

VOICE OF THE CUSTOMER HANDBOOK

How best-in-class companies win
by making customers matter

Stats, quotes
and case studies
included



YOUR CUSTOMERS ARE TALKING— ARE YOU LISTENING?

The customer's role in an organization is rapidly expanding. The top-performing businesses listen well to what their customers are saying, and use that feedback to better inform their messaging, brands and product improvements.

Whether using surveys and online review sites, a call center and online chat platform, social media or other communication channels, the collective "Voice of the Customer" (VOC) holds the key to pushing forward informed and innovative business decisions.

The Voice of the Customer concept encompasses capturing how customers feel about their experiences with a business, product and/or service. More businesses than ever before are building VOC programs to meet customer needs and stay ahead of the curve.

These programs identify and respond to customers' expectations, wants and needs. The goal is to improve customer satisfaction and loyalty.

But how do organizations successfully implement and maintain VOC programs that customers will engage in and respond to? The content and collaboration tools within an online community platform are paving the way for these programs.



USING AN ONLINE COMMUNITY TO ACHIEVE CUSTOMER GOALS YET?

Online communities put customers first—it's the community members that drive the conversation, ask and answer questions, share resources and relevant content and steer the organization's product and brand direction.

Whether or not an organization has an online community, there are three major goals for which any leading business strives: happy customers, better products and an even better organization. An online community can facilitate in accomplishing these goals.

“Place yourself in your customers’ shoes, and ask if you are giving them sticky, engaging and emotional experiences that they won’t want to leave.”

Lesley Lykins
Director of Member Engagement
The Customer Experience Professionals Association
(Quote provided from The 2015 State of Community Management Report, page 31)



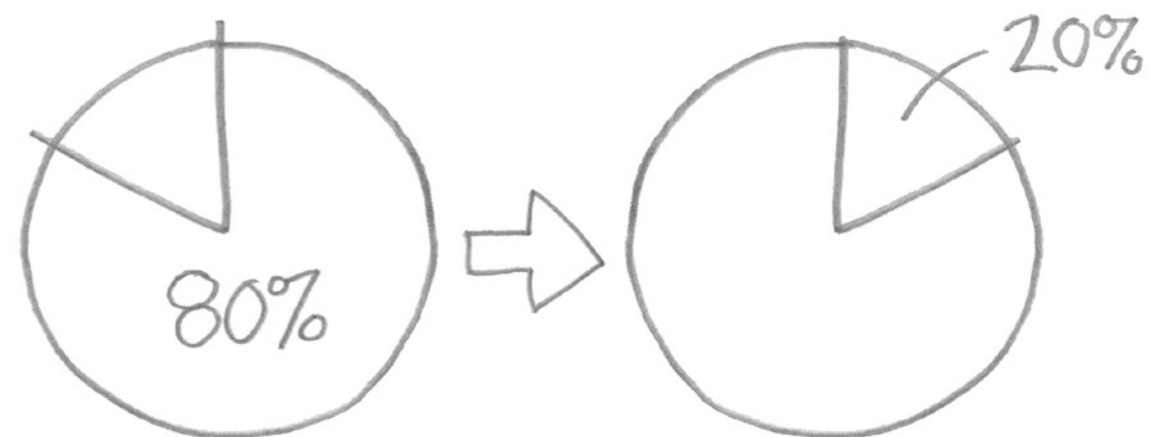
Goal 1

BUILD A HAPPY CUSTOMER BASE (AND NEVER LOSE THEM, EVER)

It takes more than just a one-and-done survey tool to figure out why customers stick around. By offering the means to communicate with one another and provide unbiased feedback, an organization will see its customers shift from basic consumer to brand advocate.

It's empowering for customers to see their feedback implemented, have their opinions matter and play an active role in influencing an organization. If customers invest that time and effort into a business, shouldn't the business return the favor? Get to know customers better with a community—it's the best tool to voice needs and wants simultaneously. Leverage the online conversations with additional survey tools and tactics, such as Net Promoter Score surveys, which customer support and sales teams can use to better understand who they interact with every day.

Customers will reward this attention with loyalty. Customer loyalty helps an organization build that positive brand image and expand its overall brand identity. Engage customers emotionally, and their loyalty and retention will strengthen.



80% of your company's future revenue will come from just 20% of your existing customers.

Gartner Group

“It’s very logical: There is proven ROI in doing whatever you can to turn your customers into advocates for your brand or business. The way to create advocates is to offer superior customer service.”

Gary Vaynerchuck
“The Thank You Economy”



CASE STUDY: HubSpot

HubSpot is known for its outstanding customer retention and loyalty. It is able to gain insights on what customers need by putting an ear to the ground and listening to what customers have to say. It achieves this through its online community, online and offline engagement channels, effective customer feedback initiatives and vast library of resources created for the most important person in the company's ecosystem—the customer.



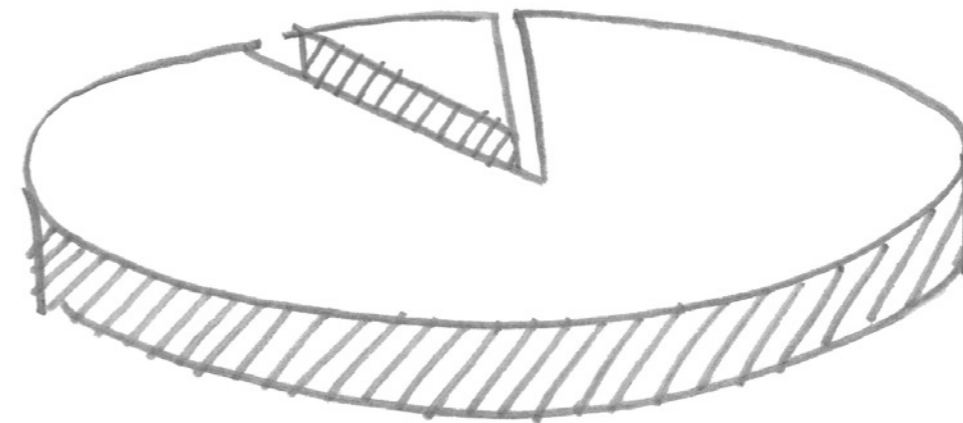
Goal 2

CREATE VALUE WITH A BETTER PRODUCT

Why update a product without asking customers what they thought in the first place? Product enhancements need to be meaningful. What else do customers want for a product and its capabilities—do they even enjoy using it or wish it functioned differently?

Put co-creation into practice and improve products with the customers, whether it's an informal forum within the online community or a larger product advisory council. Communities serve as the guide for customer-centric, crowd-sourced innovation.

Allow customers to exchange ideas and best practices constantly, not just when it's convenient for the organization. Better yet, include customer opinions and suggestions in new product releases.



88% of customers say buying decisions are influenced by product/service reviews from user-generated content.

Gartner Group

The growing trend across industries is starting customer advisory boards (CABs). While not exactly new, they're growing in popularity. Leading companies like Dell, HP, IBM, Symantec, Wells Fargo, and many

others have formed CABs, which all have the same purpose: to collaborate with customers and industry leaders, as well as drive product innovation through best practice insights and advice.

The **3 C's** of modern creativity are
Community, Crowdsourcing and
Co-creation.”

Jon Wilkins
Naked



CASE STUDY: Oracle

Oracle uses VOC programs, such as a Customer Advisory Board, to gain customer feedback in its future product direction. Its vision is to have customers share how they are using products in the “real world” and for Oracle to share with CAB members current plans and product ideas. This program directly impacts Oracle’s strategic planning, long-term performance and growth initiatives.



Goal 3

BUILD A BETTER ORGANIZATION

Customers' voices go beyond creating better products, services or even experiences. Customer involvement can improve the organization overall.

Leading businesses—those considered “best-in-class” companies—have nurtured customers as brand advocates, who can speak out in places like online communities and create peer influence in target markets. This trend to include customers in sales and marketing strategy has led to more effective sales and streamlined marketing channels.

It's the creation of a customer-centric organization, with customers providing the input and guidance needed for products and strategy. This translates into a general corporate strategy that leads to an organization's wellbeing and clear competitive advantage.

Effective VOC programs implemented within a framework of online communities aid in creating a healthier corporate strategy with clear benefits:

- **Retain the customers you already have** through meaningful interactions
- **Improve products and services** to attract new customers with help from brand advocates
- **Develop new products and better customer support systems** based on what your active customers and prospects are talking about
- **Reduce costs and increase ROI** by integrating those customer connections into an online community for customers and the organization alike

The top three business objectives for customer-centric programs are customer retention (70%), customer engagement (64%), and revenue (34%).

Forrester's The State of Loyalty Programs 2013 Study



“There are many who subscribe to the convention that service is a business cost, but our data demonstrates that superior service is an investment that can help drive business growth. Investing in quality talent, and ensuring they have the skills, training and tools to enable them to empathize and actively listen to customers, are central to providing consistently excellent service experiences.”

Jim Bush
Executive Vice President
American Express



CASE STUDY: Trader Joe's

Customer-centric CEOs use VOC for a purpose. They factor customer voices into daily and strategic decision-making and encourage everyone across their organizations to do the same. Trader Joe's is known for giving customers a seat at the table, informing the executive team's intuition and making sure it stays grounded in customer needs when planning new initiatives and investments. This implementation of customer-centric strategies lands Trader Joe's in the #1 spot for customer satisfaction among all grocery chains in the nation* and creates an important competitive edge.

*Source: Satmetrix 2015 NPS Benchmarking for Grocery Supermarkets



CUSTOMERS ARE **ALREADY TALKING**— CAPTURE THE CONVERSATIONS

These best-in-class companies are already seeing the benefits of providing a community platform for customers to talk. Every organization should be learning how to listen better.

Customers, especially with a booming Millennial generation, are and will continue to talk – on the organization’s website, within social channels like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, on popular review sites like Yelp, Angie’s List or Trust Radius, and even at in-person events. How do you turn all the chatter into a productive dialogue with your customers?

Take control of that feedback, know when it’s happening and respond accordingly—with an online community.

The voice of the customer can be heard through a variety of different mechanisms, such as interviews, focus groups, regular in-person meetings and events. But online communities are truly becoming more popular among leading organizations as one of the most effective channels to facilitate VOC programs.

“Nine-in-ten (Millennial) respondents take action weekly on behalf of a brand.”

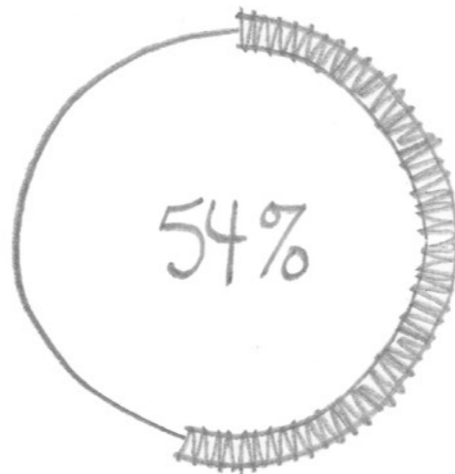
Edelman Public Relations



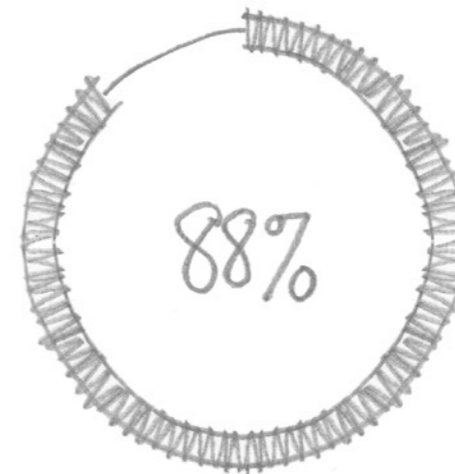
WHAT CAN ONLINE COMMUNITIES DO FOR YOUR BUSINESS?



Grow customer retention



Drive revenue growth



Increase web traffic

AT HIGHER LOGIC, WE'RE IN THE BUSINESS OF BUILDING SUCCESSFUL CUSTOMER COMMUNITIES.

We support over 25 million users in more than 200,000 communities by providing solutions that increase retention, engagement and customer loyalty. Want to see how you can boast a full and complete customer network on day one?

[START NOW](#)

