

# Passenger Experience Management



**Their  
Voice**™

10 tips for the successful development and execution of  
Voice of the Customer Programmes  
for passengers travelling by road, rail, air and water

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Voice of the Customer Programmes, sometimes referred to as Customer Feedback Programmes, have the ultimate goal of ensuring the delivery of a great customer experience; to maximise customer loyalty and consequently to improve business performance.

They are widely used by many organisations in many customer centric industries and are designed, implemented and executed to help these companies understand their customers' needs, attitudes and experiences and to drive immediate action on customer feedback.

Building a comprehensive Voice of the Customer Programme has many interconnected elements. Within this document we have outlined the 10 best practices for developing, implementing and running Voice of the Customer Programmes which will help define the future success of your passenger experience programme.



You will read how to design a successful programme to capture feedback from passengers and other key stakeholders to drive organisational improvement and achieve greater levels of support and satisfaction.





## 1 Make passenger feedback part of the experience

Your passengers will give you feedback on your service if the right feedback channels are available to them. Therefore you should be aware of all available touch points between your service and the customer.

Offer your passengers as many channels as possible for collecting feedback and allow them to provide their opinions about their experiences. This could include surveys, social media i.e. twitter and Facebook, word-of-mouth, internet blogs and forums, direct communication with staff, etc.



## 2 Make the voice of the customer tangible on the internet

Your passengers are talking about you and to you; in countless internet forums, blogs and on social networks. These communication streams clearly detail their views and provide in depth detail on the quality of your services.

It is therefore essential in today's environment that your feedback programme embraces and integrates the monitoring of social media and tracking of blogs etc. By actively monitoring discussions about your organisation you can identify current topics, spot overall trends and opportunities and, vitally, you can intervene and manage specific issues





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### Design appealing and engaging survey experiences

Any survey of your passengers should form part of the overall experience. It is important to note that responses differ when surveys are conducted during the experience compared to past experience. Both types of monitoring are important and should form part of your overall programme.

When executing satisfaction surveys avoid long lists of statements about internal processes, which are potentially not relevant to the passenger. The survey should be created in a form that enables the respondent to provide relevant feedback in terms of their experience, and importantly examine what matters to them.

Multiple forms of response should be offered to the respondent where possible, e.g. telephone, mobile, online, SMS, postal, IVR, etc. In online surveys respondents can be engaged through the use of rich media techniques, i.e. more visual, interactive and dynamic questions and through the personalisation of the survey experience. This can also help with vulnerable groups who may struggle with more text heavy interview approaches.

## 4

### Close the feedback loop

Passenger dissatisfaction is very often a gradual process. By immediately identifying any negativity as it arises we can address specific issues to ensure problems are addressed before they impact on large numbers of passengers.

Understand the requirements of your passengers at all times. The use of real-time pre-defined triggers on surveys detailing passenger concerns will provide frontline staff the opportunity to resolve the issue to drive satisfaction. The implementation of a formal process including predefined responsibilities, action planning tools and escalation processes will help to resolve customer issues early. In order to close the customer feedback loop it is important to inform passengers about the resolution activities, let them track the activities and gather feedback on the final resolution





## 5 Use smarter techniques to unlock insights from unstructured and unsolicited data

By only using conventional structured data from surveys the more rich insights will be missed. The use of sophisticated analytics tools will provide greater understanding about passengers and their true reasons for satisfaction.

Surveys, comment fields, call centre transcripts, inbound e-mails, social media posts and tweets exhibit a comprehensive pool of information and insights. Additionally, posted videos, podcasts and other sources of unsolicited feedback can be insightful in more closely understanding your passengers. Smart techniques such as text analysis and sentiment analytics harness rich stores of unstructured data. Combining this with traditional data sources will provide valuable insights to help you better understand passenger experience and behaviour. This in turn will help support and inform strategic and operational decisions.



## 6 Link feedback to other business data

In order to analyse and effectively assess the root causes of dissatisfaction and to identify the operational improvements to be implemented, an holistic view and understanding of the experience is required. This can be achieved through the combination of disparate data into a single view.

Survey data needs to be combined with data from other systems or sources to be seamlessly integrated into one holistic system. For example, these sources could include other survey data, customer data, passenger numbers, finance data, operational metrics, etc. Additionally the combination of survey data with data from social media posts, tweets and internet forums will give you a great opportunity to understand the thoughts and emotions of your passengers to better identify areas for improvement.





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## Communicate custom reports throughout the organisation

Transparency is one of the key success factors in the design and execution of every feedback programme.

It is vital to ensure that the “right people” have access to the “right data” at the “right time”.

Big picture summaries and strategy relevant insights will be distributed to the executive management and operations managers will see detailed tactical reports. Frontline staff should have access to easy to understand and actionable findings through dashboards, passenger profiles and so on



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## Shift the focus from metrics to diagnostics

Capture and analyse interaction of passengers and turn this information into meaningful, actionable insights. Understanding what drives satisfaction is therefore key.

Through the application of advanced analytics and techniques such as data mining, key insights to predict future satisfaction and dissatisfaction can be generated to drive significant operational improvement. Advanced analytics such as driver analysis, predictive modelling, data linkage, text analytics, segmentation, forecasting, etc. will provide insights that help implement action plans and understand the impact of your actions on your passenger experience.





## 9 Implement a process to drive actions and improvements from the data

As a matter of course even the best data will not improve performance if it is not continuously converted into actions. The passenger feedback programme should be used to recognise new challenges early enough, to assess the relevance of specific issues and to implement a strategy for the conversion of improvement measures.

You will not improve satisfaction through short-term ad-hoc actions. Continuity and a systematic approach are vital. Therefore a feedback programme should move beyond simple satisfaction reports and should integrate easy to use passenger experience along with performance management tools for frontline staff; with formal processes and procedures for implementing actions, e.g. best practice guide, target setting, action planning, closed-loop issue resolution, improvement planners, etc.



## 10 Make the feedback programme a strategic initiative

In order to make your passenger feedback programme a success it is essential to be dedicated to feedback, have a dedicated team in place, get buy-in from frontline staff and have support from the top.

Within the organisation it is necessary that resources are available in all involved units and that executive sponsorship is achieved. In order to address issues on cultural factors or change management processes, HR should be involved from the beginning. Additionally, milestones and targets need to be set at the design phase in order to ensure the programme has a clear path to follow and engenders buy-in at all levels. It is not a pass/fail tick box exercise.





In summary, don't forget about:

Making passenger feedback part of the service experience

Making the voice of the customer tangible on the internet

Designing appealing and engaging survey experiences

Closing the loop on passenger feedback

Using smarter techniques to unlock insights from unstructured and unsolicited data

Linking feedback to other data sources

Communicating reports throughout the organisation

Shifting the focus from metrics to diagnostics

Implementing a process to drive actions and improvements from the data

Making the passenger feedback programme a strategic initiative





Our staged process of integrated Voice of the Customer enables you to:

- Design passenger centric feedback mechanisms
- Engage with your passengers
- Integrate feedback from various sources
- Manage the information and apply advanced analytics
- Deliver actionable information and learn from insights
- Drive immediate action from feedback to improve performance





## Steve King - Head of Services Research at SPA Future Thinking

Steve joined the company in 1993 and is a key member of the management team; heading up a team of 12 researchers specialising in customer, employee and social engagement research across service industries including healthcare, transport, utilities, public sector and higher education. He is a firm believer in putting the voice of the customer into the heart of business decision making, linking feedback to key business performance metrics.



Steve has devised some of the largest quantitative projects conducted by the agency and specialises in mixed methodology projects that include both qualitative and quantitative elements. He has a passion for introducing advanced analytical techniques into areas where these have not been used historically. Steve's work on advocacy rates within a leading Russell Group university was described as 'trail-blazing' by Dr Paul Marsden of the London School of Economics.

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For over a decade SPA Future Thinking has been providing strategic research and actionable insights to a number of leading blue chip companies. We offer both custom solutions and analytics and proprietary techniques to help guide the decisions that you make in areas like market development, new product development, innovation, customer satisfaction and experience, brand, communications, buying behaviour and more.

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