

**Keyword:** How surveys can help customer retention rate

## **1. How surveys can help customer retention rate**

Customer surveying is one of the most effective ways to improve your relationship with your customers. The method works on two levels: you are able to directly learn what your customers are experiencing and what they want to see in the future, and giving customers the chance to voice their opinions shows that you value them.

### **What to Measure**

You can measure almost anything about customers using surveys – their demographics, their experiences with your business, what products they'd like to see in the future. When you make and analyze surveys, a certain balance must be struck:

- Ask for and use useful demographic data, without coming across as too nosy
- Learn about what customers might like to see in future products and services, without relying too heavily on opinions that may not reflect actual demands
- Ask enough questions to get meaningful information, without asking so much that you lose customer interest

### **Surveys That Listen**

As you formulate your survey, you'll want to ask mostly questions that use a scale or are multiple-choice, since these types of questions are the easiest to answer and the easiest for you to analyze. As long as you don't use leading language, asking people to rate their experiences or their opinion on a subject will provide reliable data.

You'll also want to include a few spaces where customers can give feedback in their own words. Doing so demonstrates that you are truly interested in their personal opinion, which builds trust and goodwill. A general box for customers to place "Any comments or concerns" is effective; you can also ask for feedback on specific issues, such as what they'd like to see in a new product.

### **Use the Information**

Now that you've built a survey that values and respects the customer, how you use the results will also help you retain customers. Try these ideas:

- If many customers reported a bug or a poor experience, share how you've rectified the situation and consider offering coupons to those affected
- Always treat your customer data with the utmost respect for confidentiality
- Use your online presence to announce new developments or changes inspired by customer surveying results
- Use customer survey data to identify what types of customers are usually retained, and which types you're most likely to lose

When done carefully, customer surveying does more than just give you information about customers and their preferences – it allows you to improve your overall relationship with

customers, thus improving retention.

**Keyword:** Creating the right questions for your survey

## **2. Creating the right questions for your survey**

If you do customer surveying right, it can help you identify key information about your customers and make decisions that will improve your entire company. However, a poorly written survey won't give you useful information, and may even lead you astray. Below, we'll explore the most important steps in creating the right questions for your survey.

### **Identify Your Goals**

No single survey can do it all. In general, your surveys will be designed to measure one aspect of the customer experience. What was their online checkout like? How satisfied are they with your products? How and why do they use your services? As you analyze customer survey data, you'll be able to draw conclusions, so decide before you write the survey what you want the results to reveal.

### **Design the Survey**

Surveys should be designed in such a way that they keep the attention of the person taking them. Keep these issues in mind:

- Customers will lose interest in the survey after just a few minutes, so keep it as succinct as possible
- Questions on similar subjects should be clumped together so that the survey flows naturally
- Plan how many questions you'll ask on each subject in advance

### **Write the Questions**

Now that you've identified your goals and created a rough blueprint of the survey, you can formulate the actual questions. The language you use when creating questions can make or break your survey. Consider the following:

- Questions should be targeted to the educational level of your customers; don't use college-level questions if many customers have a 10th-grade reading level. If you're uncertain, go with simpler language
- Ask only one thing with every question
- Avoid leading or biased language – terms with emotional connotations can unconsciously bias survey-takers
- Questions should mostly have the same response options; for example, don't ask for a 1-5 rating on one question and an “Agree or disagree” on others. Keep it as consistent as the needs of the survey allow for
- Don't give too many options – having more than 3-5 options is normally too many to get good results

In some cases, it may be useful to adapt some common, industry standard questions to your own needs, while also creating your own questions. After you've administered your survey, you'll be able to use data analysis to determine whether or not certain questions gave effective results, allowing you to write even better questions as time goes on.

**Keyword:** Necessities for Survey Analysis

### 3. Necessities for Survey Analysis

It's not enough to simply make customer surveys and briefly review the results without going into in-depth survey analysis. Customer surveying gives you the opportunity to gather the information you need to make business decisions that are based on the evidence at hand, rather than just your own intuition. Of course, not all survey analysis software is created equal. As you research your survey analysis software options, make sure whatever software you choose has these necessities:

- **Side-by-side comparison** – You won't be looking at any single survey in a vacuum; instead, you'll be comparing results to past surveys and information gathered from other sources. If you're a very large company, this may mean thousands of surveys going back several decades. Your software should allow you to compare surveys and specific questions from different surveys without any trouble.
- **Ability to integrate different types of results** – Not all surveys give the same types of results. Some results are more qualitative, such as customer feedback comments; and even in multiple-choice results, the format will vary. Your software should allow you to integrate these different types of results.
- **Capacity** – As mentioned above, large companies may have thousands of surveys from thousands or even millions of customers, going back decades. Even small to medium companies who give out surveys frequently will find that they accumulate a large database over time. Your survey company must be able to handle this type of volume.
- **User-friendliness** – Few companies have a dedicated analyst these days, and with modern software there's no need for one. The best survey analysis software should be intuitive to use, allowing people from many different departments and backgrounds to learn the software quickly and make sense of the results.
- **Great customer service** – You want a company who will be on-call to answer your questions when you have them. It should be easy to find a real person to talk to on phone or via web chat, and the customer service representatives must be competent at helping you find solutions.

When you find a software company, like mTab, that offers all of these features, you'll be able to truly make the most of your customer surveying. Companies who do customer surveys frequently, and combine it with excellent survey analysis, are able to stay a step ahead of their competitors who are less in tune with the market.

**Keyword:** What not to focus on when analyzing survey results

#### 4. What not to focus on when analyzing survey results

Survey analysis lets you make sense of your customer surveying, turning raw data into information you can use to make an action plan. However, it's also possible to get caught up in irrelevant information while analyzing surveying results, which can take you away from what's really important about the results. With that in mind, it helps to start out with an idea of what's important and what's not. Here's what *not* to focus on when analyzing survey results:

- **Outliers** – Every survey has outliers. You might find that one or two customers gives unusually stellar or poor feedback, which can be blown out of proportion if you look at just one survey. Similarly, if you have a few respondents who are very far outside of your usual target market, you may want to regard their opinions as outliers if they differ from what most customers say.
- **Business suggestions** – Customers often have opinions on how you should run your business and what products you should offer. In some situations – for example, if customers are suggesting something that's already been suggested in-house, or if many customers have the same suggestion – this may be worth listening to. On the other hand, isolated suggestions or ideas that are far outside of your scope of business shouldn't be dwelled on.
- **Results of poor questions** – After sending out a survey, you may realize that certain questions are poorly phrased, using biased or unclear language. Don't try to use these results despite the problems in the questions. Instead, cut your losses and throw out the questions.
- **Inconsistent results** – You may find that the results are highly inconsistent on certain questions. Answers between different customers may vary more than for other questions. Another example: if you ask two similar questions at the start and end of the survey, and tend to get different results for each one. These issues may also indicate poor question design or another issue, and shouldn't be included.
- **Past information** – Modern survey analysis lets you analyze surveys almost in real-time, but you may still end up with feedback that addresses issues that are no longer relevant. If your results, for example, are due to a past issue that's since been resolved, there's no use in dwelling on the past.

When you analyze your surveys, ignore results that meet these criteria and instead keep your eye on the results that will be helpful in shaping your future decisions.

**Keyword:** Tips for effective surveys during the holiday season

#### 5. Tips for effective surveys during the holiday season

During the holiday season, most companies experience a surge in purchases and interest. It's the last big shopping push of the year, and you'll usually see a big drop-off come January, so taking advantage of the season can help you get as many survey respondents as possible. Not only do you benefit from an increased volume of customers, but many companies offer seasonal specials or introduce new products during the holiday season, meaning that

surveying is a great way to get feedback.

At the same time, the holiday rush is a busy time for both customers and companies. Customers find themselves scrambling to shop, prepare to have guests, and travel, while companies must meet the increased demand. Nevertheless, the hustle and bustle of the season doesn't mean you can't do some great surveying during this time. Use the following tips for effective surveying during the holiday season:

- *Plan in advance* – When possible, it's best to design your surveying and plan out the execution before the holiday season. Since the holidays are such a busy time for most companies, spending time building surveys can be unfeasible.
- *Set your goals* – During the holidays, you have a once-a-year opportunity to find out important information about how your company comes across during the holiday season. However, you won't be able to take full advantage of those results until the following years. Decide whether you want to learn holiday-specific information, information you can use year-round, or a combination of both.
- *Respect your customers* – Customers are very busy during the holidays, which can make them reluctant to take surveys. Quick surveys are always important, but you should particularly emphasize this feature during the holiday season.
- *Reward your customers* – 'Tis the season for giving, so consider offering coupons or contests with your surveys. These rewards should be attractive to survey-takers, without placing a strain on your budget.
- *Have an analysis method picked out* – Holiday survey results are often quite time-sensitive, and you're usually experiencing the holiday crunch at the same time. Choose your data analysis software before the holiday season, so that it's just a matter of plugging in the results.

When you incorporate these tips into your survey design and execution, you can create holiday surveys that give you valuable results while placing as little strain on company and customer time as possible.