

# Ten Things Your Customers Want to Tell You (IF ONLY YOU WOULD ASK)

*Why companies need a lead-integrated  
Voice of the Customer (VOC) program*



NitroMojo, a sales and marketing optimization engine that incorporates customer feedback into the lead process, analyzed the results of thousands of responses across companies and industries. The results were quite surprising and beg the question – what would your customers tell you about your company if only you would ask?

## Voice of the Customer program best practices

Customer feedback can increase your revenues. It can tell you about the performance of your sales force, the effectiveness of your marketing activities, the quality of your product and the power of your competitors.

It can, but unfortunately for many companies, it doesn't. Instead of making a real organizational impact, customer data sits in silos having a minimal effect on only the areas of the organization privy to the information. Before diving into the analysis of the Voice of the Customer (VOC) responses, it's critical to understand why typical VOC programs won't give companies this kind of revenue-impacting information.

There are three major pitfalls to a successful consumer relations feedback process.

**1. Surveying only once or twice a year:** The days of once-a-year customer satisfaction surveys are history. When the market is flooded with competitors, when product upgrades can be introduced in months (not years), when negative feedback can hit millions in minutes, companies must constantly be in-tune with the thoughts, opinions and insights of the market. If you're only asking once a year, you may be getting there too late to save a sale or make a real organizational impact.

**2. Asking only customers:** Some companies are doing an excellent job of routinely asking for feedback. Customers, on cue, receive a "how did we do?" survey following a purchase. But people who have already purchased aren't the only ones who can give you valuable feedback about your sales and marketing process. Prospects, who are currently in the midst of that process, can shed light on sales follow-up, available product education, a product's biggest competitors and more.

**3. Not getting the right people involved:** If customer satisfaction surveys are done, the information is shared with the customer service team. If market research is done, the information is shared with the marketing team. The problem with this scenario is that there are valuable nuggets of constructive feedback about sales, product development, distribution, billing and more that aren't getting shared with the people who can actually do something about them. And isn't making real organizational change that impacts the bottom line the reason for doing this kind of research in the first place?

So, what is the right way to create a feedback loop for your organization? In contrast to the pitfalls, three axioms for a successful Voice of the Customer program are:

- *Ensure that the feedback happens on a continual basis.*
- *Ask both your customers and prospects how you're doing.*
- *Route feedback to the areas of the organization mentioned in the survey. Better yet, route the feedback to the individuals within the area who have decision making authority and can act on the results.*

When organizational leaders are on-board with the tenants of the program, VOC proponents must determine the best way to accomplish them. The best way to implement a successful VOC program is to integrate it with your lead management system.

Think about it: a lead comes in through marketing activities and is fostered through the sales process. The relationship either ends in a sale for your company, ends in a decision to purchase another product or ends with no purchase at all. This lead is a prime target for asking the questions you need to know to make your business better. Because marketing activities are happening continuously, surveying the leads that come through these activities keep the process on-going.

NitroMojo's patent-pending Customer Reveal™ technology takes this a step further by integrating back-end routing rules into the feedback process. When surveys come in, they are automatically sent to members of leadership for review and action.

When companies have such a program in place, they can glean critical information about their marketing efforts, sales follow-up, customer service and product.



## What customers had to say

Prior to NitroMojo's public release in 2009, the predecessor to the software was utilized by a global marketing and advertising firm to gauge the effectiveness of client marketing programs. The software, including the automatic Voice of the Customer feedback and routing, was implemented for companies across industries and target markets. Most of the participating companies were manufacturers who utilized an inside sales team and a distribution channel.

Thousands of VOC surveys across the client base were completed and submitted. In 2010, leadership of NitroMojo analyzed the predecessor data to determine if there were consistencies in the kind of VOC information provided to companies by the Customer Reveal technology. There were, in fact, consistencies. And each one demonstrated the power the VOC program can have in holding sales and marketing accountable, building a long-lasting relationship with customers, highlighting the importance of customer education and keeping a constant pulse of the competitive landscape.

The following are the revelations from the VOC analysis.



## Leads are trying to purchase, but nobody is contacting them

The number one reason a potential customer has not made a purchase is because he or she has not been contacted by anyone from the sales team. In fact analysis of the VOC data indicated that 50 percent of marketing leads never received a follow up from the sales team or distributor channel. If the primary purpose of marketing is to generate leads for the sales team, and budget dollars are being funneled into activities to accomplish this goal, then consider the amount of money wasted when sales-ready leads don't receive communication on how to buy.

## Companies aren't marketing to the right person, but they can find out who is

The second reason a marketing lead has not purchased is because he or she is not the decision maker for the end purchase. In these scenarios, the individual who responded to the marketing event is often the person responsible for researching options that will be posed to the decision maker. Through the automatic VOC process, however, the initial responders will often respond with the name of the decision maker, so that individual can be enveloped into marketing's efforts or contact directly by sales.

## Deals can come back from the dead

VOC can rejuvenate the sales process. A sales person may have counted a lead as "cold" and discontinued follow-up. However, on average, 15 percent of VOC respondents indicated that they want to be contacted immediately by someone in the sales force. This touchpoint, which allows prospective customers to "raise their hand" again quickly, turns non-responsive or closed leads into "hot" sales prospects.



## Companies' purchase cycle timeframes may be unrealistic

According to VOC responses, most people who hadn't purchased simply hadn't yet come to a purchase decision. Economic times are calling for more research on the part of buyers and therefore longer sales cycles. This is the time to build stronger relationships with customers. Information gleaned from VOC can help you do that.

## VOC can help define realistic sales expectations

Leads indicated that they are not ready to buy now, but NitroMojo's VOC analysis suggested that at least 30 percent of responders would be ready to purchase in six to nine months. It is the job of marketing and sales to ensure their brands don't fall off the lead's radar during this critical time. A formal lead nurturing program that includes consumer education through marketing tactics, as well as personal contact to build the sales relationship is crucial.

## Customers respond well to VOC surveys

On average, clients using the VOC Reveal technology received a 30-35 percent response rate to the surveys. There are good reasons for this solid return rate. The surveys are quick and easy to submit, links to the survey are sent directly to the inbox with an e-mail explaining the survey's purpose, and individuals are genuinely interested in providing feedback about specific experiences with a company. Although these VOC surveys don't replace more exhausted research efforts, this response rate is around 25 percent higher than typical research projects which also necessitate greater incentives to participate.

## VOC extends your marketing research & pays for itself

In the analysis, 80-90 percent of the people who received automatic VOC surveys opted-in to regular communication from companies via the VOC form. These individuals will go on to provide the greatest ROI for marketing campaigns. Utilizing an opt-in list, companies will generally experience a 30-35 percent response rate to their marketing efforts. If lists are purchased, the response rate is two percent or fewer. Collecting data pays for itself.

## VOC By the Numbers

*What have we found from our experience with VOC?*

**50%** of marketing leads are not followed-up on by sales.

**15%** of cold leads want to be contacted immediately by the sales team.

**30%** of non-purchasers will be ready to purchase in six to nine months.

**30-35%** of customers will respond to a VOC form, as compared to 10% for typical research projects.

**80-90%** of customers will opt-in to your marketing database for further communication.

**80%** of customers know what your product does, but not who you are.

**5%** of customers will voluntarily refer a colleague for follow-up.

## Brand awareness is greatly lacking

On average, 80 percent of VOC responders recalled product attributes, but did not remember the companies' specific brands (even if they purchased the product)! This was likely because the individual found the product by searching for its features, not by searching for a company specifically. The statistic drives home the need for consistent communication of brand messages. With the highly competitive marketplace, companies must ensure that their brand is top-of-mind, no matter where the lead is in the sales process. If it's a customer that has purchased, companies must make sure they support the buy- and-repeat cycle. If the individual is still researching the options, brand messaging will push him or her to purchase a specific company's product when they're ready.

## Competitive intelligence is at your fingertips

A best practice in lead management VOC programs is to ask customers specifically what brand of products they are evaluating or purchased and why. The surveys provide a continual stream of market intelligence for message refinement and new product development. While expensive research reports can tell companies who is competing in their space, this research drills down further to determine which other companies are of most interest to your leads. Leads may not be so forthcoming with their sales representative, but the VOC can help marketing and sales teams arm their reps or channel with the specific information they need to sell against competitive products.

## VOC is a lead generation tactic

Approximately 5 percent of customers voluntarily referred a colleague through the VOC program. Now, the system is not only a lead and sales management mechanism, but also a business development tool. More than ever, the power to make or break a sale is in the hands of influencers outside a company. For many organizations, customer referrals are one of their highest sources of leads, and they are constantly brainstorming ways to promote this further. The ability for a sales or distributor representative to mention a referrers name can help them jump through many of the initial sales hoops with ease.



## About NitroMojo

NitroMojo is a thin-client lead optimization engine software that contains the **essential functionality** that marketing and sales people need to do their jobs more effectively and efficiently.

Marketing teams can create campaigns through various media, track the leads brought in through each campaign, measure ROI, score leads based on various factors and forward those leads to the sales people or distributors who can make the sale happen.

Sales managers can enable workflow processes with their internal teams and distribution channels, measuring the progress made toward closing deals. They can project sales targets and know who is and who is not performing. Sales team members easily see their hottest leads, update contact records with vital information, request fulfillment from marketing, see who else in the organization is contacting their leads, forward leads to distributors and measure, in real-time, the success of their distribution channels.

While some lead management systems only capture data about the leads, NitroMojo automatically gets feedback **from** the leads with its patent-pending Customer Reveal™ technology. This feedback from the market can dramatically improve the sales and marketing process, even helping to win back deals that may have been lost.

And unlike CRM systems that require cumbersome implementation and management, as well as multi-department involvement, NitroMojo can be implemented for and by the people who need it. The NitroMojo team of technical experts and sales/marketing consultants will listen to how your processes work and customize the product to fit your needs.

When marketing and sales teams have this functionality at their fingertips, they'll be able to:

- Identify the performance of any media or any campaign, tracking cost-per-lead, cost-per-sale and return on investment. This information can better arm marketing teams to respond to the changing needs of the target.
- Identify the strengths and weaknesses of inside, direct and distributor sales forces and help improve performance of all three.
- Receive prospect feedback on products, customer service and the sales cycle.
- Ensure that valuable leads are never lost through the marketing and sales processes.

NitroMojo was developed by building on the proprietary lead management tools that MillerPierce, a full service marketing firm, had established for its clients for more than ten years.

## Conclusion

A VOC program can assist companies in garnering the information they need to grow revenues, make marketing and sales strategies more effective, stay on the cutting edge of consumer product needs and keep a watchful eye on their heaviest competitors. To achieve this success, however, consumer feedback needs to be continual, it needs to be widespread and the information needs to be shared with individuals in the company who can act on it. The best way to achieve these best practices in VOC programs and achieve an organizational impact is to integrate consumer feedback into the lead management process.