

How to Find the Best Feedback Channel for Your Organisation

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There is no one ideal way to collect customer data for every industry. The success of your Voice of Customer program greatly depends on a number of factors, such as your industry, company size, resources, budget and more. To truly find the best channel collection method(s) for your organization, you need to take the time to map out your customer's journey, and find:

1. The most prevalent touchpoints they are using
2. The touchpoints they are not using
3. The touchpoints they are beginning to use (foresight is essential in today's fast-paced, tech-savvy world)

Most experts agree that, on average, a high success rate for customer experience requires multiple approaches to customer engagement, all operating in parallel. The most common methods include:

Solicited Methods

- Email
- SMS
- Web
- Phone
- Retail kiosks
- In-house paper surveys

Unsolicited Methods

- SM comments
- Online comments
- Phone comment
- In-person comments

When comparing and contrasting the success rates of these channels, it's important to stay focused on your business objectives. One important question to ask is:

Why am I collecting feedback in the first place?

- Is it to find out what my customers think of our company's services?
- Is it to find out what customers' needs are?
- Is it to find out if we are meeting or failing their demands?
- Is it to find out how big of a gap (if any) exists between our brand promise and what customers actually experience/receive?

Once you've done that, it's imperative to also ask:

What do I intend to do with this feedback?

- Am I going to create a system and process to improve on the issues that are raised?
- Am I going to change how we operate or market our products and services?
- Am I going to use this information to improve retention and ROI?
- Am I going to use this information to strategize untapped revenue opportunities with customers?
- Am I going to understand who our most high-risk customers are and how better to market offers and promotions to them?
- Am I going to close the loop with customers that have reported a negative and unsatisfactory experience?
- Am I going to share this feedback with key stakeholders in my company to help improve the overall customer experience and drive a company culture focused on the voice of the customer?

After you've really approached the issue with thought and care, then you can begin employing the methods of collection that work best for you. Not sure where to start? Here is a general comparison of some of the more popular channels based on our experience in the industry.

Solicited Email



Pros: Email surveys have an average response rate of anywhere between 8-10%. This is generally regarded as a good percentage for the low cost of creating the surveys (in many cases, it is next to none) and its vast reach capabilities (almost everyone uses email).

Cons: This type of survey can contribute to what some call "survey fatigue," and can end up in the spam or trash folder depending on who you send it to.

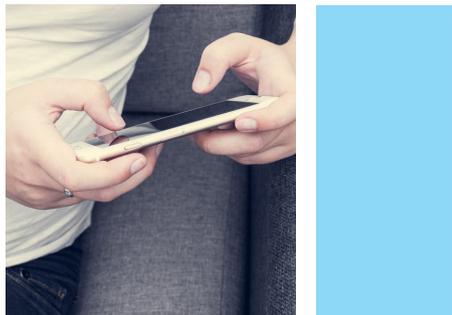
Tips & Stats:

- Make email surveys mobile optimized because 67.2% of consumers use a smartphone to check their email¹
- By 2018, 80% of email users are expected to access their email accounts via a mobile device²

¹ "Mapp Report: 2016 Consumer Views of Email Marketing," <http://www.bluehornet.com>/www.bluehornet.com 2016.

² The Radicati Group, Inc., "Email Statistics Report, 2014-2018," April 2014.

Solicited SMS/Text Surveys



Pros: SMS surveys, in many industries, have the highest open and response rates of any channel. For some industries, open rates are as high as 90-98%, while response rates can be anywhere from 30-48%. SMS/texts work well because they are short, easy to use and can be extremely timely (the best SMS surveys are sent right after a key interaction, such as a purchase or bill payment).

Cons: You must have access to mobile phone numbers. They are also more expensive due to carrier fees, and require you to work with a vendor who has SMS gateway integration.

Tips & Stats: Many companies also send links to online surveys within the text. This allows for lengthier and more detailed feedback should the customer wish to say more.

- Text messages have a 98% open rate, vs. email with a 20% open rate (Mobile Marketing Watch)³
- Text messaging has a 45% response rate, vs. email with a 6% response rate (Velocify)⁴
- Texting takes up 14.1% of cell phone users' time (Nielsen)⁵
- 90% of all text messages are read in under 3 minutes (Connect Mogul)⁶
- 96% of smartphone users text (Acision)⁷

³ "SMS Marketing Wallops Email with 98% Open Rate and Only 1% Spam." "www.mobilemarketingwatch.com" www.mobilemarketingwatch.com August 6, 2014.

⁴ "Text Messaging for Better Sales Conversion." HYPERLINK "http://www.velocify.com" www.velocify.com 2012.

⁵ Nielsen Netview and Nielsen Mobile Mediaview, August 2012.

⁶ mobileSQUARED commissioned by SinglePoint, "Conversational Advertising," June 2010.

⁷ "New Acision Research Reveals UK Smartphone Owners Are 'Eclectic Communicators' With 76% Using a Mix of Messaging Services Today." www.prnewswire.com February 25, 2013.

Solicited Web

Pros: Implementing a survey on your website is a great way to capture data from customers who are already engaging with your company online (it's less invasive). Using data from your web analytics, you can also target your surveys to the most appropriate/popular pages. You can also reduce calls to contact centres with better online services.

Cons: Lower response rates than other channels. More research of web interactions required. Technology integration can be difficult with older sites.

Tips & Stats:

- A well designed website can lead to great customer experiences and reduced call volume and call volume costs. By mapping the customer journey and collecting feedback on the very channel customers are having issues with, you can make valuable changes to your site and pages, resulting in better services to customers.
- Consider integrating a Live Chat service. According to an eDigital survey in 2014, 73% of consumers prefer live chat via a company website for customer service related queries.⁸

⁸ edigitalresearch.com, "Customer Service Benchmark", 2014.

Solicited Phone



Pros: Companies have the choice between liveagent interactions, Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI), or automated interactions, such as Interactive Voice Response (IVR). Live agent surveys have extremely high completion rates of up to 85%, but automated surveys are cheaper and more consistent in delivery and responses.

Cons: These interactions are slower, more expensive than email and are seen as invasive by many. Additionally, it can be hard to collect sensitive information, and in-person interactions have some inconsistencies, while automated interactions can be perceived as uncaring. With the rise of outsourcing contact centres, there can also be difficulties managing consistent services offshore.

Tips & Stats:

- Call back strategies have extremely beneficial outcomes. With a goal of getting back to customers within 24 hours after a key interaction or complaint, major brands have been able to save billions in revenue and lost business.
- Forrester research found that live agent calls can cost between \$6-12, while an automated interaction can cost as little as 25 cents.⁹

⁹ Forrester Total Economic Impact™ Study Prepared for ATG, "The Total Economic Impact™ Of Click to Call And Click to Chat," August 2010.

Unsolicited Email



Pros: Getting feedback without any effort is always a bonus, regardless of whether the feedback is positive or negative. Email is an effective and costless channel in which to receive important comments, many of which come from customers who are ready to churn or who have pressing concerns that need to be addressed immediately.

Cons: Can be hard to track down the customer.

Tips & Stats:

- Make the feedback channel easy for customers to find and use.
- Respond in a timely manner

Unsolicited Social Media

Pros: There is no question that social media usage for customer service is on the rise. Benefits include real-time interaction and minimal or no cost. It is also easy-to-use and increasing in popularity among the general public.

Cons: With so many social media sites and apps out there, it is hard to stay engaged all the time on each and every one. Moreover, it's hard to know which sites will remain popular over time, making it difficult to allocate resources and time spent on monitoring. Quite often, comments on social media can backfire on a company's reputation if not handled and managed properly. Intensive oversight can also be time consuming.

Tips & Stats:

- 55% of customer requests for service on social media are not acknowledged.
- 84% of social media service interactions are escalated to other channels.
- 13% of companies claim that 25% of service requests start socially.
- 72% of Facebook interactions are never completed, in any channel.
- 67% of escalated social interaction go back to channel of origin¹⁰

¹⁰Kolsky, Esteban. Annual survey associated with ThinkJar Research, 2015, referenced from "50 Important Customer Experience Stats for Business Leaders." "<http://www.huffingtonpost.com>" www.huffingtonpost.com October 15, 2016.

Your business is unique, so your collection methods should be as well. Depending on your industry, budget and organisational goals, you may need to focus on CATI or contact centre services to increase retention and revenue (such as with a callback program), or you may need focus on online services to cut down on calls made to the contact centre. Whatever the objective, you must ensure you have a fully integrated customer experience program that is able to monitor and track the various channels in tandem. This ensures consistency across the board, and leads to better services as your customers go from one channel to the next.

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