



Podcast 011

## Gaining Fabulous Feedback

Hi listeners, a very warm welcome from me, Liz, and Nicky. So Nicky, what's new?

Well Liz, perhaps we should tell listeners how we spent three days with Nick James from Seriously Fun Business doing a course on Event Management and strategic marketing.

Yes, it was an epic few days for many reasons, but we learned so much didn't we and it just reaffirmed that no matter what stage you're at in your career, you do need to keep investing in your personal development. It was certainly a great few days that remotivated and provided us with lots of pointers for new ideas.

Yes, brilliant, if a little exhausting. But I guess anyone tuning in is doing just that, investing in their own knowledge, so hats off to you people! Your continued support really is very much appreciated!

So what's this week's podcast about then, Nicky?

In our previous podcast on customer service, we talked about the importance of maintaining your customer service levels. So, I thought perhaps we could keep on the theme by thinking a little more about how to check in to see how well you are doing from time to time, and then how to use this information in your marketing activity.

Oh good, so yes, as we said, staying on top of our customer satisfaction is something we all need to do. But no-one is interested in lengthy time-consuming surveys or unwieldy telephone calls. I don't know about you, but several times I have been sent a quick Survey Monkey type questionnaire and given up after a few questions because they simply demand more input than I initially thought or they simply take too much of my time.

Yes, exactly that, so one thing I have to advocate is the use of the Net Promoter Score (NPS) which is a quick and effective way to keep track of your overall success.

Sound interesting - tell us more about that then?

Yes, so the brilliant thing about the NPS system is that it involves one simple question, or two if you follow my example and it can be anonymous too which means you really aren't taking much of your customers time. Then at the same time, you can start to build some testimonials which you can then use in your marketing.

We've said before about how testimonials are really important, especially when starting out as you're trying to establish your all-important credibility factor. Then if you're using online reviews on platforms such as TripAdvisor, Google Reviews, Booking.com, AirB&B, Facebook, and Checkatrade, for example, it's doubly important as this can affect your rankings too on these platforms. And businesses with higher star rankings are seeing increases in revenue as well as improved trust and loyalty with their customer base.

That's exactly right. So, diving straight into the net promoter score. what it does simply is it immediately categorises all customers into one of the three groups—promoters, passives, and detractors—allowing you to see right away whether a customer experience was a success or a failure—and why.

How does it do that?

Well, you either do this by phone but it's easier to add a hyperlink to your final invoice where you direct people to a landing page on your website that captures the information through a form or using a tool such as Survey Monkey or I use Wufoo forms as then it notifies me when I get a response. There you ask one simple question, so write this down listeners — How likely is it that you would recommend us to a friend or colleague? — Customers then respond on a 0-to-10 point rating scale and are categorised as follows:

Promoters (score 9-10) are loyal enthusiasts who will keep buying and refer others, fueling growth.

Passives (score 7-8) are satisfied but unenthusiastic customers who are vulnerable to competitive offerings

Detractors (score 0-6) are unhappy customers who can damage your brand and impede growth through negative word-of-mouth.

To calculate your company's NPS, take the percentage of customers who are Promoters and subtract the percentage who are Detractors. And that gives you a baseline score that you can seek to improve upon over time if needs be.

So I suppose if you get anything above 7 you're doing okay and then if you also get a load of detractors, you need to do more to put things right so to speak? You could decide to go back to them at this stage and see if you can remedy any problems they may be having?

Yes, for sure, especially if people have been given the option to add their email address

You mentioned a couple of other questions that you add to this?

So, I believe ideally you want to dig a little more deeply from this question and this is done by simply adding the next question. So listeners, write this down cos it's a biggie. Your first question is "How likely is it that you would recommend us to a friend or colleague?" Then the next question is "Why?" - this insight enables you to quickly identify issues that create detractors—and the actions you need to take to address them.

Oh, I like it, two questions and you're done. I can see that Net Promoter surveys are not traditional customer satisfaction surveys, and simply measuring your NPS does not lead to success but, that said, it's a quick and effective way to highlight issues that should be dealt with directly by the team involved and it pinpoints improvements or otherwise over time.

The ultimate test for any customer relationship metric is whether it helps improve customer loyalty or retention. By using the NPS, you can help employees clarify and simplify the job of delighting customers. It helps identify and engage your best customers. While finally, you can compare performance from week to week and month to month.

Brilliant, so I guess the final question if you want to do it at this stage is just to ask people for a testimonial?

Precisely! Although this shouldn't be a required question, but you could ask people, as I do, "If you are pleased with our service and you are happy to do so, would you mind adding some brief feedback that we can share with our audience online?"

So three questions then.

Yep, any more and then you're getting into lengthy survey territory but remember over time you can use your NPS score to judge ongoing performance.

Great, so this is one idea for listeners. Perhaps give it a go, you can use digital platforms for this if you prefer, as Nicky said, although a telephone call can draw out better results with the right customer and telephone technique.

So then, I guess there are those Industry-specific Review Sites. As we said, ranking high on Google and Facebook is important, but it I guess it shouldn't be the sole focus of your online review strategy.

Yes, so you should also identify industry-specific review sites that are relevant to your business and direct your customers to fill out reviews on those sites as well.

I guess the first, and most important step, in this process, is to find sites that your customers and potential customers often visit when researching products or services like the ones you mentioned at the beginning of this podcast.

Yes, because industry specific review sites are excellent resources for a targeted searcher. This individual usually knows what they want and is extremely focused. They also are most likely to have pre-existing knowledge of these sites and are further along in the purchase process as well. Just because these sites are more narrowly focused doesn't mean reviews there won't have value to your overall SEO strategy, as reviews from these niche sites can also show up in Google search engine results.

Deciding what approach to take with online reviews can be a difficult one, but having a diverse presence across multiple review sites will maximise your exposure to all types of consumers and increase the likelihood that your business will be found and visited by potential customers.

Yes, so remember that one of the biggest advantages of online reviews – especially if you are collecting new ones on a near daily basis – is the real-time feedback you receive both on your business operations as well as your employee performance.

Awww, yes, we need to share the love! I know we could talk about this subject all day, but we're running out of time, so I guess this may be the time to say to our listeners that if you are enjoying this Marketing Menu podcast, please do make sure you share and subscribe via iTunes, Stitcher, Tune-in or Blubrry when this item has finished. We're a new channel, and we'd really like to get out there and help as many growing businesses as possible.

Now I suppose no business is immune to negative reviews, but how that business responds to those reviews will go a long way toward showing your customers that you value their opinion and constructive feedback. Using negative reviews – or even middling reviews – as an opportunity to learn and improve your product and service is a good way to build a successful business.

Yep so real-time feedback is essential to identifying problem areas and remedying them quickly before the problems become systemic. Transparency has long been a buzzword in the business world. Businesses that aspire to be truly transparent value honest feedback from customers. This helps them identify which processes are working, which employees are succeeding, and gives businesses actionable insights that enable them to make educated business decisions rather than taking a simple shot in the dark. I do get a little exasperated when I hear business owners say "Oh we offer great customer service" and then when asked to qualify this they say well we get loads of great reviews on Facebook, far more likes than dislikes!

Now I think I know what you're eluding to there, Nicky! This is the point that, according to recent research, only 1 in 26 customers will take the time to complain publicly – so I guess we're saying how do you know that all these likes aren't actually a skewed representation of how your customers are really feeling? The other 35 are fed up but not saying anything. Do everything in your power to make it easy for customers to give feedback and tell you about problems they are having.

Getting a handle on what makes your customers tick, what they like about your business, and what they would change is valuable information that shouldn't be taken lightly. In the past, it was more difficult to get a pulse on what your customers thought about your business. You might have had anecdotal data about your customers' sentiments but nothing concrete.

Precisely. I guess it's like looking at return on investment - you need concrete figures that stack up and the NPS is simply one way you can track results over time. Businesses that don't utilise all feedback to improve processes that aren't working or to validate processes that are will remain stagnant. And with the marketplace constantly changing, businesses that don't respond and just stand still will be left behind.

I agree although it may not be comfortable to do a bit of naval gazing. The bad news is that, according to Consumer Reports surveys, 91 percent of customers won't give you a second chance if the first experience they have with your business is poor. That's why it is paramount to use the feedback given via customer reviews to build the customer experience. This will help your business create advocates as opposed to detractors.

So, I had an experience of this recently when a recruitment company asked me how they should respond to some negative feedback online that followed a disgruntled potential employee not getting a position he was after.

Oh juicy, so what suggestions did you make, it can be really important to act quickly when this sort of thing happens right?

Yes, so listeners may recall how in podcast 009 we talked peachy public relations and about having a worse case plan in place so that employees know what to do if this happened, as time is, as you rightly say, of the essence.

So, what suggestions did you make?

Yes, so listeners may like to write these headings down. The first port of call is to Empathise and Apologise if you are in the wrong. It is important to swallow your pride and acknowledge any wrongdoing.

Then Respond calmly – Have someone who isn't directly involved in the situation respond to the complaint. Let cooler heads prevail rather than make the situation worse.

Thirdly, offer a proactive solution – Taking responsibility is only the first step to resolving customer concerns. You must also show that you've put some thought into the problem and offer a way that you can fix it.

And finally, take the conversation offline. Once you have apologised and offered a solution, provide the customer with a way to contact someone in the business like a customer service manager that can follow-up on the situation until it is resolved.

Now that's interesting because I know when I see a negative review online, I follow the conversation more than for a good one. Bit naughty really but I guess or at least hope I'm not alone here. But then again maybe just because I am in the industry when I see a negative review handled well it actually boosts my respect for the establishment. We all know we can't all get it right all of the time, don't we?

Yes, that's true, but in fact, according to a study by Bazaarvoice.com, consumers who saw a brand respond to a negative review were more than twice as likely to purchase than if the brand had not responded.

So listeners, responding to a negative review isn't easy but is worth it in the long run. It shows your customers that you care, are willing to adapt and change to meet customer needs, and shows that your business doesn't just give lip service to the idiom, "The customer is always right."

Yep apparently though it takes 12 positive experiences to make up for one unresolved negative experience and, you're right, according to research by the White House Office of Consumer Affairs, news of bad customer service reaches more than twice as many ears as praise for a good service experience.

So again, take the time to address unhappy customers and do everything in your power to remedy the situation. It's not only worth keeping their business but also avoiding any negative word of mouth exposure.

Gosh, there is so much to this isn't there?

Yep, but let's end on a high Liz. It's worth remembering that all these good experiences you can use in your marketing activity. I know one local company that regularly shares their captured feedback on their social media channels, which I believe you have done for us too isn't that right?

Yes, I have shared a couple of testimonials we have got from listeners online, with their permission of course and I never name them unless we've asked for permission. I may put the company name, or you could say delighted from Brighton say, but that is a little cheesy!

I suppose one stage on from this is building case studies which you can then use when making presentations, particularly to new prospects or when you want to demonstrate the breadth of your experience?

Yes, these are useful, and if you're putting them online, then you're also helping to build your keywords, to use a search engine optimisation term.

So I don't know about you but if I've worked particularly hard for a client, and of course they are happy to share a few words, and are happy for me to share the story then I will create a one-page case study that clearly shows the 'as was situation', 'what we did' or 'solution' and then the 'outcomes' or 'results'.

Yes, then you can add that all important testimonial and any key metrics that resulted from the project. If you can link financials in the form of business uplift or event attendance, of course, this is always good.

I find these help with the sales process and genuinely happy customers are nearly always happy to share. It can take a bit of time though, so I always suggest the business writes the document and then passes this to the client for comment. This way you control the tone and the key points of the article and the client doesn't feel they have to do all the work.

Good idea. Well, Liz, I think this has given listeners loads of good ideas to think about. So, Liz, you're going to be out of action for a couple of weeks as you're expecting a new addition to the family, aren't you?

Yes, well, I am so excited my daughter is expecting our second grandchild, so I am going to be on hand to help her but we can take the time in our next podcast to feedback on some questions that we've received from the listeners themselves and see how that goes.

Wow well, exciting, I wish you all the best with that. Yes, so listeners this is your chance to get in touch and send in those all important questions so that we can respond to some of the issues you are facing.

Yes, and in the meantime do start collecting those all-important excellent customer service stories and remember that they really do help create brand loyalty and ultimately they spread the love more quickly.

So, before we wrap up, let's just say a big thank you for tuning in. We know there are loads of podcasts and webinars out there and we've specifically designed The Marketing Menu to offer practical, accessible marketing ideas that you can put into practice. So, we're very excited that you've chosen to tune in and we hope that some of what we've shared today resonates with you and allows you to make real business changes. Let us know how you get on.

Yes, so tune in again on Wednesday 9th August when we'll be looking at those all-important marketing questions that listeners have sent in. Thanks, guys, so this is a goodbye from me, Nicky Matthews until next time.

And me, Liz Gordon, goodbye.

References: <http://www.helpscout.net/75-customer-service-facts-quotes-statistics/>  
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