

7 ways to unlock the true value of your customer feedback programme



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In order to reap true value from any customer feedback programme, your business must care about your customer and their experience with your brand. By caring and demonstrating that you care, you can directly influence your bottom line. How can you do this?

It's simple. You need to find out what your customers think of their experience. You need to ask them to tell you **in their own words** what they think. You don't need to ask endless questions; they will tell you exactly what they like, what they dislike and what might lead them to purchase elsewhere if you give them the opportunity to do so.

Armed with that information, you can put yourself in your customers' shoes and understand exactly what needs to be done to improve their experience, win back unhappy customers, and make loyal customers even more loyal.

Here are 7 ways to unlock the true value of your customer feedback programme: ►



1. Stop doing things customers dislike

Annoying your customers is one of the best ways to lose your customers. Make sure you know what they dislike and stop doing it!

One of our automotive clients reviewed comments from those customers who were not likely to recommend a particular dealer. On closer examination, several issues were identified in the “oil service” area. One of the largest areas for complaint was “Unreasonable Wait Times for Oil Change”.



Numerous comments request service dealers simply provide “an honest estimate on how long it will take to complete work,” or at least “improve the accuracy of the estimated wait time.” As a result of reviewing this feedback, dealers were encouraged to manage customer expectations better when services could not be completed in a timely manner. All they had to do was call them and tell them.

2. Do more of what customers love and value

Find out what works and what aspects of their experience they love. Do more of it and continue to do it well.

The South African National Blood Service recently re-ignited their “Pint for a Pint” promotion as a result of gathering customer feedback. For every pint of blood donated, customers received a pint of beer. SANBS had run this initiative in the past but, not realising how popular it was, had suspended it after a few months. Feedback gathered through their kiosks indicated that the promotion was sorely missed by customers and influenced how often customers gave blood. Needless to say, the promotion was quickly re-instated. ▶



3. Improve communications

Marketing messages can often be misconstrued; instructions or directions can be difficult to understand; and verbal communications between staff and customers can sometimes become fraught. Find out where your weaknesses lie and make the necessary improvements.

By analysing customer feedback comments, Origin Energy identified a problem with the way they communicated certain information to customers. After introducing a new system of estimating bills (rather than taking accurate readings), they started receiving a large number of complaints relating to “high energy bills”. Full details of the new system had been incorporated into the small print on the invoice but customers had not noticed them and had duly complained that their bills were higher than they should be. An analysis of the feedback enable them to identify what had caused the increase in complaints and as a consequence, they moved the information about the new system to the front page of the invoice and made it more prominent. The outcome was that customers understood the new system and complaints about “high energy bills” reduced significantly.



4. Improve products / services

Senior managers often think they know what products or services need improving. But how can they ever really know unless they ask customers what in *their* opinion, would really make a difference?

Eurocamp had considered investing in a major upgrade of the outdoor furniture on all their campsites. Customer feedback from the past year was analysed to check customer opinions on the matter. Very few negative comments were found – but significantly more negative comments were found about the quality of bedding provided. As a result, the capital expenditure was spent on bedding rather than furniture, which in turn had a positive impact on satisfaction scores. ▶



5. Improve processes

Processes evolve over time and whilst many are effective, there is never any harm in looking for better ways of doing things. Better processes can save you resources, time and ultimately, costs.

Speedy analysis and delivery of customer feedback has radically changed MINI's approach to dealing with product quality issues. As a result of using Feedback Ferret's Hot Alert module, MINI is now able to rectify a problem as soon as it is spotted and before it affects more vehicles down the production line. VIN numbers of any 'problem' vehicles are passed on to the relevant department - where the member of staff responsible for installing or building the problem part (or the supplier of the part) can be traced and identified immediately. The manufacturing and quality managers can now respond immediately to problems on the factory floor in a way that had not been possible before. Whether it is a member of staff who needs additional training or a supplier whose part has caused a technical problem, they hear about it immediately and take positive action to ensure it does not recur.



6. Improve staff

How do you know which members of staff are underperforming if you can't keep an eye on them all day every day? Let your customers tell you who isn't performing well and focus your efforts on delivering training programmes or disciplinary procedures where necessary. And never forget to reward named staff who may be complimented in customer feedback.

Vodacom South Africa installed feedback kiosks in each Vodacom branch nationwide which allowed customers to give feedback while they were waiting in the shop. One of the largest areas for complaint was staff attitude and staff availability. Customers even named the lazy or inattentive staff and, as a result, under-performing staff have been disciplined, re-trained, and in some instances dismissed. ▶



7. Reduce costs

How many times have you thought “If only we’d reacted sooner we could have avoided that”? By reacting to negative feedback comments quickly, you can avoid PR disasters, stop issues being aired on social media and, quite possibly, reduce costs.

Origin Energy managed to save \$250,000 in Ombudsman administration costs as a result of Feedback Ferret’s Hot Alert programme. The company received a Hot Alert within minutes of the word “Ombudsman” appearing on their customer feedback. They immediately contacted those customers and, through empathy and listening, prevented many of these cases being taken to the Ombudsman.



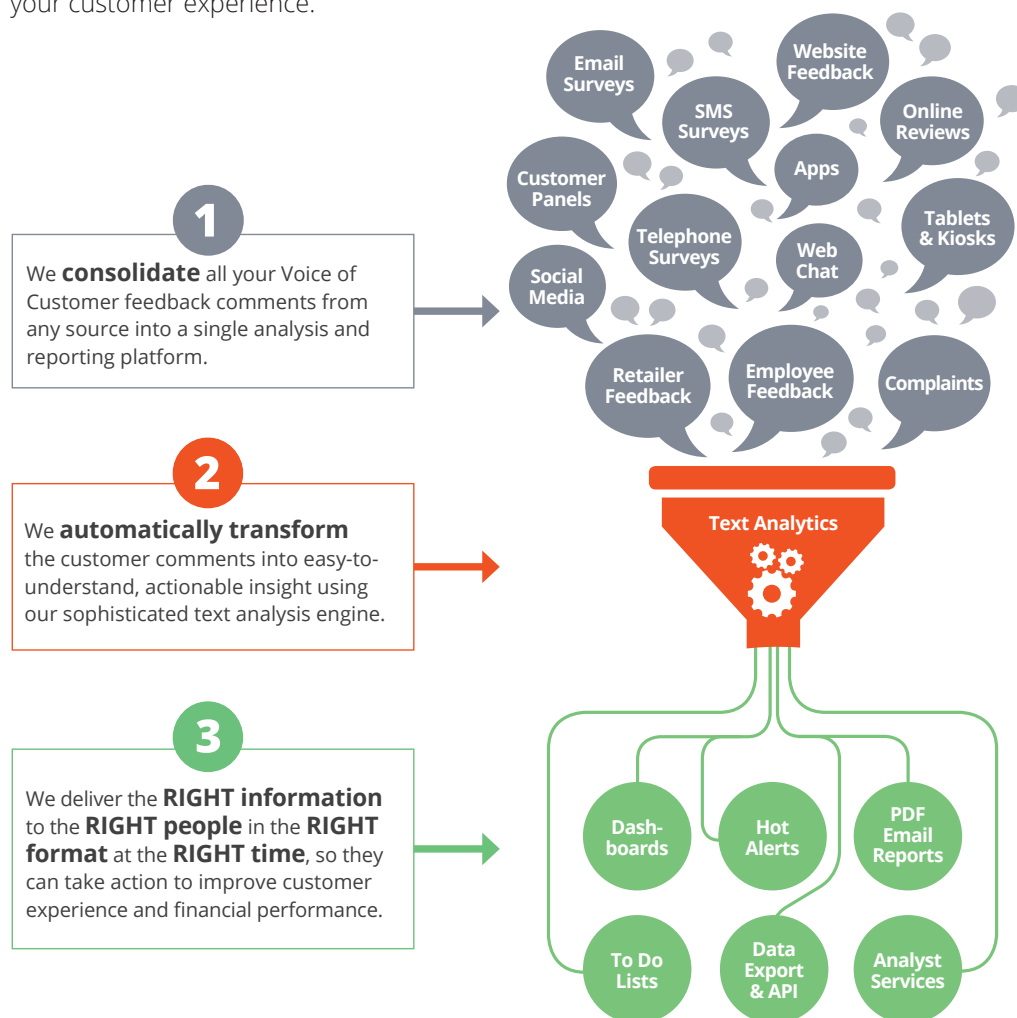
Finding out how your customers feel and whether their expectations have been met is the first crucial first step in improving their experience. Armed with the answers, you can use any of the above 7 methods to unlock the value in your customer feedback – all of which have the potential to impact your bottom line.



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Feedback Ferret – Experts in Customer Feedback

Using text analytics, Feedback Ferret transforms customer feedback comments into actionable insight. We make it easy for you to improve your customer experience.



All our technology and services have been developed by, and are operated by, Feedback Ferret Ltd. The technology is our own intellectual property, designed specifically to address the needs of extracting insight from customer feedback.

Feedback Ferret is based in Bourne End in the UK, with offices in USA, South Africa and Poland.

For more information visit:

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