



## Top 10 Things to Improve Your Voice of the Customer Program

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Read the paper, look at webinar offerings, or talk to anyone in your industry and it's obvious that customer experience continues to be a focus as companies fight for reputation, market share, and revenue gains. With all that attention, you'd assume we would see some positive improvements, right? So why are there just as many examples of frustrated customers jumping ship due to negative experiences or lack of consideration for the customer's *real* needs?

Here's my list of the top 10 ways to improve the customer experience by properly leveraging the contact center's Voice of the Customer (VoC) program and the insights it can provide.

1. **Check alignment with strategy.** Each budget cycle, the contact center needs to ensure that its major initiatives support the business strategy. Take time to revisit the VoC program and how it supports your expectations for service excellence. Don't simply say: "It was fine last year; no change needed this year."
2. **Get clear on what you want to measure.** There's not much point in soliciting customer feedback unless it triggers some kind of action or insight at the agent, center, or company level. Ask yourself: What information would be truly meaningful to the front line, support services, and management? What would help the center – and agents – get better or stay on the top of their game?
3. **Ask for specifics.** Include an open ended question to allow customers to share their insight. There's no better way to capture what you should keep doing and what needs to be changed.
4. **Make the survey relatively low effort and easy to use.** Take a fresh look at your survey approach, content, and design. Have you narrowed the field of inquiry to no more than 5-7 questions? Does your survey methodology honor the recipients' preferred media? Is it minimally disruptive?
5. **Implement triggers for action.** Establish trigger thresholds so surveys scoring below an acceptable level get immediate follow-up and experience intervention.
6. **Conduct root cause analysis.** If your survey reveals an undercurrent of unhappiness, you need to know *why* you're falling short of the mark. For example, if it took too long to reach the right person, the cause could be a capacity constraint, a call routing issue, agent training, or something else. Too often, the front line takes the "hit" for something beyond their control. If you don't surface the root cause, you'll keep getting the same complaints! Consider conditional questions tied to specific responses as one way to gather more detail, and use other reports and analytics to dig into the root cause of what surveys reveal.
7. **Connect VoC with QM and coaching.** Best in class centers make sure that there is a common thread from strategic and operations planning to training, auditing, and coaching. Make sure that VoC is part of this continuum and keeps pace with major changes and course corrections.
8. **Refine continually.** When satisfaction scores go flat, make some adjustment to your approach to allow for a deeper dive. Don't assume that everything is OK or stop VoC because scores are high. Take it to the next level!



9. **Close the loop.** When you ask for information, be prepared to share the result. You will build credibility and relationships when you are transparent about your current state and the actions that you'll take to improve it. Tie each survey to specific agent interactions and share customer responses in a timely manner with your agents.
10. **Share the wealth.** While your survey may reflect contact center themes, the insights that you glean may benefit other departments within your organization. Keep them apprised of your findings – especially the groups whose work is either upstream or downstream from your efforts. Addressing the themes collaboratively allows the center to gain value by providing insightful customer, process or product information and keeps the entire organization focused on your customer.

Do you *really care* about your customers? How does your VoC program stack up to the ten key components of a well-aligned VoC program? Now is the time to take action. Address the gaps *now*, before you lose another customer or enterprise confidence in your center.