Voice of the Customer: more than NPS measurement
The majority of customers do not feel understood, which is why many marketers have assigned a high priority to customer experience management, intensively focusing on customer centricity as the basis of their decision-making. Thus, customer centricity and the development and implementation of an effective voice of the customer (VOC) program have been the focus and core of many businesses’ strategy. This focus has the potential to generate financial benefits and rewards, motivating companies to embrace the concept of customer centricity. A voice of the customer program may focus on the collection and capture of structured and unstructured feedback along a clearly defined journey, creating a continuous opportunity for improvement. The capturing of voice of the customer data along definitive touchpoints enables efficient and valuable customer experience management (CXM), generating insights that can inform strategy and drive financial success. The key metric underlying and guiding most VOC measurement is the Net Promoter Score (NPS), which, since its introduction in 2003, has become an industry-wide accepted standard for measuring customer satisfaction and predicting company growth. In order to design a successful VOC program, we suggest to extend pure NPS measurement by three aspects:

1. unstructured feedback
2. advanced analytics
3. brand performance measurement

These aspects are different in nature but will all contribute to a successful VOC program through actionability, additional benefits and the creation of a more holistic view on customer experience.
The Net Promoter Score (NPS) is perhaps the most classic and well-known voice of the customer (VOC) key performance indicator. The NPS is based on the assumption that the more advocates and promotors a business has, the more likely it is to expand and surpass competitors, closely linking the concepts of customer satisfaction and loyalty. The NPS is based on a single question, asking customers on an eleven-point scale, how likely it is that they would recommend a specific brand, product or service to a friend or colleague. Respondents are then classified into three categories:

1. promotors (scores 9-10),
2. passives (7-8) and
3. detractors (0-6).

Following the analysis and classification of respondents, the NPS is calculated by subtracting the percentage of detractors from the percentage of promotors resulting in scores between -100 and +100.

By measuring NPS, companies intend to capture satisfaction as well as loyalty, and predict growth. The NPS has many benefits, as it is an industry standard that facilitates effective benchmarking over time and is widely used across sectors today due to its quick and easy nature. Yet, it is not the only valid metric: Health indices as well as e.g. the customer effort score can also provide valuable insights. For all these KPIs it is vital to include influencing factors that explain them and allow for an effective steering of the main KPI.

While the NPS delivers valuable insights by itself, it is important to make the results actionable in order to drive the business forward. VOC programs will only be successful, if their results are actionable and deliver relevant information on how to drive e.g. the NPS.

We suggest to systematically include unstructured feedback and advanced analytics in order to create comprehensive measurement systems. Typically, deeper insights and a better understanding can be provided following these paths.

We also suggest to extend the customer experience and measure a dedicated brand experience. The brand as a major KPI is typically widely accepted in an organization. Since branding is an important success driver, we believe that an incorporation of brand into a comprehensive measurement system is beneficial and consistent.
Identify new business drivers using unstructured feedback

The NPS provides brands with responses and data to one aspect of customer experience, yet, VOC programs thrive on data, which is why it is beneficial that other elements, such as unstructured feedback are integrated. Unstructured feedback, gathered from open feedback requests and surveys, as well as social media platforms, forums, blogs and other sources, allows for the identification of important drivers underlying customer experience. This explorative identification process can enable brands to gain insight into the potentially new decision-making frameworks, behaviors and needs that impact consumer behavior and decision-making. Unstructured feedback can also be used to spot trends and recognize the topics that show the potential to be substantial and yield innovation potential. Through trend spotting brands can gain insight into their consumer’s needs and wants, as well as their interests and behaviors. By combining the insights gathered through unstructured feedback with NPS measurement, feedback and data that one might not expect will be drawn out, generating new and valuable insights into the customer and their needs and desires that may drive and influence the NPS distribution and score.
As previously outlined, the key issue underlying the use of NPS revolves around the inability to derive and identify specific CX drivers. Advanced analytics can clarify these queries and give answers to questions such as: What aspects have the greatest impact on improving the customer experience and how can it be improved systematically? Advanced analytics facilitate the effective improvement of customer experience by knowing how to identify the biggest success drivers and targeting these drivers to achieve certain goals and implement them in business strategy. It can, for example, shape churn prevention as VOC information and advanced analytics can help with the identification of customers with a high churn likelihood, by linking VOC with CRM information, highlighting how analytical models support action taking. Integrating VOC insights and CRM data creates a holistic picture containing actionable insights, enabling a close the loop methodology. By introducing a close the loop cycle and approach to manage the extraction of data and generation of insights, the CXM sphere can benefit from the ability to act and understand. Connecting the NPS with advanced analytics therefore is incredibly important, allowing the examination of data and content using sophisticated techniques and tools to discover deeper insights, make predictions, and generate recommendations.
Create a seamless brand experience along the customer journey

Lasting success is often driven by strong brand performance, influenced by emotional and functional factors and their perception by the market and already attracted customers. Emotional elements may revolve around the feelings and emotions a brand evokes, whilst functional elements focus on whether the brand does what it is supposed to do. Measurement of brand performance can be conducted in a variety of ways, through loyalty and quality measures, associations and differentiation, awareness and market behavior measures. When correctly and objectively measured with cognitive and behavioral approaches, complementing the NPS, brand performance measurement can create great value within a VOC program and be tracked along various points along the customer journey. Most brands already employ some form of brand tracking, intending to add a transactional perspective through their VOC program. Creating a seamless brand experience along the customer journey is the main objective of these activities. When managed effectively, brand performance and its measurement can be used to influence purchase intentions and general customer perception, aiming to drive financial success.

For maximum success, VOC programs should be more than just NPS measurement

The most successful companies intensively focus on customer centricity and make it the center of their customer experience management strategy to better understand their customers and predict their behavior. To accomplish these goals, VOC programs are created that gather feedback at various points along the customer journey, aiming to foster satisfaction and loyalty and cultivate growth. Whilst the NPS has many benefits, and has positively shaped many companies and their customer experience management, it is vital to remain aware of the other metrics, measurements and elements that can be included in the overall VOC program. As previously highlighted these may include brand performance measurement, unstructured feedback and advanced analytics. Collectively these elements enable companies to gain a holistic understanding of the customer and the behavioral and cognitive factors that shape their decision making. Ultimately, using the outlined elements and techniques in a voice of the customer program will show increased revenues and can be used to foster growth.
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