

THREE PILLARS OF CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

A Great Customer Experience Meets Emotional, Social, and Functional Needs

To improve customer experience, we need to look beyond just whether something “works.” We must also understand how people feel and how they see themselves in the process. Great experiences meet people’s **emotional**, **social**, and **functional** needs.

| Emotional | Social | Functional |
|--|---|---|
| It answers: Am I doing this right? | It answers: Do they think I’m capable? | It answers: Can I get this done easily? |
| Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “I want to feel confident I submitted everything correctly.” | Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “I want to be seen as capable and responsible.” | Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “I need to renew my license.” |
| People want to feel confident, understood, and respected. | Experiences impact people’s sense of identity, belonging, and respect. | These are practical tasks people need to complete. |

When we talk about customer experience, we often focus on whether a process works—but great experiences go beyond just function. They also account for how people **feel** and how they see **themselves** in the process.



The **emotional** side reflects how every interaction with government can spark feelings—like confidence, trust, anxiety, or frustration. People want to feel reassured they did things right and avoid the stress of repeated calls or confusion.



The **social** side relates to people caring how they’re perceived—by others and by themselves. They want to feel capable, respected, and seen as competent. A process that feels confusing or impersonal can hurt their confidence and sense of belonging.



The **functional** side is about getting the things done. Whether it’s renewing a license, applying for a permit, or finding information, people want clear, efficient, error-free interactions.