

Transforming the International Experience

Rebuilding a Legacy Service Ecosystem Around Customer Confidence

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“Customers don't think in products. They think in goals.”

At a Glance

Top 5 Customer Care Call Driver, Resolved	4 Core Experiences Unified	Unified Look and feel now consistent with the rest of the app experiences	Dozens Of plan offerings aligned together, finally
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Executive Summary

International travel presents a unique customer experience challenge.

Unlike domestic wireless services, international travel introduces uncertainty before customers ever leave home. Questions about coverage, pricing, travel benefits, roaming, and plan eligibility often force customers to navigate multiple tools, compare disconnected products, and interpret unfamiliar terminology.

The existing international experience reflected years of incremental development. Customers managed international plans through legacy workflows, TravelPass Bank existed outside the international ecosystem, and the International Dashboard had become one of the organization's top customer care call drivers.

As Principal Product Designer, I led the redesign of the international experience by transforming a collection of disconnected tools into a unified service ecosystem. Rather than redesigning individual interfaces, the objective was to simplify one of the company's most complex customer journeys by organizing the experience around customer goals instead of internal product structures.

The Story

Setting the Stage

Some customer experiences become fragmented overnight.

Most evolve that way over time.

The international experience was the latter.

Over the years, new products, features, and services had been introduced to help customers stay connected while traveling abroad. International calling plans, TravelPass, destination planning tools, loyalty benefits, and travel alerts all solved legitimate customer needs. Individually, each capability served a purpose. Collectively, however, they reflected years of incremental evolution rather than a single, intentional customer experience.

Customers were often forced to navigate between multiple tools to accomplish what they viewed as a single task.

Someone planning an international trip might begin by researching destination coverage, move into a separate experience to compare travel plans, visit another location to understand TravelPass eligibility, and eventually find themselves navigating legacy workflows simply to make changes to an existing plan. Each experience had been designed at a different point in time, often by different teams with different business objectives. The result wasn't necessarily broken, but it was increasingly difficult to understand.

The International Dashboard represented one of the clearest examples of that fragmentation.

Although it served as the primary destination for international services, it had become dated both visually and functionally. Customers could perform many of the tasks they needed, but the experience required unnecessary effort, relied on outdated interaction models, and lacked the flexibility expected from a modern digital product. Over time it had become one of the organization's most significant customer care call drivers, creating frustration for customers while increasing operational costs for the business.

Leadership recognized that incremental improvements would no longer solve the problem.

This wasn't an opportunity for another visual refresh.

It was an opportunity to rethink how customers experienced international services from beginning to end.

That shift in perspective changed the nature of the work.

Instead of asking how individual screens could be improved, we began asking how customers actually thought about international travel.

The answer was surprisingly simple.

Customers weren't trying to manage products.

They were trying to prepare for a trip.

That realization became the foundation for everything that followed.

Rather than organizing the experience around internal product ownership, we began organizing it around customer intent: planning travel, understanding options, managing benefits, monitoring usage, and returning home. Those became the moments that mattered, not the organizational boundaries that had historically shaped the experience.

Looking back, that change in mindset was arguably the most important design decision made throughout the project. It reframed the problem before anyone started designing solutions.

Leading the Transformation

As Principal Product Designer, I led the experience strategy for the international ecosystem while partnering closely with Product Management, Engineering, Customer Care, Marketing, and executive stakeholders responsible for bringing the initiative to life.

Unlike many enterprise programs, there wasn't a single feature or workflow that defined success.

Every improvement affected another experience somewhere else in the ecosystem. Changes to International Trip Planner influenced TravelPass education. TravelPass integration influenced dashboard behavior. Calling Plan Change influenced account management. Dashboard architecture influenced discoverability across every supporting experience.

Nothing existed in isolation.

Because of that interconnectedness, my role extended well beyond individual interface design.

One of my primary responsibilities became creating alignment across teams that historically worked independently.

Daily collaboration sessions became the operational heartbeat of the initiative. Representatives from Product, Engineering, Design, Customer Care, and other supporting organizations met regularly to review progress, identify dependencies, discuss implementation questions, and resolve issues before they slowed delivery. These conversations weren't status updates intended to report activity. They were working sessions where decisions were made, priorities were clarified, and customer experience remained the common point of reference.

As the project matured, the conversations themselves began to change.

Early discussions often centered on individual requirements or technical constraints. Later discussions focused almost entirely on customer outcomes. Instead of debating ownership, teams began asking how the ecosystem should behave as a whole. Instead of optimizing isolated features, they worked together to improve the overall journey.

Watching that shift happen was one of the most rewarding aspects of the project.

Shared understanding gradually replaced organizational boundaries. Collaboration became easier because everyone was solving the same problem instead of defending individual workstreams.

That kind of alignment rarely happens by accident. It requires a clear vision, consistent communication, and a willingness to continually bring conversations back to the customer. Those became the principles that guided my leadership throughout the program.

Balancing Leadership with Delivery

While I was responsible for the overall experience strategy, I also remained deeply involved in the design and execution of several of the initiative's most significant customer experiences. I've always believed that effective leadership doesn't require stepping away from the work. In fact, staying close to the product often results in better strategic decisions because leadership remains grounded in the realities customers and delivery teams face every day.

That balance became especially important throughout the international transformation.

As conversations about long-term strategy continued, work also needed to move steadily toward implementation. Product requirements evolved, engineering dependencies surfaced, and customer feedback continually influenced priorities. Maintaining momentum required switching comfortably between executive conversations, design critiques, implementation reviews, and hands-on product work, often within the same day.

The centerpiece of the initiative became the redesigned International Dashboard.

For years, customers had managed their international services through an experience that no longer reflected either the complexity of the products or the expectations of modern digital experiences. Although the dashboard contained much of the functionality customers needed, it had become increasingly difficult to navigate, relied on aging interaction patterns, and had ultimately become one of the organization's Top 5 customer care call drivers.

Rather than approaching the dashboard as another redesign project, we treated it as the foundation of an entirely new ecosystem. The objective was to create a centralized destination where customers could understand, manage, and prepare every aspect of their international experience without navigating disconnected workflows.

One of the most significant improvements involved allowing customers to manage international travel plans and international long-distance plans directly through the Calling Plan Change experience. Previously, many of these tasks required separate wizard-based workflows that had evolved independently over time. Consolidating these experiences reduced unnecessary complexity while creating a far more consistent interaction model across the broader ecosystem.

The dashboard also introduced entirely new capabilities designed around the realities of international travel. Customers could now access travel-specific tools, receive contextual travel alerts, review international trips taken over the previous six months, and manage international services from a single destination. Rather

than forcing customers to search for information across multiple locations, the experience surfaced relevant content when and where it was needed.

Equally important was the transformation of the International Trip Planner.

Planning for international travel has always required customers to make decisions involving coverage, pricing, destinations, and eligibility. Historically, that experience relied heavily on freeform exploration, requiring customers to understand products before they understood which questions they should be asking.

We completely reimagined that journey.

Instead of asking customers to navigate telecommunications terminology, the redesigned Trip Planner became a guided planning experience that walked travelers through decisions one step at a time. Each screen built naturally upon the previous one, reducing cognitive load while educating customers as they progressed through the experience.

The goal wasn't simply simplifying the interface.

It was simplifying decision making.

TravelPass Bank became another important opportunity to improve the overall ecosystem.

As part of a broader loyalty initiative, TravelPass Bank moved from Verizon Up into the international experience, where customers naturally expected to find it. This seemingly simple organizational change had a meaningful impact on discoverability and customer understanding.

Within the new experience, customers could review accrued TravelPass days, monitor redeemed balances, track remaining available days, and assign complimentary TravelPass benefits earned through Verizon Visa, all without leaving the international ecosystem.

Rather than appearing as another disconnected product, TravelPass became an integrated part of preparing for travel.

The International Calling Plan Change experience also received significant attention throughout the initiative.

Beyond modernizing the visual design to align with the Monarch design language, the experience was updated to better reflect the interaction patterns established across the broader international ecosystem. While visually subtle, these improvements reinforced consistency between experiences, reducing the amount of relearning required as customers moved between different parts of the platform.

Although each initiative solved a unique problem, none of them were designed independently. Every workflow, interaction pattern, and information architecture decision was evaluated through the lens of the broader customer journey.

That systems perspective became one of the defining characteristics of the project. Rather than delivering a collection of improved interfaces, we delivered a connected ecosystem where each experience strengthened the next.

Designing Through Alignment

As the initiative progressed, one principle consistently guided our decisions.

“Customers don't think in products. They think in goals.”

That philosophy became more than an observation. It became the framework for evaluating nearly every design discussion throughout the project.

Customers weren't interested in understanding the distinction between TravelPass, international calling plans, dashboard experiences, loyalty programs, or account management tools.

They wanted confidence — confidence that their phone would work after landing, that they had selected the right plan, and that they understood their available benefits before leaving home. Everything else was simply a means to achieving that outcome.

Once we embraced that perspective, many design decisions became significantly easier. Instead of organizing the experience around internal product ownership, we organized it around customer intent: planning, preparing, managing, traveling, and returning home. Those became the organizing principles for the ecosystem.

The effect reached far beyond interface design.

Information architecture became more intuitive. Navigation became more predictable. Engineering implementation became more consistent because interaction patterns were intentionally shared rather than independently invented.

Cross-functional conversations also changed.

Instead of debating how individual products should behave, teams increasingly discussed how the overall customer journey should feel. That shift represented one of the most meaningful outcomes of the initiative.

Design had become more than the creation of interfaces. It had become the common language through which multiple organizations could align around a shared understanding of the customer.

Looking back, I believe that organizational alignment was every bit as important as any individual screen we produced. The interfaces made the work visible. Alignment made the work possible.

Looking Beyond the Launch

Every enterprise initiative reaches a point where the launch is complete, the final design files have been handed off, and attention begins shifting toward the next roadmap priority.

For many teams, that's where the story ends.

For me, it's where the real evaluation begins.

I've never believed the success of a product should be measured solely by whether it launched on time or whether every feature made the release. Those are important milestones, but they're temporary. The more meaningful question is whether the work leaves the organization in a better position than it was before the project began.

The International Experience Transformation accomplished exactly that.

While customers immediately benefited from a simpler, more intuitive experience, the long-term value extended well beyond the launch itself. The project established a stronger information architecture, more consistent interaction patterns, and a unified framework that future teams could continue building upon. Experiences that had previously evolved independently now shared a common language, making future enhancements significantly easier to design, implement, and support.

Equally important, the initiative fundamentally changed the way multiple organizations collaborated.

Rather than treating international services as a collection of independent products, teams increasingly viewed them as parts of one connected ecosystem. Product discussions became more strategic because foundational experience questions had already been answered. Engineering benefited from predictable interaction models and reusable patterns. Customer Care gained experiences that better reflected how customers naturally approached international travel. Even stakeholder conversations became more productive because everyone was evaluating decisions through the same customer lens.

One of the greatest compliments a designer can receive is when future teams no longer have to solve the same problems again.

That was one of the outcomes I was most proud of.

Leadership Lessons

Every significant program leaves behind lessons that extend far beyond the project itself. This initiative reinforced several principles that continue to shape my approach to enterprise product leadership.

Customers Think in Outcomes

Customers don't wake up thinking about international calling plans, TravelPass, or loyalty benefits.

They think about arriving in another country with confidence that their phone will work.

That distinction seems subtle, but it fundamentally changes how products should be organized. When experiences are designed around customer goals instead of internal product structures, navigation becomes simpler, decisions become clearer, and complexity becomes far easier to manage.

Service Design Is Organizational Design

One of the most rewarding aspects of this initiative wasn't redesigning interfaces.

It was helping independent organizations align around one customer journey.

In enterprise environments, the customer experience is often the visible expression of dozens of organizational decisions happening behind the scenes. Design has a unique ability to bring those conversations together by providing a shared visualization of the future experience. In many ways, service design becomes organizational design. When teams align around the same customer journey, collaboration naturally improves.

Systems Scale Better Than Features

Features are temporary. Products evolve. Business priorities change. Well-designed systems continue creating value long after individual features have been replaced.

Throughout this initiative we intentionally invested in reusable interaction patterns, shared information architecture, and consistent decision-making frameworks. Those investments reduced implementation complexity during the project while creating a stronger foundation for future innovation. That systems-first mindset continues to influence every enterprise initiative I lead.

Alignment Creates Momentum

Organizations often assume that alignment slows delivery.

My experience has consistently shown the opposite.

Projects move faster when teams spend less time revisiting decisions, reconciling conflicting assumptions, or redesigning experiences that should have been shared from the beginning. Alignment isn't bureaucracy. It's acceleration. The earlier organizations invest in shared understanding, the less friction they experience during execution.

Why This Project Matters

Looking back, the International Experience Transformation represents much more than the redesign of a single product area.

It reflects the type of work I enjoy most: complex problems, multiple stakeholders, interconnected systems, and opportunities to improve not only customer experiences, but also the way organizations work together.

Throughout the initiative I had the opportunity to:

- Lead experience strategy across an enterprise service ecosystem.
- Partner closely with Product, Engineering, Customer Care, Marketing, and executive leadership.
- Reimagine the International Dashboard as the central destination for international services.

- Transform the International Trip Planner into a guided planning experience.
- Integrate TravelPass Bank into the international ecosystem where customers naturally expected to find it.
- Modernize International Calling Plan Change using shared interaction patterns and the Monarch design language.
- Replace a fragmented customer experience with a connected ecosystem centered around customer intent.

Those accomplishments are meaningful, but they aren't what I remember most.

What stands out is watching dozens of people from different organizations gradually begin solving the same problem together. That's when enterprise design becomes truly impactful.

Closing Thoughts

The International Experience Transformation reinforced something I've come to believe over the course of my career.

The best digital experiences don't begin with interfaces. They begin with understanding — understanding how customers think, understanding how organizations operate, and understanding where complexity truly exists.

Once that understanding is shared, the interface becomes the natural expression of good decisions rather than the place where difficult problems are solved.

That philosophy continues to guide every product initiative I lead. Whether modernizing a legacy platform, launching a new capability, or mentoring design teams, my objective remains the same:

Create clarity before creating interfaces.

Because when organizations align around the customer, design becomes far more than the creation of screens. It becomes a catalyst for better products, stronger collaboration, and experiences that people trust.

“The best experiences don't eliminate complexity. They organize it so well that customers never have to think about it.”