How to Build
a Staff Journey Map

In trauma and violence-informed practice, focusing on the staff experience is critical — especially during times of crisis or in a downturn. Creating a staff journey map is one way to uncover problem areas and solutions.

What is a staff journey?

A staff journey is the path someone takes from the time of applying to an organization through to the exit from that organization. Staff experience is the feeling about everything that constitutes that path or specific feelings about specific touchpoints. The touchpoints that have the most impact on that experience are described as moments that matter, and these are the most important things to include in a staff journey map.

What is a staff journey map?

At its simplest, a staff journey map is a graphical image that represents the organizational path, or moments that matter, for a particular type of staff.

A staff journey map can be a high-level comprehensive overview of the staff experience, from recruitment to training to final offboarding, as in the staff journey map template below. It can also depict a particular part of the journey, such as pain points of the journey, or stages that cause problems. Staff journey maps are also likely to include specific information about the touchpoints you're focusing on, ratings of a particular interaction and next steps.

Why are staff journey maps important?

A staff journey map is an important tool to understand the staff experience. Your team can use the map to identify main areas for improvement and then create new strategies, based on data from a staff feedback mechanism or other sources. When done correctly, staff journey maps can uncover areas that need improvement.

Staff journey map template

No two roles are alike, so every staff journey map will be slightly different. However, this template can help you get started creating your own map. The template offers some objectives for major touchpoints of the staff journey, as well as some strategies and methods to follow. The staff experience can then be rated using the feelings key. The notes section enables your team to evaluate what went wrong or right and identify the next steps

Employee Experience Journey Map

A diagnostic tool that will help you visualize an employee's current experience in your organization, the Employee Experience Journey Map includes "touchpoints" at which you can assess whether an employee's experience meets their expectations. Below is a sample journey map with examples of Discovery Touchpoints, Insights, and Opportunities.

DISCOVERY
The perception of the organization and the Hiring Process.

ONBOARDING
The integration into the organization.

TRAINING
The acquisition of knowledge or skills.

WORK
The achievement of the task and the way one connects to others and to teams.

REWARDS
Everything related to compensation, benefits, and how to obtain them.

MOBILITY
Professional changes relevant to the employee.

BREAKS
Moments when you aren't working but you maintain a work relationship.

EXIT
The way in which a person disassociates themselves from the organization.

Stages	DISCOVERY	ONBOARDING	TRAINING	
Touchpoints	Applicant tracking system –Recruiter outreach –Interview			
Emotional Curve				
Needs				
Insights	–Recruiting process caused frustration but team mitigated damage			
Opportunities	–Eliminate resume "black hole			

The full journey map template, with additional information, is available on the website.

5 Steps to creating your own staff journey map

1. Understand your 'why'

As an HR leader, you serve a crucial role in advocating for the staff experience and driving the mapping process. As with any map, you need to know where you want to go before you understand the kind of map you need.

Initially, you can start by outlining the map by hand to easily make adjustments, and then build it out from there. While some organizations may want a complex map that covers all touchpoints, pain points and potential strategies, others may want a simple, straightforward map that identifies the most important touchpoints of a staff's journey from beginning to end (as with the template). You can adjust the template based on these requirements.

2. Decide on personas to map

Once you have identified goals, use the staff journey map template to identify the staff personas or segments whose journeys you want to map, since each experience will be unique.

For example, front-line staff will have a different journey than the operational or support staff. Bear in mind that an entry-level staff's touchpoints and pain points will be different than management.

3. Identify touchpoints

An important step in creating a staff journey map is to plot the most important touchpoints for each persona or segment you're mapping or to focus on specific issues. These moments that matter include critical junctures in the staff journey, from the first moment of contact as a candidate to the offboarding experience. Important touchpoints also include staff performance reviews, training, and client interactions. More specific ones could be mapping how the organization handles life events, such as a new baby, or problem areas, such as a lack of raises or processes for dealing with difficult staff or managers.

4. Gather feedback

Reach out to staff to identify which touchpoints matter most and to get a fuller understanding of each one. For example, you'll want to identify what the staff wants to accomplish at each touchpoint and what are the pain points.

5. Keep the map up-to-date

Creating a staff journey map is not a one-and-done process, since change is the rule, not the exception. For example, few would have foreseen that communicating about the coronavirus would become critical to staff experience. And when staff experience their own or vicarious trauma, you need to be able to be responsive and make changes from the norm where necessary.

Conduct a staff engagement survey periodically (even if informally) to gather feedback on the staff experience and enable important events to trigger new discussions. For example, hold exit interviews to gather feedback on a staff's experience including what pain points were most responsible for the decision to leave.

Creating a staff journey map is not an end unto itself, so it's important to understand how to use a journey map to boost staff experience.