

The background features a stylized illustration of a person in a grey suit holding a megaphone. The person's arms and hands are visible, with one hand holding the megaphone and the other near their chest. Surrounding the person are several circular icons: a yellow star in a pink circle at the top, a heart in a yellow circle on the left, and a thumbs-up in a pink circle on the right. The background is light blue with concentric white circles emanating from the megaphone, suggesting sound waves. The text is overlaid on this illustration.

**(VOC)**

# **VOICE OF THE CUSTOMER**

**CAPTURING CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS**

**ROOTLOUD**

# WHY VOC MATTERS

You worked your butt off to get the customer, and you do. Great! Now what?

Businesses that regularly utilize the voice of the customer (VoC) feedback tend to do better on every scale, from revenue growth to customer retention. For example, a recent study from the Aberdeen Group shows that **companies using VoC data have almost ten times as much annual revenue growth** as others.

The main benefit of VoC programs is measuring a customer's experience at critical touch points in real time. Therefore, one of the best things you can do is to ask the customers what they want and go from there to build a relationship. Knowing a customer's desire enables you to see where you might go with your product or service offering, but it also may show you to shift to a different customer segment that aligns more with where you are currently.

A **VoC** program can help you capture how your **customers** feel about your business, product, or service, giving you insights that can help you create a stronger **customer** experience.

## WANT TO MATCH YOUR OFFERINGS TO YOUR CUSTOMER'S NEEDS AND DESIRES?

Voice of Customer (VoC) lets you match product features, sales, service, and support to customers' needs. That spells a strategic advantage for the product-producing company that understands its customers better than the competition.

An effective VoC effort is two-sided:

1. Systematic gathering of input from customers, including

- Close-to-purchase such as Net Promoter Score
- Topical surveys
- Social media, mostly specialized platforms like installer forums
- Competitor monitoring

2. Ensuring feedback is put to use

- Tying feedback to company strategy
- Inclusion of stakeholders in the process

## Gathering of Customer Input from Multiple Listening Posts



Input is essential to VoC, and information from several listening posts gives you a clearer perspective. Post-purchase input, usually Net Promoter Score (NPS), is one of the most used measurements of VoC. Your product is at the top of customers' minds at purchase and installation, so an NPS survey fits the need due to its simplicity. Challenges include survey fatigue and a bias that your best customers tend to respond. These challenges can be overcome by coupling the

effort with regular sales and servicing motions rather than impersonal email blasts.

It's vital to survey the field installers (whose opinion matters), not the office manager who answers emails. It would help if you always asked the responder their role. We have even used box inserts and not simply email to gather the needed information. Note that NPS scores themselves are NOT the actual value here. (More on that below.)

We enable you to make sense of the feedback and put it to use.

### Topical Surveys

Internal teams will have specific questions, such as product featuring or filling assortment gaps, which should be addressed with surveys. We have implemented survey programs at SnapAV and at an e-commerce company.

### Social Media

Social media give a broader perspective than your surveys. For example, listening to industry and installer forums yields more value for a manufacturer than the mega-platforms (Facebook, LinkedIn, etc). We use Natural Language Processing to read and monitor these forums for efficiency, as we have with a major bank's customer feedback.

### Competitors

Your competition is listening to the same customer base, so an annual competitor review of websites, their 'owned' social media, and industry forums is an excellent cross-check that you're not missing any themes.



Too often, stakeholders see VoC data and say, “Yes, I already knew that. I’ve been in this industry for years.” At the same time, new insights which might challenge their perception are dismissed as inaccurate. That’s the fault of the research team who “throws VoC over the wall” in a

beautiful Powerpoint deck, and the VoC program fades into obscurity.

## Steps to fix the typical VoC problems

- Give the **stakeholder departments participation** along the process. A designee participates in survey design and testing. They give input on issues and responses on social channels.
- Sales and Service teams **invite survey feedback** to their regular contact routines.
- Best of all is the **two-way VoC**. After NPS surveys, have key stakeholders (ex. engineer and customer service representative) call customers with the lowest scores to ask great questions and gain insights from listening.

In the end, you will gain crucial insight into improving products, services, and processes. There is nothing lost in this valuable data. You desire real-time feedback, so equip your customers with tools for such feedback.

**We recommend creating a customer feedback loop.** A feedback loop is a customer experience strategy meant to constantly enhance and improve your product based on user reviews, opinions, and suggestions. This feedback loop is based on the concept of mutual interaction between both the business and its customers.



# ROOTLOUD CASE STUDY

## Voice of the Customer

### Client

A manufacturer of home audio and theater equipment

### Challenge

The client knew they had a large pool of customers with high potential but low order volume. They desired to know how to become their primary supplier. The best "top-of-mind" contact point, especially for these low-volume customers, was upon receipt of an order, so the Net Promoter Score framework was a good fit. Yet, most of the executive team was disinterested in the NPS results. Those scores, by product category, didn't change much from month to month and when they did, the reason was well known, such as a new product launch or a defect recall.

### Solution

That changed when we got a team to call customers who gave the client low scores. The team consisted of the following: a product engineer, a customer service representative, and a member of the research team. These were the lukewarm customers the client needed to hear from and understand their needs better. Most of these customers were open and shared why they didn't like the

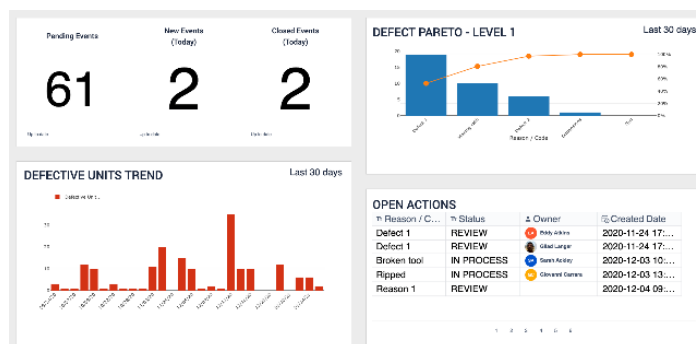
products and how they felt they could be improved. This group offered to be on a focus group to help design, test, and review the next generation of products.

In many cases, our client could spend time on their customer's site to gain input. Suddenly the client had loads of input for improving products and processes, not just an NPS number on a report. This insight and data were what the executive team needed to guide their decisions for investment.

## Success

That feedback resulted in several product feature decisions which began winning back those low-volume customers category by category. In one case, they even made a strategic decision to abandon a whole generation of signal technology and begin innovating next-generation technology, which saved several hundred thousand dollars in sunk product development costs. Last, improvements were made to their e-commerce store.

This included a better rating tool, immediate feedback to the customer service team, and the ability to return products with defects faster. Here is a snapshot of the defect tracking board in several departments.



## Summary

Voice of Customer can be powerful when the program gets valuable information into the hands and heads of decision-makers, not just scores on a dashboard. Customers that return and refer are vital to scaling any business. But with the pace of change that digital technology has brought to these ancient relationships,



we've lost something. We've added more and more separation layers between businesses and consumers—automated checkouts, websites, one-to-many communication, and now we even have chatbots. So how do we maintain and advance the convenience and scalability that technology delivers while building those deep, long-lasting relationships between buyer and seller?

## About Rootloud

Rootloud is a performance consulting firm with an emphasis on strategy, sales, and development, specializing in tackling intricate business, government, and education issues.

We improve customer experiences for our clients. We deliver digital transformation in marketing, sales, and operations, yielding impressive, long-lasting returns. Improving your overall customer experience has enormous implications for your business.

If you desire an experienced digital design team to take a next step in exploring improved customer experience or operational efficiencies, please contact us at [hello@rootloud.com](mailto:hello@rootloud.com)

Here are a few of our 600 clients.

