Don’t expect to win colleagues or management over on your first attempt. You may have to come back to an issue many times in different ways. Be persistent, but avoid repetition. If you don’t convince people with one approach, find a new angle or provide new information.
In our fervency to create the best experience, we can appear to be a roadblock to others' ideas. Try to avoid being critical. Instead, remain positive but ask a lot of questions. Questions that encourage colleagues to identify the flaws in their own ideas.
Every time there is disagreement about the best approach, suggest testing. Testing is a great way of resolving disagreement. It also establishes a user centric culture. If you suggest it often enough it will become a mantra that others also adopt.

Suggest testing
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When creating a great experience you will sometimes know the objections people will have. Don’t hope they won’t. Instead preempt these issues, as once people state an opinion they rarely back down. Preempting gives them a chance to change their mind.
The bigger the thing you ask for the more likely management will say no. So instead only ask permission to take the next step. Keep your requests small. If your small request works out they will feel more confident taking larger steps next time.
Even the best user centric design process won't survive a senior manager swooping in and pooping over it. To avoid this find out who the key decision maker is at the start of the process. Either get them to engage in the process or delegate decision making.

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Management spend their lives listening to staff moan about problems they face. Don’t be that person if you want to see change. Instead, after pointing out any challenges you face, offer possible solutions. All management have to do then is say yes!

Have a plan, not just problems

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Saying no to colleagues should be a last resort. But sometimes it will prove necessary. The best example is when they bring you into a project too late to consider the needs of users. If this happens stick to your principles. They will then bring you in earlier next time.
Often parts of an organisation are unofficially competing with one another. Use that to your advantage by creating a game. Score the teams on their user experience and offer a prize to the team who scores the highest. This will bring out their competitive spirit.
Point out how a focus on user experience has helped other companies succeed. These don’t even have to be companies in your own sector. When colleagues suggest circumstances are different, don’t argue. Instead suggest running a trial to gather hard data.
We think our job is to build products and services for users. But we cannot fix the experience of users alone. We need others and that means we need to educate them about best practice. We need to stop seeing ourselves as implementors and become educators.
Every company wants to innovate. Management love to support innovation. If you position yourself as an innovation team people will expect you to work in a different way. They will expect you to challenge the status quo.
When mapping the customer journey, don’t only map the current reality. Get colleagues excited about how much better things could be. Map a future journey too. One where the user experience is better and the organisation works more efficiently.
People are influenced by the metrics against which things are measured. If you start tracking how long it takes users to complete a task, this will be what people seek to improve. By focusing colleagues on the right metrics you shift their thinking.
If you want colleagues to improve the users experience you will need them to change how they work. But people don’t like to change when things appear to work well. The only way you will get them to act is to show them that inaction threatens them.
When exploring new ideas get colleagues to work free from constraints. Set aside legacy and dependencies. Prototype and experiment. Explain these are disposable and not meant for the real world. This gives you a chance to excite people about the potential.
Creating a set of policies can be a great way of embedding user experience best practice. Policy avoids having the same arguments with every stakeholder. People see policies as impartial, applied to all equally. This means that policy isn't personal and avoids politics.
A discovery phase is a gentle way to introduce colleagues to a different way of working. A way more focused on users. It provides the opportunity to discuss user needs upfront and do some research. This ensures you kick off projects with the right focus.
Avoid debates over what is important. Work with stakeholders to compile a list of everything users want to do on your website. Instead of giving equal weight to all tasks, get user feedback. Ask users to identify their top tasks and use this to decide what to prioritise.
Take every opportunity to tell the story of your customers experience. Stories have a power to grab our attention and put ourselves in the role of the protagonist. Stories are a great way to get your colleagues to imagine what it would be like to be a customer.

Tell the customers story
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Too many people start writing for the web by asking, “what do I want to say?” Instead we should get colleagues to begin by asking, “what questions do users have?” Research those questions and encourage colleagues to write copy that answers those.
When projects start with a long specification they often fail to consider the needs of users. Instead start a project with a stack of user cards that outline what a user wants to do. Simple statements outlining who the user is, what they want to do and their final goal.

Start with user story cards
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In their haste to achieve business goals, colleagues often forget user’s feelings. Encourage them to think about how the user feels by asking them how they would feel in the users position. This will help them empathise with the user.
Users often fall between the gaps in organisations. Gaps between devices, platforms and departments. To improve the user’s experience focus colleagues on these gaps. Encourage them to collaborate across teams to ensure a joined up experience.
Instead of trying to win over your entire senior leadership team, focus on one person. Somebody who already appreciates the need to improve the experience of customers. Prove yourself to that person and they will help you win over the rest of the executive.
If user needs are getting sidelined in the creation process, get them involved. Run a workshop where both stakeholders and customers attend. Not only will you gain the insights of users, you will also make sure colleagues are exposed to their needs.

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If you want to get to know users, visit them in their homes. Nothing will tell you more about a person than how they live. Video the visit and show it to colleagues. It will help them empathise with users. While visiting also see how people access your online services.

Visit users in their homes
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Don’t wait until you are told you can do something. If there is a chance to make things better for the user, do it! As Grace Hopper said, you can always ask for forgiveness. You will find that people tend to accept new ideas more easily if they have already happened.
We might not have the authority to change the organisation, but we can define how we do our own job. If we include the user in our working processes it forces colleagues to consider their needs. For example you might insist that your work is always tested by users.
A great way of bridging departmental silos is to interview colleagues in other teams. Use it as an opportunity to better understand their needs. But also introduce them to ways user experience design might help them achieve their goals.
To spread a culture of user experience beyond your team embed clients into the team. If they work side-by-side with you they will come to see the value of user experience design. They will then take that knowledge back with them when they return to their department.

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Sometimes the best way of getting a stakeholder to think about users needs is by making them the users advocate. Instead of you being the voice of the user, ask a stakeholder to take on that role. This will focus them on that task.

Create user champions
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Run an exercise where stakeholders wireframe solutions based on different audience needs. Focus them on coming up with solutions specific to each different audience group. This will make them think more about what those groups need.
Make sure you celebrate your successes. If you manage to increase a key metric, make sure you advertise that company wide. Take every chance to show colleagues and management what a difference user centric design can make to the business.
Give stakeholder user attention points to spend. Every element they add to a page costs points. Show them Yahoo! and Google and ask which is better. They will say Google. Point out that Google have spent their points focusing attention on a small number of elements.
Run an internal conference

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Make a big splash by running an internal conference and inviting the whole company to attend. It is a great chance to raise the profile of the user. It gets colleagues thinking about customer needs and exposing management to best practice.
A week long design sprint brings together stakeholders from across your organisation. It is a chance to answer business questions through user centric thinking. Over the week you will build a prototype and test it with real customers, educating stakeholders as you do.
Don't start by piloting a customer facing service. Instead focus on an internal app such as claiming expenses or booking a meeting room. If colleagues can see how much easier you can make their lives, they will be more receptive to doing the same for users.
Create a lowlight video
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Make sure you record your usability test sessions. Afterwards you can edit the most painful moments down into a 2-3 minute video. A video that you can play for management and colleagues. Nothing is more compelling than users getting frustrated.
Annoying though it is, management don’t pay as much attention to their own staff as an outside expert. They see you as biased. By quoting the opinions of outside experts you add credibility to your point and introduce a level of objectivity.

Quote an outside expert
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When you quote an outside expert it adds credibility and independance to your point.

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Data is a powerful tool for convincing colleagues and management to change. Make sure you are setting and tracking key performance indicators. Including data alongside stories of individual users creates a more compelling case.
Often management have written a company strategy. This is a document they care about because they created it. Show them that user experience design can help achieve the goals in that strategy. If you do you will be much more likely to get their support.
Clearly articulate the principles of user experience design to colleagues. Write a set of design principles outlining how the organisation should approach design. Principles such as designing with data and always starting with a users need.
Customer journey mapping is a great way of educating colleagues about users. Make sure you involve as many stakeholders in their creation as possible. Also ensure that your finished maps are referenced regularly and don’t just end up in a draw.

Customer journey maps
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Drip feed user experience best practice to your colleagues. Publish a newsletter where you highlight success stories, share expert opinion and show statistics. By regularly updating them you ensure they see the benefits of a user centric approach.
Blogging is a great way of educating colleagues. It is also good for building exposure and credibility. But for your blog to be effective you must blog regularly. This ensures colleagues don't forget to consider the user when making decisions.
Take a leaf out of the UK Government Digital Service book. Insist that all stakeholders in a project must have spent time with a user in the last six weeks. If they have not, they are not in a position to contribute to the direction of the project.
If you want to excite management and colleagues about the potential of a great user experience, show them it. A demo or a prototype will always be more compelling than a document or explanation. It doesn’t need to be perfect. It just needs to inspire.
Don’t try and convince management and colleagues to care about the user. Instead focus on the things they already care about. Show them how a better user experience will help them achieve their goals and benefit them personally.
Each month run usability test sessions on the same day. Meet with just three users in the morning and encourage as many colleagues as possible to attend. When colleagues can see users struggling they are more open to change.

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You cannot bring about cultural changes by yourself. You need to find other people in your organisation who care about the user experience as much as you do. They are out there. Together you can work on a plan for winning over still more people.
If you go to all the trouble of creating empathy maps for your users, don’t leave them in a draw. Instead turn them into attractive infographics and hang them in the office. This is a great way of reminding colleagues to think about the user.