

'Real Time Customer Feedback – It's within in your grasp and your budget'

Written by Rebecca Mingay

For years obtaining real time customer feedback was a dream for businesses. At a recent workshop held in Edinburgh ICD Partnership Ltd and technology experts, Servicetick, demonstrated how the partnership of research fundamentals and software innovation has made this an economically viable and painless process. The ICD Partnership helps clients design and implement the architecture required to implement a successful customer experience strategy whilst ServiceTick has pioneered innovative real time customer measurement tools for use on and offline.

The event was attended by a wide array of recognised businesses, including SEPA, Apex Hotels, Lombard, Volkswagen, Gleneagles Hotel, Prudential and Scottish Life.

Pressures on business...

There is currently a lot of pressure on businesses from regulation, such as TCF and Best Value, and customer expectations, to provide positive customer experiences. Often the regulation is the result of recognised failure to do things well while accreditation is sought after for perceived competitive advantage. Charters and promises are often found on the wall but really living up to all these principles can become confusing and difficult.

Add to this the fact that businesses are now operating across a multitude of channels, which customers regularly jump between and as customers we have different expectations for each channels requiring a different treatment.

For years customers were happy to trust corporate marketing literature however they now look further a field in their search for information and feedback, often turning to the web and in particular social sites. This has lead to huge opportunities for advocacy but also for the sharing of negative comments seen by the World in seconds e.g. Trip Advisor, Facebook, Twitter.

These pressures have helped to motivate businesses to engage with customers, try to understand their behaviour and enhance their overall experience.

Other key motivations for exploring real time feedback, highlighted at the workshop included: the need for enhanced reporting on the customer experience; wanting to know more about customers, how they think and behave; identifying new ways of gathering customer insight; looking at improving existing frameworks; pragmatic ways of getting feedback; gathering actionable feedback; finding out what matters to customers.

Challenges facing businesses...

There seem to be common themes in the challenges facing businesses.

- understanding different expectations and priorities of the different segments
- hearing what customers are really saying – not hearing it through the internal filters of staff and the language of the businesses
- gathering information from customers who don't use their voice (the silent majority?)
- managing consistency across the brand
- managing and maintaining a consistent experience across channels and third parties balancing experience delivery with profitability
- managing retention
- understanding the diversity of requirements for direct customers and stakeholders.

Another key challenge commonly faced by businesses is the speed at which they can capture customer's feedback. Time delays can dramatically distort responses, with issues often being exacerbated by feelings of being ignored or reduced as the intensity of the emotion dissipates over time. This is where ServiceTick real time solutions have been demonstrated to be extremely valuable in both the collection of specific feedback or sales optimisation.

ServiceTick Real Time Feedback Solutions...

The ServiceTick solution captures customer responses when they matter the most, at the point of the experience.

The only product of its kind, it is capable of covering all channels and designed to be easily implemented within existing IT systems with no hardware requirements. Thus tracking a customer's entire journey across channels is possible. The system is bespoke, ensuring that it meets individual client needs efficiently and is proven to be successful at increasing loyalty, conversion rates and a number of rescued sales. There are no known barriers to implementing the system and so most installations can happen within days and with minimum interference. In addition, the system is also very cost-effective as it is provided on a pay as you go basis with no license fee required.

IVR Survey...

One key application of the ServiceTick system is IVR surveys, which can be used both on and offline. These are commonly used within call centre environments. Call agents ask callers if they would like to participate in a survey at the end of the call and if the answer is yes, they are automatically transferred to the automated survey. Research has shown that callers are willing to answer questions for 2 – 4 minutes. The survey can ask an unlimited number of questions which combine keypad responses and verbatim responses, which are then recorded on an online console.

The key to success is in the preparation of the correct questions asked to the right customer segments, which is where ICD's experience and expertise can be of immense value. A bank of questions is designed and each survey will randomly select a question from each category within the bank, to ensure a comprehensive picture is generated. Key words e.g. "unhappy" can be identified and once said by a customer, an alert sent to identified personnel. These alerts will trigger an agreed action e.g. "call the customer back to discuss their comments further".

This system allows KPIs and staff performance monitoring in real time. Results are often used to create league tables, which naturally induce increased performance levels whilst providing a rich picture of what constitutes good behaviour in the eyes of the customers. Statistics generated also ensure that it is not only good customers who are selected for surveys. The ability to capture and analyse verbatim text is a major leap forward in analysis which otherwise is either prohibitively time-consuming and expensive. It also has the benefit of helping to improve search engine search placings.

Online surveys can also be introduced as Pop-up or Pop-under surveys (these are in the background so are not intrusive and thus generate a good response). Pop-under surveys appear after a web browser has been closed, so do not stop or delay the customer doing what they wish to online e.g. browse, obtain a quote or make a purchase. Such surveys can be branded, as required, by the client and changed depending upon the customers behaviour e.g. whether browsing or buying.

This is an extremely flexible system that can be evolved as it can only take 10 – 15 minutes to implement a new survey.

IVR surveys can deploy free phone numbers enabling customers to call and complete a survey on their own accord e.g. in an airport lounge or branch outlet.

With the internet continuing to be one of the main channels used by customers, ServiceTick also offers clients an innovative system for monitoring customers' online experiences.

Introducing SessionCam...

"SessionCam" monitors an entire online journey and identifies specific events as they happen, such as customers falling away from the site, fraudulent manipulation of data, technical errors and areas of difficulty. Alerts are sent to specified personnel who can then follow up the experience with a phone call or email depending upon the priority of the customer. Phone calls that have presented as being a customer care call can naturally lead onto being a sales call and have proven conversion rates of 15 – 30%.

SessionCam records journeys in real time, capturing information as it is input. It is proven to help optimise web performance and is great for enabling clients to view their customers in their own space and time, rather than basing actions on what customers say they do. A full array of reporting functions are available for this system e.g. number of visitors, drop off rates, time spent on fields, trouble spots, re-entered data.



Clearly It is vital that this tool is used properly and not aggressively to maintain the trust and confidence of customers in the brand.

And finally...

The ICD and ServiceTick partnership is unique. It offers clients and end to end service combining specific consultancy expertise and innovative technology which establishes the ability to obtain real time customer feedback using a sophisticated tool that is both time and cost effective.

ICD can assist where required to ensure that there is the appropriate architecture to support the introduction and success of using Servicetick. Services include project managing the planning process; making the best use of existing feedback; designing and mapping out new customer experiences and analysing captured feedback.

ServiceTick offers invaluable feedback in an extremely user friendly tool, that helps clients to stay alongside customers and one step ahead of the competition when it comes to providing a positive and fruitful customer experience.

If you would like to discuss any of the solutions or services offered by ICD or ServiceTick, please do not hesitate to contact us either by phone or email.

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