

Why Customers
AREN'T
ENGAGING
with your Survey
AND WHAT TO
DO ABOUT IT

PRESENTED BY...



Frankensurvey: Don't create a monster

To know how satisfied your customers are, you need to hear from a lot of them. The trouble is, customers aren't playing ball.

Survey responses are at an all-time low, generating a double-whammy of 'non-response bias' and 'self-selecting bias' that leaves CX professionals wondering what on earth their results actually mean.

This eBook addresses the challenges of survey fatigue, examines why the core principles of satisfaction surveys have become misguided and shows how organizations can reclaim them as part of a positive, engaging customer journey.



Are customer satisfaction surveys actually spreading dissatisfaction?

Read the independent analysis; speak to your peers at other organizations.

At the end of the day, it's response rates that show how sick and tired people are of filling out surveys. It seems a 1-2% response rate has turned from a disastrous outcome into an aspirational one for survey exercises, which typically means as many as 99% of the people receiving them can't spare the time, don't think it's worthwhile and – probably – would rather you hadn't bothered contacting them in the first place.

What's more, there is plenty of anecdotal evidence which shows that the very process of conducting customer satisfaction research is destined to *decrease* customer satisfaction.

It seems crazy for companies to put such a huge amount of effort into crafting every aspect of their customer journey, only to ruin it at the end, by sending out a cumbersome and inappropriate survey. It leaves a nasty aftertaste for what would have been an otherwise-delighted customer.

Ever been behind the wheel of a survey bandwagon?

When 'learning about customers' is the goal, organizations understandably want to learn as much as they can. This gives rise to the customer satisfaction survey as an all-you-can-eat smorgasbord, designed by committee and invariably many times longer than originally planned.

Does this sound familiar?

“We wanted to ask repeat customers how they felt about our new service, and pretty soon we weren't the only ones with questions. It became an unwieldy bandwagon of a questionnaire, testing hypotheses dreamed up by every business department for their own ends.”



Not only is this situation extremely common, but it's often justified as a win-win for all concerned, as in:

- The organization gets value for money discovering the maximum amount of insights for the cost of a single survey exercise.
 - Nothing is missed; the organisation can think long and hard about what it wants to find out before commissioning the survey and collecting responses.
 - Internal departmental stakeholders are appeased with 'bonus' data they would not ordinarily have the benefit of.
 - Customers get to reveal their closely held beliefs in one conveniently efficient blast, rather than piecemeal.
-

Hmmmm... The counterargument is that this approach is misguided, or even delusional, for the following reasons:

- The organization has compromised the purpose of the exercise (to improve customer satisfaction) when making its ROI calculation. It will be transparent to the customer that questions have been designed to satisfy a laundry list of corporate objectives rather than to help them.
- The organization's lack of timing sensitivity means the survey isn't optimized to elicit a response relevant to the customer journey.
- The value of the data collected has been overstated, potentially overtaken by the desire to produce comprehensive data analysis 'for the sake of it', even though the whole endeavour is self-defeating; being based on a tiny subset of self-selecting customers.
- Even a masochist wouldn't eagerly greet the opportunity to complete an extended 'Frankensurvey'. The idea that customers prefer longer surveys delivered to them on an arbitrary timescale is simply wrong, even before considering the detrimental impact of non-response bias on the collected results.

“The lower the response rate, the greater the non-response bias. The reason for this is fairly obvious: the group of people who choose to answer a survey is not necessarily representative of the customer population as a whole. The survey responders are more motivated to take the time to answer the survey than the non-responders; therefore, this group tends to contain a higher proportion of people who have had either very good, or more often, very bad experiences.”

Rob Brogle, iSixSigma

HOW DID IT EVER COME TO THIS?



“Every question you ask is expensive. (Expensive in terms of loyalty and goodwill). Don’t ask a question unless you truly care about the answer. This means that a vague question with vague answers (extremely satisfied... acceptable...extremely dissatisfied and no scale to compare them to) is a total waste of time. What action will you take based on that?”

Seth Godin on surveys



Survey History 101

You have to go back to the 1940s to have been considered strange for floating the nutty idea of asking real people what they thought about things in a structured and accurate manner. Ever since then, you'll have been slapped on the back for such astute judgment.

The science of market research really took off during the mid-20th century. Centred upon the elegant 'questionnaire', many of its hallmarks endure today - non-leading questions, multiple-choice answers, anonymous responses - with collected data feeding back into robust statistical analysis. It's the approach that cemented the grip of major corporate brands, and helped politicians learn how to win elections.

In fact, we've deemed market research so effective that pretty much all of us sleepwalked into applying its practices for determining customer satisfaction.

Fast-forward a few decades and witness the introduction of online/email survey platforms revolutionising the economics of questionnaires. It's cheaper and faster than ever to ask customers what they think. And, as we've established, that's a temptation proving too hard for many to resist.

As practices have remained the same over that time, the received wisdom of surveying customers has gone stale, fatigue has set in and customer responses have regressed to a vanishing point.

It's time to restore the link between customer journey and customer survey

Business leaders place great strategic equity on 'the customer journey', with investments targeting the user experience, omni-channel communications infrastructure and innovative ways of creating customer 'delight'.

As one accompanies a fictional customer along his or her route to fulfilment, we should experience a serene effortlessness, and no disruption. So imagine that customer's reaction when:



They receive a 20-question email survey
...several days after buying something
...with the offer of entering a prize draw if they fill it out.

This is more disturbance than delight; an unwanted and resented inconvenience. It even creates a barrier to those customers who genuinely do want to provide feedback.

As customer journeys become more and more Cinderella-like, the traditional customer survey is often the ugly sister. Customer experience planning in most businesses doesn't extend out to the survey design, and so even though the experience of taking the survey forms a big part of the customer experience, it is frequently overlooked.



THE ONLY TWO THINGS GUARANTEED TO ELICIT A HIGHER RESPONSE RATE

Today, response rates for customer satisfaction surveys are often so low that non-response and self-selecting biases can render them worthless. The most pressing priority is to reverse this trend.

Incentives are not the answer. Even if giving every respondent a \$5 iTunes voucher was financially viable, you wouldn't get the data you wanted. It doesn't incentivise honesty and, a customer who enters a random selection of answers in return for a small reward is hardly perpetrating fraud.

Instead, a survey solution should:



Consume almost none of their time



Be totally relevant to their customer journey

Remember that each customer's time has a tangible financial value that you're asking him or her to spend on you, instead of doing something else.

In 2013, a blogger for Mic.com calculated that it literally wasn't worth Bill Gates' time to pick a \$100 note off the ground (assuming it took at least one second, and disregarding any added premium Mr Gates likes to place on doing something fun in his spare time).

There are plenty of people out there who would pay money not to fill out surveys again in their lifetime.

**But what if you reduced the survey to the smallest possible unit:
a single question?**

Many businesses have done just that; reset their institutionalised thinking around the customer satisfaction survey and opted for single survey questionnaires for low-friction and honest, in-the-moment feedback.



Why the one-question survey is so devastatingly effective

From a business's perspective, it doesn't feel like a survey, especially when you no longer have to wrap the survey proposition up into an email, design a set of complex radio buttons and drop downs, manage a survey platform and a thank you email and then figure out how to analyze and respond to data attached to multiple questions. There isn't the scope to invite departmental colleagues to butt-in and create a survey bandwagon either.

And it doesn't feel much like a survey for the customer... which is a good thing. As experiences go, it's darn near effortless. Customers, who've become used to clicking like/dislike icons on everything from social media apps like Facebook to public ratings sites like TripAdvisor, now have an outlet for their private feedback too.

Best of all – because it's so portable – the one-question survey is easy to inject into the customer journey, making it far more relevant and far less disruptive to the overall experience.



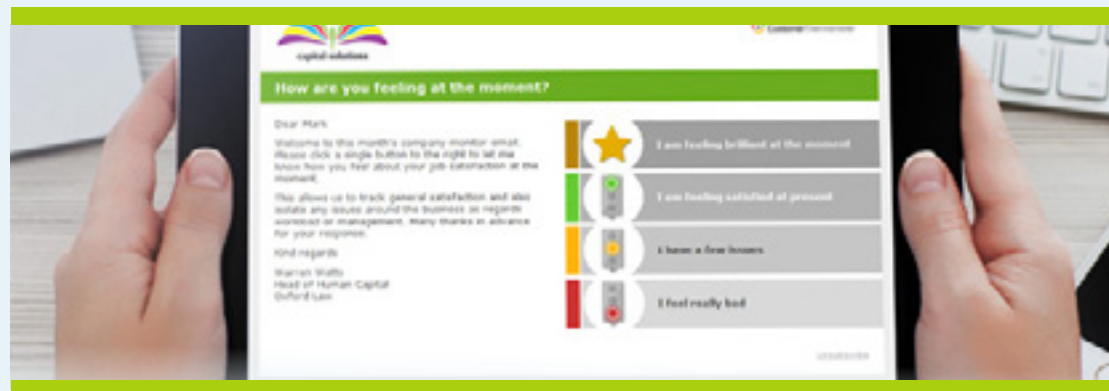
But how I am supposed to find out everything I want to know about my customers in one question?

The one-question survey doesn't spell the end of long-form market research questionnaires, focus groups and in-depth user studies. Such practices undoubtedly have their place when the objective is wider market intelligence.

In any case, just because you ask one question today, doesn't mean you can't ask a second question later. Both this approach and the longer-form methodologies can work excellently side-by-side.

What's clear is that when the objective is determining customer satisfaction, many organizations are finding the one-question survey provides a far more reliable, unbiased and wholly representative set of results than ever before.

And the very act of doing it clearly doesn't irritate customers either.



What leading brands say about their one-question surveys



“It gives us real-time feedback, and enables us to respond immediately so we can deliver a better service.”



SONOS

“Our customers feel empowered by having the ability to access us directly with their feedback.”



“The one question survey is giving us [information] we didn't even know we needed.”



BIBO

“Because it's so 'light touch', we regularly achieve response rates of over 85%.”



THREE SIMPLE STEPS TO RECLAIMING THE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY

Apply the following steps to in evolve your existing survey methodology, so that customers are happier engaging and your entire organization can have complete confidence that it is learning and benefiting from a simpler and more customer-centric approach.

Scrutinise your current approach

Get hold of your present customer satisfaction survey and apply an honest eye. It will help to recruit colleagues or friends for this stage.

- Is it effortless to complete?
 - Is it presented to customers at the optimum point in their journey?
 - Is it a Frankensurvey created by a raft of corporate objectives? or does it genuinely advocate for the good of your customers?
 - Would you ever 'show off' your customer satisfaction survey externally, as an example of best practice?
-



Look at your metrics

Investigate the true impact of your survey.

- Do you overcome the threat of statistical bias by regularly achieving high response rates?
- Is the practice of using customer satisfaction surveys actually helping you achieve the goal of pinpointing problems/improvement opportunities?
- How many customers comment positively on the experience of undertaking your customer satisfaction survey?



Consider alternative approaches

Research the commercial model and real-world examples for one-question surveys and compare this against your present approach.

- How much time is spent commissioning a new customer satisfaction survey across your organization, from beginning to end (including data collation and analysis)? Compare this to the time required to undertake a regular, focused one-question survey.
- Refine your existing survey into the three questions most critical to the objective of determining and improving customer satisfaction. What value would your organization place on obtaining each of these insights quickly, reliably and accurately?
- Present the findings from this worksheet to colleagues.



About Customer Thermometer

Customer Thermometer monitors your customers' views in real time. If you know what they're thinking, you have a fighting chance of fixing it. It's a brave, strong and visible way of demonstrating your service ethos to the world. And the really great thing is, it works across all sectors.

Try the survey customers love, and get incredible response rates.



customerthermometer.com

*Get a Free Trial!
Click Here*



GET YOUR FREE CUSTOMER THERMOMETER ACCOUNT HERE!