

Ten Things Your Customers Want to Tell You (IF ONLY YOU WOULD ASK)



Voice of the Customer best practices

Customer feedback can increase your revenues. It can tell you about the performance of your sales force, the effectiveness of your marketing activities, the quality of your product and the power of your competitors.

It can, but unfortunately for many companies, it doesn't. Instead of making a real organizational impact, customer data sits in silos having a minimal effect on only the areas of the organization privy to the information. Before diving into the analysis of NitroMojo Voice of the Customer (VOC) responses, it's critical to understand why other VOC methodologies won't give companies this kind of revenue-impacting information.

There are three major pitfalls to a successful consumer relations feedback process.

1. Surveying only once or twice a year: The days of once-a-year customer satisfaction surveys are history. When the market is flooded with competitors, when product upgrades can be introduced in months (not years), when negative feedback can hit millions in minutes, companies must constantly be in-tune with the thoughts, opinions and insights of the market. If you're only asking once a year, you may be getting there too late to save a sale or make a real organizational impact.

2. Asking only customers: Some companies are doing an excellent job of routinely asking for feedback. Customers, on cue, receive a "how did we do?" survey following a purchase. But people who have already purchased only provide a partial perspective. Prospects, who are currently in the midst of your sales and marketing process can provide the perspective you need to compete more effectively and increase sales conversions.

3. Not getting the right people involved: If customer satisfaction surveys are done, the information is shared with the customer service team. If market research is done, the information is shared with the marketing team. The problem with this scenario is that there are valuable nuggets of constructive feedback about sales, product development, distribution, billing and more that aren't getting shared with the people who can actually do something about them. And isn't making real organizational change that impacts the bottom line the reason for doing this kind of research in the first place?

So, what is the right way to create a feedback loop for your organization? In contrast to the pitfalls, three axioms for a successful Voice of the Customer program are:

- *Ensure that the feedback happens on a continual basis.*
- *Gain perspective from customers, prospects and Distribution channels.*
- *Route feedback to the areas of the organization mentioned in the survey. Better yet, route the feedback to the individuals within the area who have decision making authority and can act on the results.*

When organizational leaders are on-board with the tenants of the program, VOC proponents must determine the best way to accomplish them. The most efficient way to implement a successful VOC program is to integrate it with your sales and marketing technology.

Think about it: a lead response comes in as a result of marketing activities and is fostered through the sales process. The relationship either ends in a sale for your company, ends in a decision to purchase another product or ends with no purchase at all. This contact is a prime target for asking the questions you need to know to make your business better. Because marketing activities are happening continuously, garnering feedback from leads that come through these activities will provide an ongoing flow of business intelligence.

NitroMojo's patent-pending VOC technology takes this a step further by integrating back-end routing rules into the feedback process. When VOC feedback comes in, the information received is automatically routed appropriate sales, customer service, marketing and others who have a need to know. VOC feedback is also aggregated and presented in dashboard reports to inform broader decisions including new product development, sales territory structures, Distributor channel relationship management, etc.



What customers had to say

The data that this eBook is based on was collected over a twelve month period through participating companies who had implemented the NitroMojo technology, including the automatic Voice of the Customer feedback and routing. The VOC data collected was provided by customers and prospects from a broad span of industries, job titles, marketing stimuli and geographic regions. Most of the participating companies were manufacturers who utilize both a captive sales force and channels.

VOC feedback data from thousands of customers and prospects across the client base were completed and submitted. NitroMojo research experts analyzed the data to determine if there were consistencies in the kind of VOC information provided to companies utilizing the NitroMojo sales & marketing technology. There were, in fact, consistencies. And each one demonstrated the power the NitroMojo VOC functionality can have in holding sales and Partner channels accountable, building a long-lasting relationship with customers, highlighting the importance of customer education and keeping a constant pulse of the competitive landscape.

The following are the revelations from the VOC analysis.



Prospects are trying to purchase, but nobody is contacting them

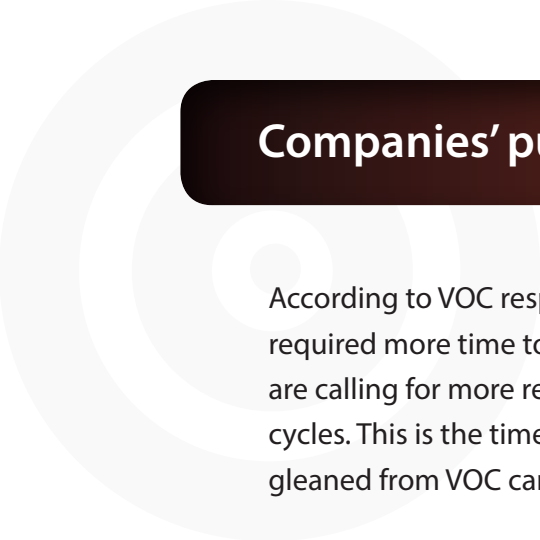
The number one reason a potential customer has not made a purchase is because he or she has not been contacted by anyone from Sales or from a Partner channel. In fact analysis of the VOC data indicated that 50 percent of sales leads never received a follow up. If the primary purpose of marketing is to generate leads for the sales team, and budget dollars are being funneled into activities to accomplish this goal, then consider the amount of money wasted when sales-ready leads don't receive the follow-up that leads to a conversion. Consider putting a customer feedback loop functionality into your sales and marketing process to prevent leads from falling through the cracks.

Companies aren't always marketing to the decision maker, but they can find out who needs to be included in the sales process

The second most common reason a lead contact has not purchased is because he or she is not the final decision maker. In these scenarios, the individual who responded to the marketing event is often the person responsible for researching options that will be posed to the decision maker. Through the automatic VOC process, however, the initial responders will often provide the name and contact information of the decision maker, so that individual can be included in marketing's efforts or contacted directly by sales.

Deals can come back from the dead

VOC can rejuvenate the sales process. A sales person may have counted a lead as "cold" and discontinued follow-up. However, on average, 15 percent of VOC respondents indicated that they want to be contacted immediately by someone in the sales force. This touchpoint, which allows prospective customers to "raise their hand" again quickly, turns non-responsive or closed leads into "hot" sales prospects.



Companies' purchase cycle timeframes may be unrealistic

According to VOC responses, most prospects who hadn't purchased simply required more time to complete their purchase decision process. Economic times are calling for more research on the part of buyers and therefore longer sales cycles. This is the time to build stronger relationships with customers. Information gleaned from VOC can help you do that.

VOC can help define realistic sales expectations

For customers who indicated that they were not ready to buy now, NitroMojo's VOC analysis suggests that at least 30 percent of them would be ready to purchase in six to nine months. It is the job of marketing and sales to ensure their brands don't fall off the customer's radar during this critical time. A formal lead nurturing program that includes consumer education through marketing tactics, as well as personal contact to build the sales relationship is crucial.

Customers want to give their feedback

On average, clients using the automated VOC functionality inherent in the NitroMojo technology received a 20-45 percent response rate to requests for feedback. There are good reasons for this solid return rate. The feedback form is quick and easy to access and complete, there is some type of viable incentive offered and individuals are genuinely interested in providing feedback about specific experiences with a company.

Although the VOC feedback process doesn't replace more exhaustive research efforts, the response rate is much higher than typical research projects, is broader in reach and facilitates immediate results on an ongoing basis.

VOC extends your marketing research & pays for itself

In the analysis, 80-90 percent of the people who received automatic VOC surveys opted-in to regular communication from companies via the VOC form. These individuals will go on to provide the greatest ROI for marketing campaigns. Utilizing an opt-in list, companies will generally experience a 30-35 percent response rate to their marketing efforts. If lists are purchased, the response rate is two percent or fewer. Collecting data pays for itself.

VOC By the Numbers

What have we found from our experience with VOC?

50% of marketing leads are not followed-up on by sales.

15% of cold leads want to be contacted immediately by the sales team.

30% of non-purchasers will be ready to purchase in six to nine months.

30-35% of customers will respond to a VOC form, as compared to 10% for typical research projects.

80-90% of customers will opt-in to your marketing database for further communication.

80% of customers know what your product does, but not who you are.

5% of customers will voluntarily refer a colleague for follow-up.

Product brand awareness is greatly lacking

On average, 80 percent of VOC responders recalled product attributes, but did not remember the companies' specific product brands (even if they purchased the product)! This is likely because the individual found the product by searching for its features, not by searching for a specific brand. The statistic drives home the need for consistent communication of brand messages. In the highly competitive marketplace, companies must ensure that their brand is top-of-mind, no matter where a potential customer is in the sales process. If it's a customer that has purchased, companies must make sure they support the buy- repeat-buy cycle. If the customer is researching product options, brand messaging will push him or her to purchase a specific company's product when they're ready.

Competitive intelligence is at your fingertips

A best practice in VOC feedback programs is to ask customers specifically what brand of products they are evaluating or purchased and why. NitroMojo VOC provides a continual stream of market intelligence for message refinement and new product development. While expensive research reports can tell companies who is competing in their space, NitroMojo VOC drills down further to determine which competitors are of most interest to your customers and prospects. Customers may not be so forthcoming with their sales representative, but the VOC process arm marketing, sales teams and Partner channels with the specific information they need to sell against competitive products.

VOC is a lead generation tactic

Approximately 5 percent of participating customers voluntarily referred a colleague through the NitroMojo VOC process making it a business development tool as well. More than ever, the power to make or break a sale is in the hands of influencers outside a company. For many organizations, customer referrals are one of their most potent sources of high conversion prospects, and they are constantly brainstorming ways to promote this further. The ability for a sales professional or a Partner Channel representative to mention a referrers name can help them jump through many of the initial sales hoops with ease.

Conclusion

A VOC program can assist companies in garnering the information they need to grow revenues, make marketing and sales strategies more effective, stay on the cutting edge of customer product needs and keep a watchful eye on their heaviest competitors. To achieve this success, however, customer feedback needs to be continual, it needs to be widespread and the information needs to be shared with individuals in the company who can act on it. The best way to achieve these best practices and achieve significant organizational impact is to integrate customer feedback into the lead management process.

About NitroMojo

At NitroMojo we are obsessed with the Customer and believe that sound relationships with End Buying Customers is a vital factor to profitable growth. When selling through Partner Channels most often the End Buying Customer and a dialog with them isn't integrated effectively into CRM processes or technology. As a result, there's simply too much reliance on the Partner Channels to promote your brand, book sales and launch products.

NitroMojo changes all that by giving you the control of your markets while strengthening Partner Channel relationships. This is accomplished through:

CAPTURE: Through intelligent forms management tied to marketing initiatives, NitroMojo automatically & efficiently collects valuable End Buying customer and Partner data that is visible and actionable throughout the organization.

ENGAGE: Customizable, automated triggers based on business rules tied to data, stimulate actions by End Buying customers, Partners and Sales & Marketing stakeholders facilitating a customer focused operation.

UNDERSTAND: More than 40 drillable dashboards organized by roll provide real time insights into competitors, customer demand trends, sales barriers, marketing ROI, Partner performance, unmet customer needs, sales performance, forecasting and win/losses.

MANAGE: Role focused functionality makes coordination, collaboration and accountability easy between Partner Channels, End Buying customers, Sales, Marketing and Product Management taming the attribution that loses sales.

To learn more about how NitroMojo can make an immediate improvement to your bottom line, visit www.nitromoj.com or call **866-314-MOJO (6656)**.

