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Voice of the Customer Initiatives: *What do they really think?*



In a data-driven world, quantitative-based market research, including web-based surveys and analytics, provide an effective means to canvas a broad swath of the marketplace. But while quantitative research captures public opinion, the findings lack depth, explanation, and relevance. This is a particular conundrum for B2B companies dependent on understanding what their customers are thinking.

The solution is a Customer Perception Audit, the heart of all Voice of the Customer initiatives, to capture a customer's expectations, preferences and aversions.

Complementary to quantitative research, a customer perception audit focuses on direct outreach with customers through a series of one-on-one, confidential, highly-structured, and in-depth interviews.

By engaging in dialogues, customer perception audits establish a forum for interviewees to “tell it like it is” with candid commentary on their business needs and actual thinking. The results are comprehensive, standardized, and actionable to inform sales, marketing, product development and MIS/IT.

Business Benefits

- **Obtain a greater understanding of customer needs:** Capture attitudes, experiences, and service issues to improve your business decisions and protocols.
- **Gather competitive intelligence:** Garner insights into key competitors based on your customers' direct experiences and perceptions.
- **Improve offerings and drive product innovations:** Adjust current product features, delivery, service and pricing concerns while informing new product creations, technologies and methodologies.
- **Leverage insights for improved messaging:** Develop a common language when communicating with customers to improve your sales and marketing programs.
- **Create positive PR with customers:** Demonstrate a commitment to customer concerns, and generate goodwill, particularly if improvements are made.

FAQs

Will my clients and customers participate?

Yes. While some will resist, the majority are open to participating, particularly when a third-party conducts the interviews, allowing for free and open discourse.

Why do I need this if I already use web-based surveys and social media monitoring?

Social media monitoring and listening, have emerged as a way to garner insights into online conversations and identify ethnographic differences. Often, these online conversations are very candid but they lack depth and context. Rather, a customer audit is the centerpiece of a complete Voice of the Customer program.

Can a customer perception audit be extended to include other audiences?

Absolutely. Questionnaires can be modified to conduct outreach to such key stakeholders as employees, contractors, suppliers, vendors, industry associations and regulators to provide even greater input into business planning and marketing programs.

What are the fees for a Customer Perception Audit?

Fees are determined by the size of the customer sample. Customer perception audits are highly affordable and cost-effective, particularly in light of the quality of the insights gleaned.

How are Customer Perception Audits conducted?

We follow a simple, straightforward five-step process:

- 1 Intelligence gathering** – We take the time to understand your business and become fluent in your company’s products, services, delivery methods, channel partners, and other aspects related to client engagement.
- 2 Questionnaire development** – Working with your organization, we develop carefully constructed questionnaires to elicit responses on an array of issues.
- 3 Outreach and interviews** – After you identify customer targets, we prepare the follow-up communications; we then schedule and conduct the interviews, typically beyond the prescribed 30-minutes to go “off-script” in gleaning interesting insights.
- 4 Cull results to isolate key findings** – We compile key findings to identify key themes and major concerns, supported by specific customer comments.
- 5 Draft report and issue recommendations** – We prepare a report detailing our findings and recommendations for moving forward; we will also prepare a presentation for management, as requested.

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