Data to Dialogue: Revealing Your Customer's Voice

Maximize the Impact of a Customer Centric Approach

Does your organization have a strategic approach to utilizing customer data? Organizations routinely collect data, analyze it, and optimize their processes. However, many organizations stop there, missing an opportunity to bolster their understanding of their customers' needs, wants, expectations, and preferences—also known as the voice of the customer (VoC)—a big part of the customer experience (CX) framework.

While data is the key to understanding the customer journey, there are several reasons why organizations may be missing opportunities to tap into the full potential of their data to build this story.

- **Missing Data Sources:** Each customer's interaction with your products or services is an opportunity to collect data. Yet missing key metrics that shed light on customer touchpoints, from website analytics to customer survey results, will leave gaps in your CX strategy.
- **Data Analysis Lens:** Some organizations are already collecting the right data, but they are not applying a CX lens when analyzing it. Leveraging a customer-centric approach unlocks additional value from existing data sources.
- **Organizational Silos:** Often, individual business units are already collecting key data and analyzing VoC independently. However, without combining insights across the organization, teams may make decisions based on an incomplete picture of the customer journey.

Consider how easily accessible cross-channel data can help you avoid blind spots in the customer journey. Equipped with a holistic view of your customers, your organization can create a data-driven CX strategy that supports positive experiences, ultimately enabling continuously enhanced products and services that meet your customers' evolving needs.

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Identifying the Data

VoC data can be obtained from many sources:

Customer feedback through surveys and interviews

Direct customer interactions, such as service calls, sales calls, social media conversations, email and chat interactions, online reviews, and forums

Transactional data, such as purchase history, support tickets, and call logs

Behavioral data related to product usage, application engagement, and web metrics

Market studies such as competitive benchmarking, industry white papers, and research

Most organizations have at least one contact center providing opportunities to learn from and improve CX and VoC. These interactions shed light on direct customer feedback, needs, challenges, and anomalies. Contact centers have the potential to serve as a massive data repository of eye-opening insights, including why a customer called, what they called about, whether their issue was resolved, how long it took to resolve the issue, and more. A few questions to consider:

1. Do you currently collect first-call resolution metrics or caller trends?

2. Are you turning those metrics into contact center operational enhancements, or converting them into software improvements or communication strategies?

3. Have you combined contact center data with other sources, like social media metrics, to get a broader perspective of your customer?

While each metric alone is valuable for optimizing contact center operations and service quality, organizations will often benefit from strategically employing a more robust plan. Through qualitative and quantitative data spanning your organization, you can uncover a full picture of your customer's journey, which allows you to better understand how users engage with your products and services, what is working well, and where you can enhance offerings.

Importance of Understanding Your Customer's Journey

Prioritizing CX empowers organizations to deliver services that meet rising customer expectations, which can build brand trust and loyalty. To enhance your customers' experience, it is critical to accurately understand their entire journey with your products, services, and brand. Capturing a comprehensive view of VoC, revealed through rich customer data, has long-term benefits.

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Consider mobile-friendly software: customers increasingly want to access information and services at their convenience through mobile devices. Designing mobile-friendly software to meet user preferences often improves customer satisfaction and digital business outcomes, ultimately resulting in enhanced brand trust and loyalty.

Proven Results

Guidehouse has experience executing CX strategies for public and commercial clients. For a high-profile federal agency initiative, Guidehouse developed a roll-out strategy and strategic communications approach for modernized software that was launching for over four million users. To facilitate a seamless transition from the legacy system to a new system, Guidehouse focused on meeting customers where they were, beginning with developing a clear understanding of the end user's journey.

The Guidehouse team tapped into data from a variety of previously disparate sources across the agency, including interactive voice response and call sentiment data from multiple contact centers, and agency website click analytic reports. In parallel, the team analyzed external data sources to understand market best practices and customer sentiment about the existing platform. Combining these data sources ultimately unlocked richer insights about the customer's journey. The team analyzed and synthesized data through a human-centered design approach, using user personas and journey maps to uncover behaviors, motivations, goals, and pain points.

This consolidated view of the end user's journey informed the roll-out strategy and targeted communications approach to address the various needs of different audience segments. Through this exercise, the Guidehouse team also uncovered process pain points that were addressable through quick-win user interface enhancements, one of which reduced related contact center traffic by 39%.

Ultimately, Guidehouse tackled the problem from a bird's-eye view by collecting data across the organization and bringing it together to paint a clear picture of the customer's needs, resulting in a successful product launch.

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The connection between effective VoC strategies and tangible business outcomes is clear: Thoughtfully executed strategic CX initiatives result in positive organizational outcomes.[1]

Uncovering the full potential of your organization's data can be a daunting undertaking. Adopting a truly customer-centric organizational culture requires a mindset shift to focus on VoC, eliminate data silos, and champion human-centered solutions. However, the long-term benefits of this cultural change are clear and impactful.

[1] Ray, Augie. "Prove the ROI Business Case of Customer Experience Programs While Staying Customer-Centric," 10 Nov. 2023, www.gartner.com

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To start on the path toward a customer-centric approach, consider:

1. Conducting a VoC audit to identify existing data sources and gaps.

2. Investing in CX technologies to integrate data across departments and facilitate real-time insight.

3. Conducting cross-department workshops to eliminate data silos and foster a collaborative environment focused on the customer journey.

As your VoC efforts mature, emerging technologies in the form of artificial intelligence (AI) and predictive analytics can go a long way to enhance VoC data collection and analysis. For example, AI-driven chatbots can provide real-time customer support previously accomplished by customer service representatives and collect valuable data on customer feedback and sentiment. Predictive analytics can forecast customer behavior so that organizations can proactively address issues before they escalate.

At the end of the day, your customers define your brand, your market position, and your value, so keeping your finger on the pulse of your customer is critical.

About Guidehouse

Guidehouse is a leading global provider of consulting services to the public sector and commercial markets, with broad capabilities in management, technology, and risk consulting. By combining our public and private sector expertise, we help clients address their most complex challenges and navigate significant regulatory pressures focusing on transformational change, business resiliency, and technology-driven innovation. Across a range of advisory, consulting, outsourcing, and digital services, we create scalable, innovative solutions that help our clients outwit complexity and position them for future growth and success. The company has more than 16,000 professionals in over 55 locations globally. Guidehouse is led by seasoned professionals with proven and diverse expertise in traditional and emerging technologies, markets, and agenda-setting issues driving national and global economies. For more information, please visit guidehouse.com.

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