

# CX INSIGHTS: THE CONTACT CENTER AS A VOICE OF THE CUSTOMER TOOL

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## THE CONTACT CENTER & VOICE OF THE CUSTOMER

Gone are the days when consumers relied on advertisements, websites and low prices to dazzle them into purchasing a business's service or product. Armed with more information than ever before, today's increasingly savvy consumers are listening to what others have to say before making a purchase decision. Peer recommendations, online reviews and social media provide consumers the opportunity to connect with brands who will deliver the customer experience they desire.

*Innovative businesses are also listening.* Proactive listening and aligning activities to match customers' expectations help businesses break through the noise and differentiate themselves from the competition.<sup>1</sup>

Businesses can utilize tools such as Voice of the Customer (VOC) methodologies to build customer-centric programs, enabling them to deliver an exceptional customer experience. VOC can be defined as a way of collecting feedback from your customers to gain insight on how your products or services line up with their expectations. Organizations can collect customer feedback in many ways, like surveys, interviews, focus groups, suggestion boxes, observation, brand user groups, reviews and [Net Promoter Scores](#).

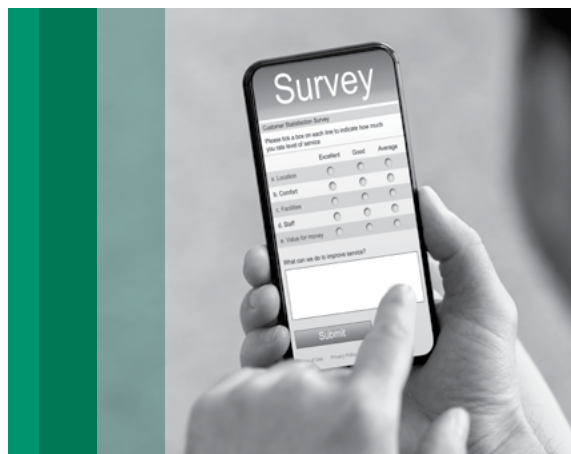
Contact center agents have always played a significant role in the customer experience. However, with brick-and-mortar buildings inaccessible throughout most of the pandemic, their role increased dramatically as businesses and customers discovered new ways of doing business together.

Considering the contact center's vital role in the customer experience, it makes sense for the same centers to play an active role in collecting VOC feedback to measure the customer's experience at that particular touchpoint. Taken a step further, contact center agents can be a credible, first-hand source of customer feedback. They work personally with customers daily and are able to provide insightful feedback based on their observations. They personally hear what the customer is saying, and they experience the customer's sentiment as well. Contact center VOC data provides contact centers and their clients with real-time feedback on the customer's perceived level of satisfaction with their interaction.

### MORLEY EXPERIENCE:

Morley collects VOC information from customers using follow-up customer satisfaction surveys and agent feedback to help drive service level improvement. This combination allows Morley to collect experience-based data, analyze the data, and create action plans for both the Morley agents and our clients. Data is collected through the following methods:

- **Surveys.** Using a Customer Data Platform (CDP), a short survey is emailed to a random sample of customers after their case has been resolved. The program collects data from completed surveys and analyzes the data to identify key trends in customer sentiment.



- **Morley agents.** Agents are encouraged to communicate both agent and customer-driven suggestions for improvement. Morley collects agent feedback through email suggestions and in focus groups.
- **Innovation Monitor.** Morley constantly monitors in-house innovations and their implementation through this tool, where we record people, process and technology-related ideas on CX from anyone at the company for viability and follow-up.

**Insight #1:** The increase in interactions between customers and contact center agents as a result of COVID-19 has elevated the opportunity for contact center agents to collect VOC data.

## 2 USING TECHNOLOGY TO AUTOMATE PROCESSES

Manual methods for collecting and analyzing data can be both time consuming and labor intensive. Spending too much time on continually collecting data and reviewing it doesn't allow enough time for businesses to take action to mitigate issues that arise from the data.

As the need for real-time data increases, many organizations are employing the use of CDPs to process the collection, analysis and generation of output of demographic, quantitative and qualitative data. By automating processes, organizations can identify key trends in data more efficiently and take action more quickly.

AI is already being used to further augment, not replace, the contact center experience. It is enhancing not only the customer experience; it is improving the experiences of contact center agents as well.<sup>2</sup>

Predictive analytics, using historical customer data to determine the likelihood of future occurrences, can easily be paired with prescriptive analytics, using predictive models, AI and machine-generated learning to recommend the best course of action.<sup>3</sup> This powerful combination of analytical information empowers contact center agents by pairing customer pain points with solution scenarios that historically have the best success rate.

These advances in technology provide agents with the ability to handle issues much more efficiently. Furthermore, they are empowered to offer resolutions that are most likely to result in positive agent and customer experiences.

### MORLEY EXPERIENCE:

Prior to implementing a CDP, data analysts at Morley would download raw data with thousands of survey responses. Comments were read and manually categorized into buckets so that responses were attributed to specific causation, such as an advisor, a product, a service, a customer experience, etc.

After the data was bucketed into categories, the data analyst would pivot the data in a spreadsheet to show the top reasons for satisfaction/dissatisfaction and help determine the root causes. This manual effort took days to complete, repeating week after week.

After adopting a CDP, the process was much faster. It automatically sends surveys, analyzes customer responses and provides a word heat map that helps Morley identify words or phrases that customers respond to positively or negatively. This allows for more time to build action plans, communicate with the client, brief agents and implement steps for improvement if a trend is identified.



**Insight #2:** Using the right technology can turn searching for a needle in a data-filled haystack into gaining a functional tool in a toolbox.

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## ACTION PLANS THAT BENEFIT THE CLIENT & THE AGENTS

An important component of building trust is your customers knowing that you care about their experiences. Asking customers about their brand experience communicates that their opinion matters. Taking action based on these insights allows businesses to further prove to customers that they were heard.

**Create an action plan:** A disconnect often exists between having the information and putting it into action. Once a trending issue is identified, bring a cross-functional team together to determine actions steps to mitigate the issue. Building teams that represent a variety of customer-related perspectives in order to brainstorm and develop solutions helps to create ownership at all levels.

**Communicate insights & action plans:** Further, insights gleaned from VOC data and subsequent action plans should be shared across the organization with the appropriate stakeholders. Who you choose to share with is completely unique to your organization and should align with your values and communications strategy.<sup>4</sup>

**Recognize successes:** It isn't all bad. VOC data isn't just about bringing to light weaknesses in the customer experience chain. It reveals positive trends and accolades as well. Receiving positive feedback is a great opportunity to recognize team success and celebrate their achievements.

### MORLEY EXPERIENCE:

By automating VOC collection and analysis, Morley has been able to focus on process improvement through evidence-backed action plans. Action plans are then communicated both internally and to the client, sometimes providing training opportunities for customer-facing agents.

Prior to COVID-19, with an on-site work environment, agent recognition and engagement were easy to manage. Morley had a plethora of customer satisfaction visuals that were displayed throughout the buildings promoting positive customer experiences. Initially, in the work-from-home environment, recognition and engagement were lacking. As a result, a Weekly Top Box Customer Satisfaction (CSAT) flyer was implemented to share our best verbatim survey data highlighting positive customer experiences.

The CSAT flyer has been a leading action plan to promote peer-to-peer engagement in a work-from-home environment. The result has been countless replies of encouragement from agent to agent that would otherwise have been limited to no interaction time together.

Other ways our teams share CSAT information is in monthly newsletters, leadership recognition meetings, team meeting agenda and annual performance initiatives. Team Leads also share daily scorecard updates in team huddle meetings and on their Microsoft Teams chat channels. These include trending scores, top performers, root cause analysis and team-specific action plan updates.

## USING VOC & CSAT DATA TO CREATE A PERSONAL CONNECTION

*Putting insights into action contributed to a 7% lift in CSAT scores from Q4 2021 to Q1 2022.*

**Process:** During listening sessions in Morley's E3 Program (Empathy, Empowerment, Engagement), specific advisor calls are studied based on VOC data. Using CSAT scores, the top and the bottom performers' calls are reviewed. Key takeaways are recorded and action plans are created, implemented and measured.

**Issue identified:** Team Leads discovered that when an agent begins with "Thank you for calling, may I have your name, year, make and model of your vehicle, etc.," it started the experience with a transactional tone versus a genuine empathetic connection.

**Action taken:** By moving the personal connection up to the beginning of the call and moving the data gathering piece to later in the call, agents communicate that they are personally interested in assisting the customer. From there the agents strive to listen, acknowledge and respond with empathy, continuing the development of the personal connection.

We have also used these communication methods to help with messages of positivity, highlighting both agent and site performance. Keeping a consistent cadence of feedback has helped build engagement from the agent group by promoting continuous improvement.

**Insight #3:** Empowering your front-line agents with a blueprint for improvement and the proper tools for the job helps build an exceptional customer experience.

## MOVING FORWARD

According to a recent Forbes article, *8 Customer-Experience-Related Predictions For 2022*, customers continue to want to talk to human beings. Post-pandemic, direct calls have increased and account for almost 60% of call center interactions.<sup>5</sup> Companies are not replacing contact center agents with AI, but instead are using AI to help agents provide a better customer experience. The added bonus is that the efficiencies created by VOC technologies can also provide a better employee experience for the contact center agent.

### Sources:

- <sup>1</sup> Aberdeen Strategy & Research: [The Voice of the Customer in Branding: A Simple Formula for Success](#)
- <sup>2</sup> CMS Wire: [Is 2021 the Year AI Dominates the Call Center?](#)
- <sup>3</sup> CMS Wire: [How Predictive and Prescriptive Analytics Improve the Call Center Experience](#)
- <sup>4</sup> Pendo.io: [How a strong VoC program drives a better customer experience](#)
- <sup>5</sup> Forbes: [8 Customer-Experience-Related Predictions For 2022](#)

### Additional Sources:

MarketingWeek: [Consumers prefer to discover brands than be subject to advertising](#)  
Mention-Me: [Customer Advocacy Report 2021](#)  
RIS: [4 Ways Voice of Customer Can Build Confidence in Your Brand](#)