Customer Journey John Lewis

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The customer journey describes the sequence of experiences through which a person becomes aware of a retailer, evaluates alternatives, makes a purchase, receives or collects the product, seeks support, and decides whether to return. For John Lewis Company, this journey is no longer divided neatly between “online” and “in-store” customers. A person may discover a product through search or social media, compare it on a phone, visit a shop to see it physically, order online, collect or receive it at home, and later use a digital account for returns, service, or another purchase. The most useful customer-journey model must therefore connect touchpoints rather than treat them as separate marketing channels.

John Lewis provides a strong case because its current strategy is explicitly omnichannel. In the year ended 31 January 2026, John Lewis sales rose 3 percent to £4.9 billion, online order volumes across the Partnership increased 11 percent, online sales rose more than 13 percent, and My John Lewis membership grew 10 percent. The Partnership also reported record customer satisfaction, while John Lewis reached a record Net Promoter Score and expanded “Ship from Store” to 28 locations (John Lewis Partnership, 2026a). These results show that customer experience now depends on how stores, digital platforms, fulfilment, loyalty, and service work together.

Journey Design

The original customer-journey model used three stages: awareness, consideration, and decision. Those stages remain useful, but they stop too early. Retail relationships continue after payment through delivery, setup, returns, after-sales service, loyalty, advocacy, and repurchase. Lemon and Verhoef (2016) therefore describe customer experience as a journey across pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase phases rather than a single marketing funnel.

A customer journey should also be mapped from the customer’s perspective rather than from internal departments, consistent with journey-mapping guidance that emphasizes realistic customer touchpoints and experience stages (Rosenbaum et al., 2017). Marketing may think of paid media, stores, web, service, and logistics as different functions, but the customer experiences one brand. A delayed delivery can damage the value created by an excellent advertisement; an unhelpful return process can undo a positive store interaction. Customer-journey management therefore requires coordination among merchandising, digital, stores, logistics, contact centres, loyalty, payments, and after-sales service.

John Lewis should not define the target customer simply as “young people who have just completed school and entered their first jobs.” The retailer serves multiple missions: furnishing a home, buying technology, beauty, fashion, gifts, nursery products, appliances, and other categories. Journey mapping should begin with the customer’s task. A first-home furniture journey differs from a beauty purchase, a laptop replacement, or preparation for a new baby.

Customer segments should therefore be linked to missions, value, and behavior. A nursery customer may need advice and reassurance; a technology buyer may value specification comparison and availability; a furniture shopper may need room planning, delivery coordination, and installation. The purpose of the journey map is to identify moments that matter most for each mission.

Discovery and Choice

Awareness now occurs through a mixture of paid, owned, earned, and retail media. Search engines, social platforms, creators, product reviews, brand websites, emails, apps, advertising, and physical stores can all begin the journey. The goal should not be to “make the customer realize they need the product” through pressure. A stronger approach is to help customers identify a problem, understand alternatives, and judge whether John Lewis offers a credible solution.

Product information is central during consideration. Customers compare price, specification, reviews, availability, delivery, warranty, and retailer reputation. John Lewis can reduce uncertainty through detailed product pages, accurate stock information, comparison tools, high-quality images, expert advice, transparent delivery estimates, and trusted customer reviews.

Physical stores remain valuable because some categories benefit from touch, trial, demonstration, or professional advice. John Lewis reported record demand for Personal Styling and Nursery appointments during 2025/26 and continued investment in store refurbishment and hospitality (John Lewis Partnership, 2026a). These services turn the store into more than an inventory location; it becomes a place where customers can reduce uncertainty and receive expertise.

The strongest journey links digital research with physical service. A customer should be able to save products online, check local availability, book an appointment, arrive at the shop with their preferences accessible, and complete the purchase without repeating information unnecessarily. Conversely, a customer who discovers an item in store should be able to order it digitally later without losing the benefit of the earlier interaction.

Availability is particularly important during consideration. A retailer can spend heavily generating demand and still lose the sale if the desired size, colour, specification, or delivery date is unavailable. The Partnership reported 97 percent on-shelf availability in 2025/26 after investment in merchandising systems. John Lewis also extended Ship from Store to 28 locations, using store inventory as part of the fulfilment network (John Lewis Partnership, 2026a). This connects inventory management directly with customer experience.

Price remains part of the decision, but competing solely on the lowest price would be inconsistent with John Lewis's wider proposition. Customers may accept a modest price difference when service, trust, delivery, advice, returns, warranty, and product curation reduce purchase risk. The journey should communicate total value rather than rely on artificial urgency or misleading claims that one product is the only solution.

Purchase and Fulfilment

The purchase stage should minimize friction without removing necessary information. Checkout should make price, delivery charges, collection options, return conditions, and payment clear before the final commitment. Account creation should offer value but should not create unnecessary barriers for customers who simply want to buy.

Fulfilment becomes part of the brand promise once payment is made. Customers judge whether the product arrives when expected, whether tracking is accurate, whether packaging is appropriate, and whether delivery teams handle large or fragile products professionally. In categories such as furniture and appliances, a poor delivery experience can become the most memorable part of the entire journey.

John Lewis's current transformation recognizes this connection. The Partnership increased investment by 26 percent in 2025/26 across stores, technology, supply chain, and brand initiatives, and it announced further distribution investment to strengthen availability (John Lewis Partnership, 2026a). During the first half of 2026/27, it continued investing in stores, inventory systems, supply-chain automation, and technology modernization (John Lewis Partnership, 2026b).

Customers also need choice in fulfilment. Home delivery, click-and-collect, store collection, and Ship from Store can meet different priorities. Speed is important, but reliability is often more important than promising a delivery window the operation cannot consistently meet. Journey metrics should therefore include on-time delivery, first-attempt success, cancellation, damaged-product rates, and accuracy of inventory promises.

Returns deserve equal attention. A difficult return process can make customers regret the retailer rather than the product. Clear policies, multiple return routes, rapid refunds, and access to knowledgeable support reduce post-purchase anxiety. For expensive products, service and repair may matter more than a simple refund.

Loyalty Loop

The journey does not end when the sale is complete. Post-purchase communication can confirm delivery, provide setup guidance, explain care, invite service when appropriate, and request feedback without overwhelming the customer. The objective is to improve the ownership experience rather

than immediately push another product.

My John Lewis can support this relationship when membership creates recognizable value. The Partnership reported 10 percent growth in My John Lewis membership in 2025/26, indicating that loyalty is becoming a larger part of the customer ecosystem (John Lewis Partnership, 2026a). Loyalty data can help personalize communication, but customers should understand how their data are used and should not be subjected to excessive or irrelevant targeting.

Real-time feedback should be connected to action. Reviews, surveys, service contacts, returns, complaints, search behavior, and store feedback can reveal pain points. Ordenes and colleagues (2014) showed how unstructured customer feedback can be analyzed systematically, while Stein and Ramaseshan (2016) emphasized the importance of identifying touchpoint elements across the journey. The value comes from closing the loop: detecting a problem, assigning ownership, correcting it, and measuring whether the change improves the experience.

Customer-journey measurement should therefore combine operational and perceptual indicators. Useful measures include conversion, product availability, checkout abandonment, delivery reliability, returns, service-resolution time, appointment conversion, repeat purchase, membership engagement, satisfaction, NPS, and customer lifetime value. A high NPS with worsening delivery failures would require investigation, just as fast delivery with falling repeat purchase would suggest another problem.

John Lewis's current results indicate that investment in stores, technology, availability, loyalty, and fulfilment is improving customer outcomes, but a journey map should remain dynamic. Customer expectations change as competitors improve delivery, digital experiences, personalization, and service. The company should regularly map high-value customer missions, identify friction, test changes, and compare results.

The most useful customer journey for John Lewis is therefore not a three-step funnel ending at purchase. It is an omnichannel loop linking discovery, evaluation, transaction, fulfilment, support, loyalty, and repeat purchase. John Lewis can differentiate itself when customers are able to move between digital and physical touchpoints without losing information or service quality. Its current investments in stores, technology, Ship from Store, product availability, appointments, and loyalty provide the operational foundation; the marketing challenge is to make those capabilities feel like one coherent experience.

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