

ILLUSTRATIVE SAMPLE

Customer Experience Review

A Premium Product Brand

MODELED ON

A founder-led premium product brand with a team of nine, selling a mix of ready-to-ship goods and made-to-order pieces that require customer decisions, material coordination, production hand-offs, and personal follow-through. The moments and figures are illustrative — sized to show the shape and depth of a real Elevation Ops review.

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Elevation Ops · Customer Experience Review

THE THREE-STAR PROBLEM



“The table is honestly a work of art. The craftsmanship is beyond what I hoped for. But I placed my order in March and did not hear anything for five weeks. I had to email twice just to find out it had not shipped yet. Beautiful piece – I am just not sure I would go through that again.”

S. · ✓ **Verified purchase** · Reviewed April 2026

Nothing in this review is about the product.

The product earned five stars. The experience cost two — and the last sentence is the expensive one. *“I am not sure I would go through that again”* is where a referral quietly dies.

This review is a composite. The pattern is not.

THE ANATOMY OF A SILENCE

Thirty-five days inside one order

The same order, seen from both sides. On the left, what the customer lives through. On the right, what is actually happening inside the business. Neither side can see the other – that gap is the experience.

WHAT THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCES		WHAT IS HAPPENING INSIDE
Day 1	Places the order. Receives a warm, personal confirmation.	The order lands in email. The details are copied into a spreadsheet – most of them.
Day 4	Wonders whether the wood-sample conversation was final. Decides not to ask yet.	The material decision sits in a DM thread. No one has written it down.
Day 9	“Just checking in – did my order go through okay?”	The owner reconstructs the status from three inboxes before she can reply.
Day 16	Silence. Assumes the piece is being built.	The maker is ready – and waiting on an approval no one logged. Nothing moves.
Day 23	“So sorry to bother you again – any update?”	The reply is written at 9:40 that night. It opens with an apology.
Day 31	A shipping notice appears, without warning.	The delivery hand-off was arranged ad hoc. The promised date exists nowhere.
Day 35	The piece arrives. It is stunning. The review mentions the wait.	The team never finds out why it was only three stars.

At no point did anyone drop the ball. There was no single ball to drop – status lived everywhere, so it lived nowhere.

Eleven customer messages were exchanged on this order. Seven of them were the customer asking, or the business apologizing.

CURRENT-STATE DIAGNOSIS

What looks like a customer-service problem is often a coordination problem.

The customer on the previous page was never mishandled. Every message she received was warm. But warmth arrived only when she asked for it – and a business where updates must be requested is a business where every customer eventually becomes a project manager.

JOURNEY STAGE	CURRENT PATTERN	CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE	OPERATIONAL GAP
Inquiry / Purchase	Messages arrive across email, DMs, and forms.	"Did they even get my request?"	No single intake; first-touch ownership is unassigned.
Quote / Selection	Options and pricing assembled by hand, per piece.	Slow; unclear what has been decided.	Selections live in one inbox; no shared record.
Approval / Confirm	Approval confirmed verbally or by scattered email.	Unsure the decision is actually final.	No clear "locked" state; ownership of the next step is unclear.
Production / Fulfillment	Status lives with the maker, not in the record.	Silence during the longest wait.	No queryable status; updates depend on someone remembering.
Delivery / Hand-off	Shipping and hand-off details sent ad hoc.	"When is it actually coming?"	Promised dates are not owned or visible to the team.
Follow-up / Resolution	Follow-up happens only if someone remembers.	Feels forgotten once payment has cleared.	Follow-up relies on memory; issue ownership is undefined.

DIAGNOSTIC CONCLUSION

The brand's first improvement is not a new tool. It is a reliable, shared record of where every order stands – what is promised, what is done, what is next, and who owns it.

PRIORITIES · DECISION BRIEF

What to fix first

Each opportunity is weighed by judgment from the working session — not a scientific score — across three questions: how much it helps the customer, how much operational leverage it creates, and how much complexity or risk it carries.

OPPORTUNITY	CUSTOMER IMPACT	OPERATIONAL LEVERAGE	COMPLEXITY / RISK	DECISION	WHY
A trusted order state	High	High	Low	DO NOW	The foundation everything else relies on.
Clear hand-off ownership	High	High	Low	DO NOW	Removes the most common failure.
Proactive milestone updates	High	Medium	Low	DO NOW	Answers uncertainty before it is felt.
Post-delivery follow-up	Medium	Medium	Low	QUICK WIN	Cheap to add; a strong trust signal.
Approval / sign-off clarity	Medium	Medium	Low	QUICK WIN	Ends “is my decision final?”
Personalized update drafting	Medium	Medium	Medium	CONTROLLED TEST	Helpful with human adaptation — never on autopilot.
Relationship-critical messaging without human review	—	—	High	KEEP HUMAN	Trust is the product; never automate the moment.
Full CX-platform migration	Unknown	Low now	High	DEFER	No value until the journey is stable.

PRIMARY RECOMMENDATION

Do not begin with a new tool or automation. Begin with the one journey where information stalls and the customer is left wondering — from inquiry through follow-through. It has the clearest strain and the fastest path to noticeable relief.

PORTFOLIO RULE

Fund one foundational fix, one low-friction quick win, and one controlled test. More than three simultaneous changes create adoption drag and make results impossible to read.

PRIMARY FRICTION

Status visibility

PRIMARY RISK

Unclear hand-off ownership

FIRST PRIORITY

A trusted order state

KEEP HUMAN

Relationship moments

WHERE TECHNOLOGY EARNS ITS PLACE

Technology, including AI, is added only where it measurably reduces uncertainty or effort — after the journey is clear. It drafts, organizes, and reminds; it does not own the relationship.

ONE ARTIFACT, REWRITTEN

The update the customer actually received

Every review includes a close read of one real customer-facing message from the intake – annotated, then rewritten in the brand’s voice. This is the Day 23 reply from the timeline.

BEFORE

Hi Sarah, so sorry for the delay ¹ getting back to you!
Things have been a little crazy ² over here. Your piece is coming along – I think we are looking at maybe 2–3 more weeks? ³ I will let you know as soon as I hear back ⁴ from our finisher. Thanks so much for your patience!! ⁵

- ¹ **“So sorry for the delay”** — the third apology on this order. Apology has become the brand’s opening word.
- ² **“Things have been a little crazy”** — invites the customer to feel like a burden, and quietly signals that her order is inside the chaos.
- ³ **“I think... maybe 2–3 weeks?”** — a guess, phrased as a guess. The customer now owns the uncertainty.
- ⁴ **“As soon as I hear back”** — reveals that no one currently knows. This is the sentence that prompts the next “just checking in.”
- ⁵ **“Thanks for your patience!!”** — gratitude standing in for information.

None of this is a writing problem. The sender cannot say what she does not know. The email is not the failure — it is the receipt for one.

AFTER — THE SAME MOMENT, WITH A TRUSTED ORDER STATE BEHIND IT

Hi Sarah — an update on your table.

Finishing began Tuesday. ¹ It takes about ten days, followed by a final inspection here in the studio. ² You can expect a delivery-scheduling note from us the week of the 18th. ³

Nothing is needed from you — if anything changes on our side, you will hear it from us first. ⁴

- ¹ **Opens with the update**, not an apology.
- ² **Names the stage and who holds it** — the business owns the timeline now.
- ³ **A date the business commits to**, not a guess the customer must carry.
- ⁴ **Closes the loop**: no reply required, and the next silence is a comfortable one, because it was scheduled.

Same sender. Same warmth. The difference is not the writing — it is that the second sender had somewhere to look.

HUMAN JUDGMENT

Where the human touch stays

The rewritten email above was drafted from a record – but a person read it before it went out, and a person will always read the ones that matter. These are the moments where that line holds.

MOMENT	HOW IT CAN FAIL	WHAT STAYS HUMAN	OWNER
A relationship-critical message	An automated note lands cold at a meaningful moment	Personal review before it sends	Brand owner
The wrong status shown	The customer sees an out-of-date or incorrect state	Source-of-truth record + confirmation	Order owner
Over-automation	The team defers to the system against its own judgment	Explicit override and escalation path	Whole team
A promise slips	A date passes and no one notices	Visible, owned dates + exception alerts	Order owner
Personalization misfires	A generic touch reads as impersonal	Human adaptation of any draft	Whoever sends it
The complaint moment	The hardest conversation is handed to a script	A person, promptly, every time	Brand owner

THE RESPONSIBILITY LINE

Systems can track, surface, and remind. People own the relationship, the judgment calls, and the moments that build trust.

THE SAME THIRTY-FIVE DAYS

One order, with a system underneath it

The identical order – same product, same team, same five weeks of making. The only change is that status now lives in one trusted place, every stage names its next owner, and updates leave at the milestones customers care about.

	WHAT THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCES	WHAT IS HAPPENING INSIDE
Day 1	A warm confirmation – with what happens next, and when she will hear from us.	An order record opens: stage, owner, promised dates.
Day 4	“Your selections are confirmed and locked. Materials are on order.”	The decision was logged the moment it was made. Approval has one home.
Day 9	“Your walnut arrived – it is beautiful. The build begins Monday.”	No one reconstructed anything. The update took ninety seconds.
Day 16	Quiet – and comfortable. The last note said what would happen and when.	The maker moved straight from approval to build. Nothing waited.
Day 23	“Finishing began Tuesday. Expect a delivery note the week of the 18th.”	Drafted from the record, reviewed by a person, sent before dinner.
Day 31	A delivery window she chose, on a date the business promised – and kept.	The hand-off had an owner. The date was visible to everyone.
Day 35	The piece arrives. It is stunning. Day 38: a person writes to ask how it feels in the room.	Follow-up was scheduled, not remembered.

The team sent four messages instead of eleven. The customer sent none.

WHERE A BETTER EXPERIENCE SHOWS UP IN THE BUSINESS

IN THE INBOX Fewer “where is my order?” contacts	IN DELIVERY Fewer missed promises and escalations	IN GROWTH Stronger repeat and referral signal
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90-DAY ROADMAP

A staged sequence with clear exits

DAYS 1–15 · MAP AND AGREE OWNERSHIP

- Map the one journey end to end.
- Name an accountable owner for each stage.
- Agree what “done” and “on time” mean.

Move on when: the team shares one picture of the journey and its owners.

DAYS 16–30 · MAKE STATUS VISIBLE

- Stand up one trusted order record.
- Put current orders into it.
- Assign owners to live hand-offs.

Move on when: anyone can answer “where does this order stand?” without asking around.

DAYS 31–60 · ADD PROACTIVE UPDATES & FOLLOW-UP

- Notify customers at key milestones, in the brand’s voice.
- Add a human-owned follow-up step.
- Retire the manual steps this replaces.

Move on when: customers stop chasing for routine updates.

DAYS 61–90 · EXPAND OR STOP

- Extend to an adjacent journey, or refine this one.
- Decide what to keep, simplify, or scope for implementation.

Move on when: leadership can decide the next phase from what they have seen.

A prioritized sequence for the brand to implement internally, or to use as the basis for a separately scoped implementation phase.

THE SAME CUSTOMER



“The table is honestly a work of art. The craftsmanship is beyond what I hoped for. And the whole process felt as considered as the piece itself – I always knew exactly where things stood, without ever having to ask. They even checked in after it arrived. I have already sent two friends their way.”

S. · ✓ **Verified purchase** · Reviewed April 2026

The product did not change. The experience did.

DECISIONS FOR LEADERSHIP

- Who owns order status once it lives in one place?
- Which system is authoritative for order state?
- What may and may not be automated at trust-critical moments?
- What result would justify a scoped implementation phase?

RECOMMENDED NEXT MOVE

Choose one journey, name an owner, and stand up a single trusted order record before adding any tool. The goal is not to adopt software – it is a calmer, more trustworthy experience for one journey, proven and then extended.

The brand, order, and reviews on these pages are an illustrative composite; a real review is shaped around one of your actual customer journeys, and the findings are yours alone.