



STOP SURVEY FATIGUE

LISTEN TO CUSTOMERS WITHOUT DRIVING THEM AWAY

Surveys can be a great way to gather customer data—that is, if your customers will respond.

Because surveys rarely seem to translate into customer service or product improvements, consumers are increasingly ignoring them. Research shows that response rates have dropped in the last two decades from 20% to only two percent. But at the same time, technology changes have empowered millions of consumers to give their opinions on brands, products, and services on their own terms. According to Forrester, consumers generated more than 500 billion impressions about products and services through social media, reviews, open-ended comment cards, and other non-invasive methods. And open-ended customer feedback will only grow more popular on mobile platforms.



How can you improve your chance of getting feedback? Here's five tips.

- 1. Invite customers to share.** Your goal as a marketer is to get as many people as possible to contribute their opinions on your products or brand—but on their terms. Use social media, paid ad campaigns, or even in-store signage to let customers know they can submit feedback any time via your website, mobile site or mobile app.
- 2. Keep it short and simple.** Customers want to quickly let you know what's on their minds—not trudge through a lengthy question-and-answer session. Embrace short and concise feedback as the key to insight, collecting feedback wherever your customers are talking (reviews, tweets, Facebook posts, or directly to your brand through digital comment cards). And never get in the way of their site or mobile app experience by popping-up a box asking for their feedback.
- 3. Make sense of the unstructured.** Accept that much of what people say online about your brand is unstructured data. These open-ended opinions contain a wealth of information; you just need the right tools to analyze natural language comments to find patterns in the unstructured data.
- 4. Measure what matters most.** A lot of customer-centric efforts get hijacked by irrelevant metrics. Marketers always want data to fit with their assumptions. But in an open-ended feedback program, you have to sit back and listen to what your customers are saying, and then find ways to measure what's important to them. Continue to revise metrics as customers provide more and more feedback. Your ultimate goal is better customer service and better products—not to have databases full of useless marketing metrics.
- 5. Close the loop: acknowledge customers' contributions.** Always make sure to let customers know their voices have been heard. Thank them for their feedback right away. If a customer has a gripe, thank them for their honest feedback and offer to fix the problem right away. If a customer leaves an email address, you can also send follow-up thank you gifts, such as small coupons or discounts, but it's not always necessary. The most important thing is to acknowledge you heard them. —*JONATHAN LEVITT, CMO, OPINIONLAB*



EMAIL DATA AVAILABILITY UP 26%

A major surge in the number of rentable email addresses over the last 12 months has led to a 26% rise in overall email contact availability, according to Worldata's Winter 2013 Price Index.

"With more data sources overall in the email rental space, prices across the board of both business and consumer files are competing by lowering prices," said Ray Tesi, senior vice president of Worldata in a statement.

Permission-based international email remains the highest priced list rental category at \$404/M, a \$1/M increase from winter 2012. Permission-based consumer email remains the lowest-priced category, with an average list price of \$72/M. This is an \$8/M decrease from winter 2012 and the lowest priced list category in the history of the index, dropping \$2/M from last quarter, the previous holder of the lowest ever price in a category.

The second lowest priced category of winter 2013 at \$78/M was aggregated business databases. Permission-based medium-large business email files showed a straight average CPM of \$240/M, maintaining its position as the highest-priced domestic category for list rental this quarter, although it is a \$11/M decrease from last winter.

The largest price decrease from winter 2012 to winter 2013 occurred in the aggregated email business database category, which dropped \$19/M from winter 2012 to \$140/M. The largest price increase was in the newsletters category, up \$3/M.

The business magazines/paid circ, consumer book buyers, consumer merchandise buyers and donors categories all remained the same as winter 2012 at \$129/M, \$90/M, \$94/M and \$85/M respectively. —*BETH NEGUS VIVEIROS*



HOW TO LEVERAGE BIG SOCIAL DATA

Social media is the single largest resource for information about consumers. This means that for marketers, big data and social data are one and the same.

Big social data spans the three dimensions that define all big data: volume, velocity and variety.

Volume: In 2012, 1.4 billion consumers spent 22% of their online time on social platforms. There are more than 250 million Tweets and 800 million Facebook updates every day.

Velocity: Big social data is constantly refreshing - giving marketers real-time, accurate insights into the latest developments in consumer lives.

Variety: Social network users produce many different kinds of data, including images, video, comments and social actions. They also offer up information about their age, gender, location, and email addresses. They're even assigned unique IDs by social networks, allowing you to track them from top of the funnel through conversion and beyond.

Your marketing team needs an interface that makes it easy to access and analyze data without the help of statisticians or your IT department. The system should automatically tag unstructured data types like comments, email addresses, etc. This will make it easy to integrate data into your other systems, like Google Analytics and your CRM. Your team can leverage opportunities in real time, without the data curve slowing you down.

Once you've established a process for integrating data, it's time for your department to start mining its value. The number of metrics available is daunting, and it's often tough to know what to evaluate first. Focus on information that's actionable - data you can use to target your consumers and sell to them across all of your marketing initiatives.

Here are a few key metrics to get you started:

Content Engagement: Measure the ways social users interact with your content, including comments, shares, referrals, and participation in social campaigns. For more nuanced insights, categorize your content by topic and type - posts about shoes, videos, etc.

Fan Loyalty: Don't just track overall content performance - look at how frequently individual fans interact with your posts and campaigns. Identify the people who are engaged with your content, loyal to your brand, and influential among their friends. Your team can use this information to create exclusive programs and offers for brand advocates.

Fan Interests: Look at fan interactions with content categories for clues about their interests and intent to purchase. Your team can then react to these insights with targeted marketing content about their favorite subjects and products.

Social Profile Data: Fan-created profiles give you access to their demographics - location, gender, age, etc. Evaluate the brands your fans follow as well. It's a great way to get competitive intelligence, and identify common interests across your consumer base.

User-Submitted Data: There is no point in collecting social data unless it's actionable. Run social campaigns that collect email addresses and mailing addresses from your fans and tie them to other data about their behaviors and interests. You can then run targeted campaigns based on any number of combinations of the data you've collected - target yoga fans under 25 with an exclusive discount via Facebook ads, or send New Yorkers an exclusive email invite to a flash sale in Soho.

Campaign Performance: Track the performance of your big social data-fueled campaigns, and use your findings to refine your data collection process. Be prepared to make exciting discoveries about what your audience wants, and make sure your team is primed to react to them quickly. *-MARK COOPER, CMO/CO-FOUNDER, OFFERPOP*



FOLLOWING THE MONEY



In the past few years, many marketers have tested multiple kinds of campaign management tools, and that has created a multitude of unwieldy data silos.

"Marketers are struggling with integration issues," says Michael Della Penna, senior vice president, emerging channels, Responsys. "They're looking for a solution that can collect critical social data and make it actionable."

This means that integrated solutions will be a key area for tech spending, says Della Penna, who notes that 2011 was very much a testing phase for social media.

"It wasn't unusual to talk to a brand that has three campaign management tools in place, testing which is the best tool for them," he says, noting that many tools initially just focused on one specific area, like email or social listening. "But by the end of 2012, many of these tools started morphing and increasing their offerings to increase revenue by account."

Now, brands are realizing that they don't need three of the same thing, and will look to consolidate into the one that best meets their particular needs. *-BNV*