

Using the Voice of the Customer to Drive Real Business Results



The reason Voice of the Customer (VoC) programs exist is to monitor the customer experience and identify problems that it makes sense for the business to resolve.

Let us be more specific. An effective VoC program will likely uncover—and must address in one way or another—several categories of feedback from customers:

- 1 Complaints** – These reflect the negative experiences customers have had with the business. Perhaps they are unhappy that they are now being charged for services or content that was formerly free. Airline baggage fees, bank service fees, and “premium” online news content are all examples of things people complain about.
- 2 Comments, Suggestions, and Requests** – These are neutral-to-constructive statements that may provide strategic insight into how to run the business better. Sometimes they capture the experience of a relatively small subset of customers rather than the entire customer base. Take the music that’s played while waiting on hold, for instance. Some customers like classical music. Some like smooth jazz or lite rock. Yet another group prefers not to wait at all and is indifferent to what they are hearing.
It’s useful, we think, to filter these two categories through a third:
- 3 Problems that, if fixed, would benefit the customer and the business** – This is the classic win-win scenario. *Elaborating...* Customers may comment on many different issues, so the key is to be strategic. Use your resources to create solutions that benefit both customers and the business.

Consider fees for services or content. Removing them will not benefit the business, unless customers are deserting it for the competition. Reasonable options include reducing fees, making them competitive with businesses in the same sector, or perhaps restructuring them to appear as an incentive.

Or music on hold. An effort to reduce wait times can improve customer satisfaction and decrease abandonment rates. It’s better for the business because shorter wait times presumably mean that customer issues are being addressed and dealt with.

Communicating with Customers
If the business decides not to act on customer suggestions, it can still be beneficial to communicate with specific customers or the entire customer base around issues that are important to them.



Improving Business Outcomes

It's important to remember that customer feedback does not necessarily, nor should it, inform action to the exclusion of other considerations. One-off responses to customer issues that do not view feedback in the context of business operations as a whole and the market environment are typically less than optimal.

Listening to the voice of the customer is all about improving business outcomes. Customer feedback provides strong clues about what to look at in order to improve performance. Used correctly, this feedback can drive a listening effort that creates real business results: a campaign integrating a well-thought-out response to customer concerns with strategic communication to better serve and retain customers.

To learn more about Voice of the Customer strategy, please visit: beyondthearc.com/blog.

Let's talk...

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