

## Lost Your Voice? Getting the Customer Heard

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When I worked for Johnson and Johnson in the '90s, Voice of the Customer (VOC) was the way to go. Based on processes, it was seen as the way for companies to gather customer insight at every touchpoint, so that they might drive product and service improvement. At ICD Insight we are currently evaluating one of the recently developed marketing metrics – NPS (Net Promoter Score). Such is the controversy surrounding NPS we have decided to host our own debate to discuss its merits and whether you really can gain true insight using just one, apparently simple, metric.

If putting the customer at the heart of the business means attuning the whole organisation to their needs - what customers feel and think, what they say, how they act and respond to you and your competitors - then there are a few factors critical to doing this successfully:

1. Customers' needs are complex and so we need to understand a bit more than "will you buy more from us?" and "will you recommend us to friends?"
2. Customers' views change and different segments will hold different views – one survey, sent to everyone, every other year isn't exactly keeping your finger on the pulse or giving you the means to react quickly to problems!
3. Conventional research methods aren't always the best way to get under the skin of customers. Customers are not obliged and rarely examine their motivation or behaviour that closely. Their particular behaviour may not be a conscious thing, and almost certainly, their immediate concern is not with how your company can increase its profits with a new killer proposition that resolves a major issue they've been having! Asking them for ideas isn't always good enough.
4. Research programmes should really support the needs of the business users – the internal customers – too. That means that how you present and communicate the findings needs to be meaningful and helpful to how they take decisions and what they are trying to achieve.

At ICD Insight we're challenging conventional methods and putting them under scrutiny. We're also challenging clients and asking them just how well they understand customers and what their research is really telling them. We're asking questions about the types of research reports and the findings that in themselves are detailed and robust sources of information, but that never get off the desk or are circulated, discussed and used – surely the most expensive research around.

The really important customer insight seldom gets back to those in your company who need it. Sometimes this is because there is simply too much information and reports are not presented in such a way that focuses the results on the users.

At ICD Insight we are trying to tackle these issues. We want to work with you to establish the best form of research and feedback to support the achievement of your goals and then help you to ensure you can maintain the flow of meaningful data, on an on-going basis. In addition to making the best use of all your existing channels to gather and disseminate information, we have extended our service to incorporate "Dynamic Reporting" - in partnership with Kanyo, an innovative web and IT company. By drawing on their offering of a significantly enhanced visual platform, we are in a position to help clients ensure that research results don't just sit on desks – they come alive. By making the results live and breathe within your organisation, you can ensure that your findings really do make a difference and that your customer really can be heard.

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