



3 WAYS TO ENGAGE YOUR CUSTOMERS TO IMPROVE YOUR PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

HOW TO LEVERAGE FEEDBACK TO IMPROVE

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In the old days marketing gurus used to say that the customer is king. Those days are over. The customer is now god.

With online platforms making it easier and easier for consumers to communicate their opinions of products and services to the whole world, and buyers now relying on candid testimonials of customers' experience, your clients have the potential to make or break your company.

So you can't just sit back and wait for the good or bad reviews; you have to proactively use your customers' feedback to help you improve your products and services.

Some of the top companies that have figured this out, like Apple and Amazon, have been able to translate their knowledge into profits and market share.

The voice of the customer is of utmost importance to IMD and listening to it has helped us to become ranked [number 1](#).

Here are three commandments we follow which could also help your company:

1] Yes, ask the ultimate question

By asking the Net Promoter Score (NPS) question "how likely is it that you would recommend us to a friend or colleague?" you can find out a great deal about what is working and what could be better at your company.

At IMD we have been using the NPS since 2009 for all of our programs and events. For us the goal is not to have a fancy number to market our programs with, but to have valuable insights into how we can be better. At the same time we can find out who our ambassadors are.

With the knowledge we glean from the NPS, we strengthen the impact of our programs and take better care of our customers.

But don't rely on just the NPS to harness the power of your customers. The ultimate question can help you find out a lot, but not enough to fully engage with your clients.

2] Measure all aspects of the impact of what you do

We make sure to ask all our customers to rigorously evaluate our programs once they have completed them. In addition, we follow up six months after the completion of the program with our NPS survey, where we also solicit feedback about the effectiveness of our programs, the transfer of knowledge and the overall impact on the workplace.

Last but not least, one year after the completion of the program we reconnect with our customers to see if their educational experience is still having an impact on them professionally.

This is part of an ongoing well-established engagement strategy to make sure that our programs deliver real results and that our clients can put their learning to use once they are no longer with us.

The lesson here is not to use only one measurement. Find out as much and as often as you can from your customers about what you are doing well and how you can improve. Then you won't be surprised to see their comments online, because you already know what they think.

3] Don't just measure, engage your customers and improve

It's a great start to know what clients think about every aspect of your business as well as who you can count on to be your ambassadors. But that's not enough. You have to act on your findings and fast.

Once you have enough information to know what your customers think, get to work making your products and services better.

Are a lot of your clients saying the same thing about a product? If so then fix what can be easily fixed immediately. If there are longer-term improvements that need to be implemented, get the ball rolling right away.

Is something working really well for you with a large segment of your clients? Then keep up the good work and do what you can to enhance it.

Also, make sure to nurture your relationships. Take care of the clients who are loyal and appreciate what you do. They might just recommend your products or services to others or give you free advertising online. Meet with them, listen to what they have to say and give them preferential treatment.

Likewise with those who may not have had the best experience. Find out what went wrong and see how you can rectify the situation.

To sum up, one of the most important things about running any business is staying in touch with your clients. This is absolutely crucial. Your brand is not what you think it is, it's what your customers think it is and what they tell each other. And they have the divine power to determine your company's success. So be careful or you might fall from their grace.

[Dominique Turpin](#) is the Nestlé Professor and President of IMD. He co-directs [IMD's Orchestrating Winning Performance](#) program.

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