Amplify Your Voice of the Customer Initiatives

How to Successfully Transform Your Customer Experience Program with Digital Feedback
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Businesses around the world are aggressively driving customer interactions to digital channels (web, mobile web and mobile apps) to lower the cost of doing business — and because customers are demanding it. In a recent Verint® market study of more than 24,000 consumers in 12 countries conducted through Opinium Research LLC, 64 percent of respondents say they favor digital channels for simple interactions.*

While the move to digital meets customer needs, it creates new challenges for organizations to create differentiation through superior customer experience (CX). Organizations that attempt to obtain feedback on digital interactions often find that response rates are shockingly low. This creates an interesting conundrum: more consumers are increasingly interacting with brands digitally and fewer are providing feedback, making it more difficult to gain the necessary insights to understand the customer experience and guide the organization as to how to best meet those needs.

To improve customer journey insight, brands must evolve their efforts to collect feedback differently. Traditional forms of company-initiated surveys and feedback mechanisms only go so far in a digital-by-default world. Today organizations also need the means to capture, analyze and act on real-time customer-initiated feedback.

Effective omnichannel customer experience differentiation is difficult in the modern-day enterprise. But organizations that are not focused on remodeling their organizations to respond to new and evolving customer demands do so at their peril.

Voice of the Customer (VoC) programs help companies listen to customer feedback, interpret that feedback, and act on it, providing a data-driven approach to improving the overall customer experience and building a customer-centric culture.

VoC programs can also drive additional business benefits, such as increasing customer retention and lowering costs to serve. In sectors where there is a choice of brands, a company’s ability to provide a superior customer experience pays off in increased loyalty, brand advocacy and market share.

But having a VoC program in place doesn’t always ensure business results. And all too often, organizations aren’t getting the ROI they need from their VoC initiatives to drive improvements in customer experience or operational efficiencies.

While many companies have efforts in place to collect VoC feedback, many industry analyst firms say the vast majority aren’t successful in driving action with VoC data or in proving the value of their VoC efforts.
For every customer, there can be a thousand points of insight across journeys from a product delivery, use, and service and support perspective. Multiply this by myriad interaction channels and you can begin to understand the challenge organizations face in capturing, analyzing and acting on feedback to gain a deep understanding of each individual’s customer experience and the brand's performance in addressing those needs.

What’s more, the types of customer feedback are broad and varied. They include:

- solicited and unsolicited feedback (such as social media tweets)
- structured and unstructured feedback (such as complaint calls)
- direct and implied feedback (correlating behavior patterns such as a product purchase or cancellation)
- overall brand perception and interaction-level feedback that evaluates perceptions for a specific interaction (such as check out or customer support)

Moreover, it’s hard to effectively make sense of customer feedback when data is kept in silos and information is not shared in large, complex organizations with many customer touch points and internal stakeholders.
Aligning Voice of the Customer Programs with Consumer Needs

One of the biggest challenges in orchestrating VoC programs is alignment with consumer behavior. Consumers will provide feedback only when the means to collect those insights are unintrusive, when that exchange takes place on their own terms and at times they are willing to provide it.

Traditional methods of gathering digital feedback such as pop-up or pop-under surveys are increasingly ineffective because they’re intrusive, distracting and disrespectful of customers’ time. To this end, brands must be prepared with the right mechanisms in place to listen to this insight when and where customers offer it.

But listening is ineffective without a way to analyze and act on the information. Without a centralized and holistic means to ingest customer feedback and respond to customers in a timely manner, organizations can frustrate customers and give the impression that they aren’t listening or valuing their feedback. As a result, customers may take their business elsewhere.

*Companies will increasingly win or lose on the battleground of customer experience. To win, you need actionable CX insights that allow you to prioritize investments that will continuously improve your customers’ experiences.*

*Forrester’s CX Index™ Home Page, retrieved May 2017*
The challenge and opportunity are to improve overall success and return on investment (ROI) from VoC initiatives by connecting the feedback dots across channels. This entails a holistic multi-channel listening approach that combines company-initiated feedback with customer-initiated feedback. With this approach, your customers can provide feedback via multiple channels and in ways that are convenient to them, encouraging authentic, valuable insights.

Speech and text analytics enable organizations to automate analysis of all feedback and distill key data to uncover process, product and service issues and help drive operational improvements through real-time and targeted action. Using these technologies can result in improvements to the consistency and quality of brand customer experience that can deliver measurable business impact.
Customers have a lot to say about their brand satisfaction and needs, but they don’t always say it in a manner that is plainly or clearly obvious. Holistic VoC programs give organizations full integration across all data types, to support an “early detection system” — providing the means to identify opportunities to mitigate issues that detract from the customer experience, and a heat map of potential business opportunities.

Below are areas organizations can focus on to gain significant ROI from listening and acting on customer feedback enabled via VoC programs:

- Feedback from major accounts or most valuable customers can be used to inform and formulate specific strategies to retain high-value customers.
- Feedback triangulating specific instances of impact can be used to identify gaps in the customer journey to optimize channels and/or processes.
- Customers showing a high degree of customer satisfaction may indicate receptivity for upsell/cross-sell activities.
- Indirect feedback from sources such as an email thread or a call recording can identify new sales lead opportunities.
- Inferred feedback from web usage data or cart abandonment data can uncover a need for more proactive sales intervention.
Done right, digital transformation enables organizations to be more efficient and more aligned with customer needs. This journey requires careful assessment/measurement to support continuous improvement — how is the organization progressing in this journey, and where are nips and tucks needed? Customer-centric organizations recognize the value in crowd-sourcing customer feedback to answer these questions.

Successful VoC programs compile feedback and data from different sources to provide rich context on customer experience and organizational responsiveness. This rich context can then be used to inform and engage stakeholders who have the power to drive action — providing the foundation for organizational change and continuous improvement.

Organizations that listen, analyze, and act on customer feedback create differentiated customer experiences. But not all post-feedback actions are the same; they can be segmented into two equally important categories — Small Loop and Large Loop actions.
Small Loop actions are typically customer-specific actions taken after a customer provides a poor rating, and/or also identifies an issue of concern. The follow-up is typically handled by one individual or a small group. Follow up may involve team member coaching, or other customer-specific actions for resolution.

Large Loop actions go beyond focused follow up with individual customers and involve analyzing trends in Small Loop actions to determine root cause. Once root cause is identified, organizations must determine the go-forward plan to reduce or eliminate Small Loop actions.

Changes often involve new policies, processes, technology, pricing, and even product features and almost always span organizational functions — often requiring significant investment. To this end, detailed analysis is necessary to support the requisite resource investment.

Large Loop actions prioritize and support organization change, employing rigorous, well-defined processes that account for input from a variety of sources, have explicit criteria for prioritizing and recommending improvements to senior management, and dictate who should be accountable for leading improvement efforts. The assigned team then investigates root causes and develops solutions, and both customers and employees are informed about progress as is relevant or required.
“If you don’t know where you’re going, any road will take you there.” Likewise, organizations that don’t apply best practices to VoC programs often find themselves lost without a defined path.

In work with organizations around the globe, Verint’s experience is that the best VoC programs are based on four core pillars:

1. **Listen and Capture Feedback Across all Channels**
2. **Analyze and Measure Trends**
3. **Distribute Insights to Key Stakeholders**
4. **Act on the Results**

These pillars are based on five foundational elements that help define overall success:

- **Vision** — the overall goals for a VoC program as agreed upon by key stakeholders.
- **Governance** — internal agreement on how the VoC program will be managed and how data will be disseminated internally and externally.
- **Culture** — a proactive approach to enable the organization to drive customer-centricity to all levels.
- **Processes** — how the organization will close the loop on feedback and change processes to affect change and address fundamental issues.
- **Technology** — the means to provide a consistent means of capturing, analyzing and acting on customer feedback.
Verint provides tools and methodology to help provide organizations with the ability to support the cultural change that is needed and the ability to unite stakeholders in a common vision of success.

Customers have access to a broad range of professional service offerings that help empower organizations to implement best-practice VoC programs, or take their existing programs to the next level.

Verint can help organizations stitch together a holistic understanding of customers’ experience across all channels and act on what they tell you throughout the customer journey/lifecycle. Verint also provides expert guidance to ensure knowledge transfer and skills development so organizations can develop center of excellence proficiencies to power their success.

Ready to learn more? Contact us today to learn more about how solutions from Verint and OpinionLab®, a Verint Company can help you discover actionable insights for meeting the needs of your customers.
Powering Actionable Intelligence.®

Verint® is a global leader in Actionable Intelligence® solutions with a focus on customer engagement optimization, security intelligence, and fraud, risk and compliance. Today, more than 10,000 organizations in over 180 countries — including over 80 percent of the Fortune 100 — count on Verint solutions to make more informed, effective, and timely decisions.