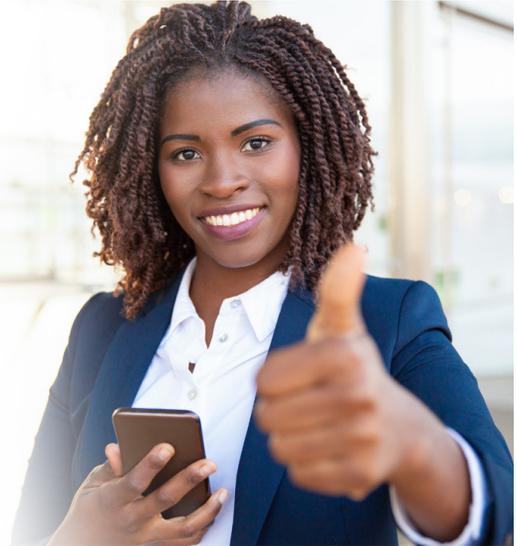


The Voice of the Customer: How to find it, how to use it

If you Google the phrase “What do customers want?” you will quickly find that, depending on who is expounding on the topic and what sort of customer is under the microscope, there are on average anywhere from 3 to 10 things that customers commonly want. One platform says customers are looking for “price, quality, choice and convenience.”

Another says customers want “preparation, simplicity, creativity, loyalty, accessibility and accountability,” and yet another lists “price, reliability & sustainability, risk reduction, usability & convenience, transparency, control, empathy & friendliness, [and] information.”



When crafting messages to reach and motivate customers — be they patients, general consumers, vendors of all types, students, purchasing agents for businesses and nonprofits, etc. — good marketing must always strive for messages that are resonant with their needs. Needless to say, listening to customers can also help you improve your market-positioning, product, service, customer service, and other customer-facing processes, among many other variables under your control.

So there is little, if anything, more essential for a business to succeed than understanding what customers want because for most businesses the quality of the customer experience is what differentiates them from their competitors. Whatever your business goals may be and whichever list of customer needs are paramount, you cannot move forward without the Voice of the Customer (VOC), what many view as “the component of customer experience that focuses on customer needs, wants, expectations and preferences.”

There are lots of ways to listen

Fortunately, for something so fundamental, there are a plethora of means to capture the VOC and glean the

information that can spell the difference between a business succeeding or failing. The means and methods of listening to the VOC include, but are not limited to:

- interviewing customers at events like trade shows or at shopping malls (aka: intercepts)
- focus groups;
- monitoring social media;
- fostering and communicating with a body of beta testers;
- emailed, online, or physical customer surveys;
- soliciting customer comments (say, via video tools like **Vouch**), customer voicemails, and even physical comment cards);
- monitoring customer reviews on Yelp, Google, and other platforms;
- measuring your “Net Promoter Score” (asking customers how likely they are to recommend your business or product to someone);
- talking with employees who deal directly with customers;
- mapping customer behavior by using website analytics (e.g., Google Analytics), product analytics

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(e.g., Amplitude and Mixpanel), and user experience mapping (e.g., Crazy Egg).

- Among others

Whatever the method, the common goal is to ask questions that provide both positive insight and constructive criticism. Are customers unhappy with your price point? Do they have trouble using your product? Does your service or product actually make life easier or does it just stress them out? Is there a reason they've left you behind? What do they love about the experience of working with your organization?

What will you do with what you've heard?

In order to remain competitive and reduce their customer churn rate, a bank in Johannesburg, South Africa decided to use VOC

and perform a comprehensive analysis on customer feedback across all their official channels, as well as social media. The bank used a hashtag-based campaign to gather feedback from customers regarding what they loved and hated about the bank. This

campaign generated two million pieces of feedback, which was used to create custom categories that divided the feedback based on what bank service customers were saying regarding mobile banking, fees and charges, etc. Named Entity Recognition, or NER, the bank then used conduct sentiment analysis by allocating sentiment

scores to the different comments. These scores allowed the bank to identify which areas and issues needed their attention most.

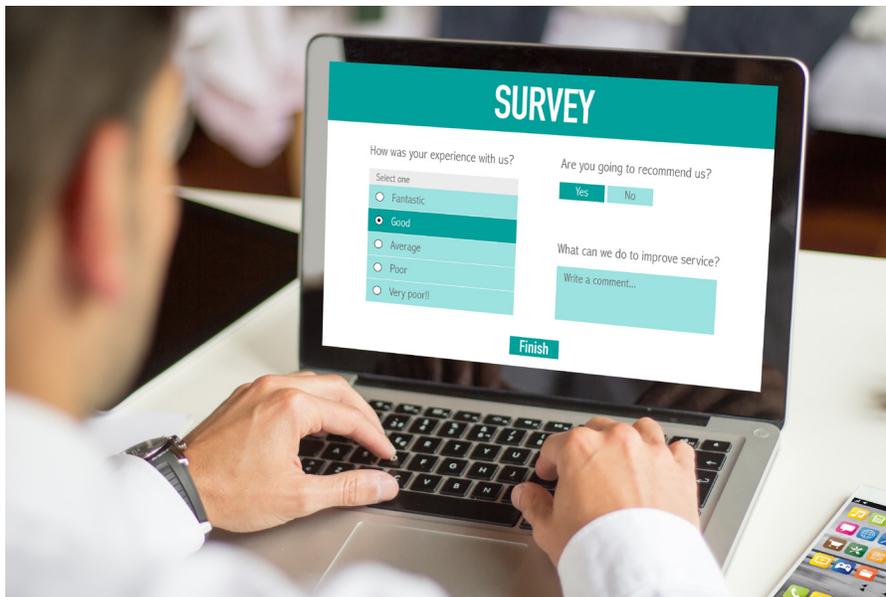
Cowley Associates also has expertise in capturing and leveraging VOC. For example, a recent client of ours — a civil engineering firm — engaged us to perform a rebranding exercise, given that their current brandmark focused on a single and previously predominant aspect of its business (landscaping). Cowley's VOC research showed that both current and potential customers were unaware of the firm's broader expertise in civil engineering, community development projects, wind power, and water/waste-water engineering, and more. Another finding was that current customers craved more direct access to (or at least visibility of) the firm's senior partners.

These and other findings guided Cowley's marketing strategies, one manifestation of which was a new corporate video that 'killed two birds' by simultaneously promoting the firm's range of services and using their senior partners to do so.

We've also helped customers leverage VOC in case

histories, testimonial videos, call-out quotes, and referral programs, among other strategies and tactics.

If you want help with any of these methods of leveraging VOC, call or email Cowley Associates to help your business understand your customers and what they need from you.



Need help capturing and then leveraging the voice of YOUR customers? Reach out to Gail Cowley today at 315-475-8453 extension 1 or via email at gcowley@cowleyweb.com.