customer to see a return on their investment (and gain the benefits of your product in their own workflows), the more likely it is that your customer will become dissatisfied and leave.

Time-to-value measures the journey between the start of onboarding and the moment when the customer sees the return on their investment. The equation to measure TTV is straightforward:

$$\text{TIME TO VALUE} = \text{ONBOARDING START DATE} + \text{DATE OF ACHIEVED VALUE}$$

How do you shorten TTV? Optimize your onboarding process. Eliminate unnecessary or repetitive tasks and reduce manual labor by automating. Streamline the process so it's easy for everyone, including your customers, to follow.

A dedicated onboarding platform can significantly improve your task management efficiency. GUIDEcx uses real-time forecasting and automates task management, so your team members don't have to send reminders and updates manually. Plus, it's easy to set up dependencies, so everyone understands how their responsibilities affect the project as a whole.

Accelerating customer onboarding and reducing TTV helps you gain your customers' trust and also benefits your organization. The faster you can fully implement your product to each customer, the sooner you can begin onboarding more customers, increasing your revenue and growth potential. A short TTV allows your customer success team to be more efficient, onboarding more clients in less time.

"If a client takes two months longer to go live, that's 60 days' worth of patients they missed getting quality measures on. This affects their reimbursements from the payers/insurance, leaving revenue on the table the longer it takes...GUIDEcx is where the work happens."

- Ann Mooney, Former Head of Implementation, Epion Health

See how GUIDEcx helped Epion reduce onboarding time by 60 days

#3: Expand Capacity to Serve More Clients

Reducing the overall time it takes to onboard new customers frees your team up to bring on more clients in a given amount of time. By definition, that's an increase in efficiency, as it involves doing more with fewer resources.

How can you streamline onboarding to expand your teams' capacity? Start by identifying any cumbersome or outdated processes and updating them. Then, consider implementing a Gantt chart to better understand task dependencies.

Finally, choose an onboarding platform that helps you manage resources and capacity. GUIDEcx includes a resource management function that allows you to keep track of team members and see which ones are over- or under-utilized. Having this level of insight into your team allows you to accurately forecast completion dates and ensure that work is distributed evenly.

Learn how GUIDEcx helped Catchafire triple capacity

"GUIDEcx has really created a strong foundation for us in terms of how we optimize and scale as we grow on different layers."

= Emma Schrager, Senior Manager of Implementation and Program Operations, Catchafire

#4: Maintain Transparent Communication

One of the biggest contributors to onboarding delays is a lack of communication and customer engagement. Inconsistent updates and convoluted processes leave customers feeling confused and frustrated. And if they constantly have to reach out to your customer implementation team to request status updates or clarify responsibilities, your employees lose valuable time. Poor communication causes delays.

Transparency is also essential to an efficient process, as shown by these two examples:

- **Time Tracking:** A transparent project management system allows you to track how your team spends its time. This information offers a clear understanding of bandwidth, allowing you to reallocate resources when needed and uncover unrealized billable hours.

- **Status Change Reasons:** With a platform that tracks and clarifies status change reasons, it's easy for everyone to see a project's status and the underlying reasons. When you know the cause of delays, it's easier to adjust and get the project back on track.

When your process is transparent, communication is simpler overall. GUIDEcx incorporates project management and communication features in a single customer dashboard, ensuring that your clients can see exactly what's going on in the project and easily communicate with your team via @ mentions and messages within the same platform.

"[GUIDEcx's] customer service resonates with me, and I've learned so much by being able to bounce things off them."

- Kayln Denniston, Senior Implementation Consultant, EventBooking

Find out how EventBooking significantly improved transparency with GUIDEcx
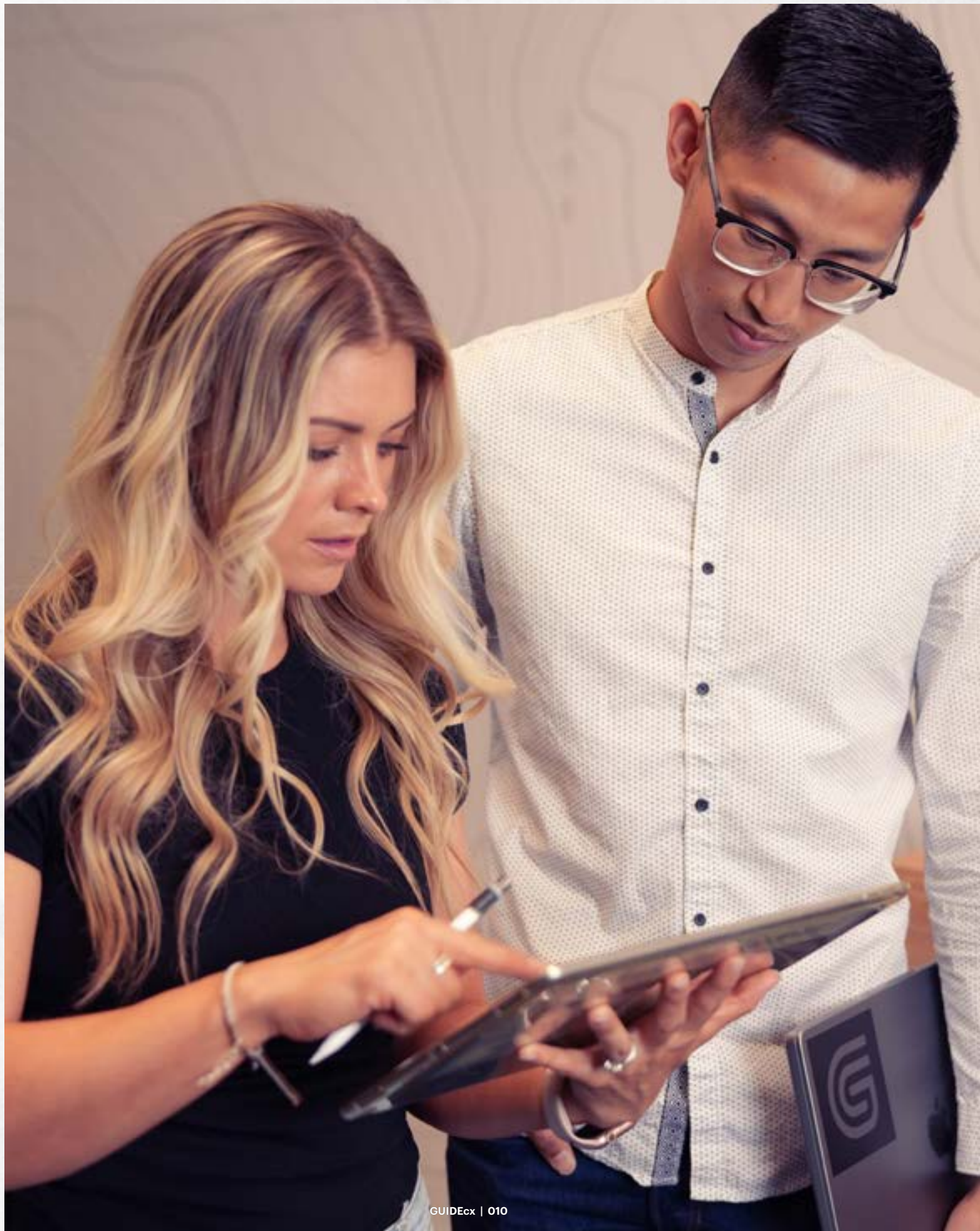
#5: Leverage Automation to Save Time

Think about the work your team does during onboarding. How much time do they spend doing manual, repetitive tasks? This kind of work is tedious and prone to errors, not to mention a massively inefficient use of time.

The solution is automation. Technology offers a simple, efficient alternative to outdated manual processes. In short, automation is the best way to reduce time spent on routine tasks. If you use spreadsheets and/or templates in your onboarding process, you already have the foundation for efficiency— all you need to automate those features.

Automation offers many *substantial* benefits:

• *Logical Dependencies*

• *Fast template updates*

• *Real-time status updates and end-date forecasting*

• *Scheduled reminders and notifications*

• *Fewer human errors*

• *No missed steps or dropped tasks*

Automating the slow, error-prone manual processes in your onboarding sequence increases efficiency and efficacy. Implementations don't just get completed faster — they provide a better experience for everyone involved because of fewer mistakes and missteps.

See how GUIDEcx's automation has helped Groupize reclaim 10 days per month

> *"Our implementation average has shot through the roof, and we're saving time. We have an average of 10 rolling implementations at any given time, yet we're saving at least 2 hours a week per client due to the automation from GUIDEcx."*
>
> *- Justin Peticolas, Manager of Implementation and Onboarding, Groupize*

#6: Eliminate Implementation Roadblocks

Roadblocks and bottlenecks slow down implementations. Nothing is more frustrating than seeing progress stall without a clear indicator of how to get it moving again. It's critical to identify all the potential roadblocks in your onboarding process as soon as possible so you can eliminate them before they impact your clients.

A common issue involves integrating multiple platforms. For example, many companies benefit from having a CRM and an onboarding solution, but those advantages disappear if the two platforms can't play together nicely.

With GUIDEcx, you don't have to worry about these types of problems. Our platform **integrates seamlessly** with popular CRM tools, including **Salesforce** and **HubSpot**, and communication platforms like Slack. You don't have to worry about capability; you can encourage your customers to use the tools they already know. This increases efficiency even more, as you don't have to spend time teaching your team or your customers to use different tools or convincing them to move away from the platforms they trust.

> **"With GUIDEcx, we have more data. We can easily identify our problem areas."**
>
> **– Brooke Cantwell**
> Customer Experience Manager, Kount

Learn how GUIDEcx helped Kount cut onboarding time by 43%

#7: Analyze and Improve the Onboarding Process

Once you've created a streamlined onboarding process that leverages automation, project management features, and communication tools, you'll start seeing the benefits. Onboarding projects will be faster and smoother, and the **overall experience** will improve for internal and external stakeholders.

But you shouldn't stop there! To keep improving the efficiency and efficacy of your implementation process, it's crucial to continually evaluate and optimize it. You should verify that your strategies are working and look for new ways to improve efficiency.

Start by setting clear goals based on KPIs for metrics such as TTV, churn, and ROI. Track your onboarding projects so you can gather the data you need to calculate those **metrics**. GUIDEcx makes it easy to see the average number of days it takes to complete a project and how much revenue each project delivers.

It's also important to track your customer's satisfaction throughout the project. Don't wait until the end of onboarding to solicit feedback. Use a customer satisfaction tool (GUIDEcx has an integrated **CSAT tool**) to request feedback at milestones and monitor your customer's experience throughout the entire process.

> *"One of the best things about GUIDEcx is the time-tracking capabilities they offer. We had no data before partnering with them, but now we have clear insight into our implementation time and process data."*
>
> - Jinny Kim, Project Manager, NEOGOV

GUIDEcx helps NEOGOV update their processes and improve customer service.

Streamline Customer Onboarding to Maximize Efficiency

Improving efficiency in your organization increases productivity, profitability, and customer satisfaction. And one of the best places to evaluate and increase efficiency is the onboarding process. This is your chance to make a good first impression on your customers and show them a return on their investment. The sooner they can reach that ROI (and the better their experience throughout the journey), the more likely they are to remain loyal to your brand.

Follow this checklist to make sure your onboarding process is optimized for efficiency:

- [ ] *Create a strong first impression*

- [ ] *Shorten TTV*

- [ ] *Increase capacity*

- [ ] *Prioritize transparency and communication*

- [ ] *Leverage automation*

- [ ] *Eliminate roadblocks*

- [ ] *Access critical diagnostics*

GUIDEcx is a dedicated onboarding platform that's designed to improve efficiency, efficacy, and customer experience. Every feature helps you save time, reduce errors, increase transparency, and simplify communication. To learn more about GUIDEcx and see how it can help you serve your customers better, BOOK A DEMO or START A FREE TRIAL TODAY!