

NICE Satmetrix

Action, Not Research

Designing Customer Surveys that Drive Improvement



Overview – Survey Design Principles

If you want a customer experience program that lives up to its promise, don't shortchange your customer survey design. Craft surveys that customers want to complete and that give you actionable insight. Abandoned surveys don't give you insight into the customer journey. Ambiguous data doesn't lead to focused action to get employees engaged with customer experience.

Therefore, you need to create surveys that:

Encourage Customer Completion

- Keep it short and to the point!
- Relate to what your customer views as important.
- Give your customers the opportunity to share their opinions and suggestions.

Create Actionable Insight

- Relevant to specific customers or larger customer segments.
- Aligned to internal departments, processes, and business leaders.
- Reflect your company's strategies, goals, and values.

In this ebook, we'll show you how to design and schedule surveys that follow these principles.

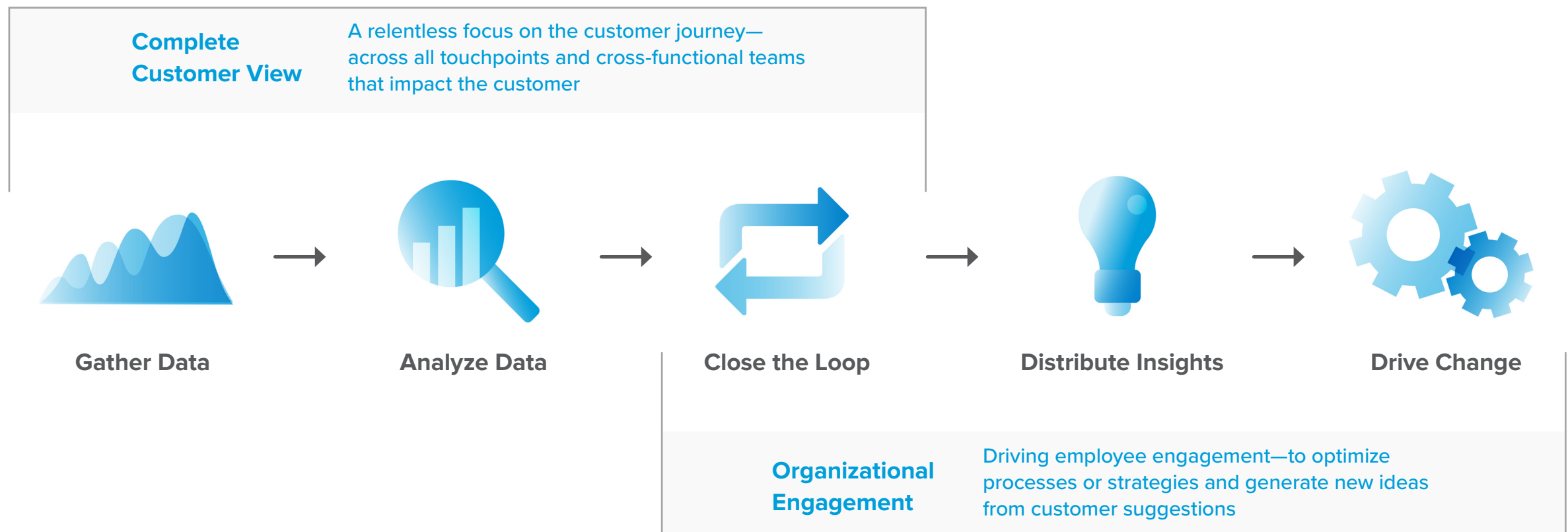


A Quick Refresher

What is CEM or VOC?

Let's start by quickly reviewing the concept of a comprehensive customer experience program. Whether you call it customer experience management, CEM, or you prefer the term voice of the customer, VOC, there are a lot of misconceptions about what customer experience management means. When CEM efforts don't bear fruit, it's often the result of a failure to treat CEM, or VOC, as a comprehensive, multi-faceted undertaking.

As a first step, VOC involves gathering customer feedback data from surveys or other sources; analyzing the data to understand what the feedback means to your business; closing the loop with customers; acting on the feedback data; and driving positive change within your company.



One Piece of the Puzzle

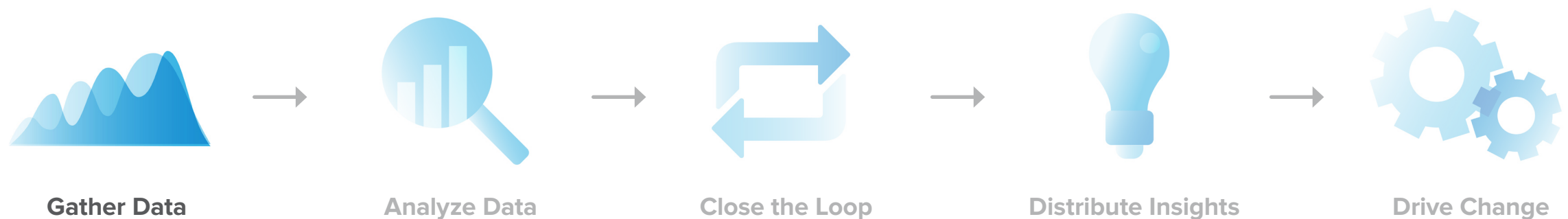
Good survey design can make a big difference for your CEM program. However, you should never mistake a survey for an entire program.

Recognizing survey design as one of many elements of your VOC program offers a couple of benefits. First, it helps you understand the scope of effort for true customer experience management. And second, it helps you focus your design work so that it considers the other elements of the CEM program. If you know you'll need to close the loop and act on the data, you can focus both your question set and the specific phrasing or wording appropriately.

And one more note: Surveys aren't even the only way to collect data about your customers. You can use operational data, insight from your closed-loop processes, social media commentary, and unstructured feedback as grist for your analysis. The more sources of data, the better.

Even so, survey design plays a key role in the quality of the data available to you, so let's begin our discussion of great design.

Customer Experience Management: More than a Survey



Customer Experience Surveys

What Works

Some people hear the word “survey” and think it’s their one and only opportunity to ask customers questions. Actually, quite the opposite is true. Customer experience surveys should be the start, or continuation, of an on-going dialogue with your customers. Ideally, surveys should be an extension of your customer communications program, with branding and language that reflects your company standards and guidelines.

Customer experience surveys are your opportunity to ask what is working well and what could be done better. Your customers should be able to express their opinion with yes/no questions or radio button responses, and they should also be able to give suggestions in open-ended dialogue boxes.

Key Points

- Create a conversation with customers using a regular cadence of surveys.
- Ensure surveys reinforce your brand and augment your customer communications program.
- Allow your customers to give opinions and suggestions.
- Gain insight into what’s working and what’s not.

Customer Experience Surveys

What Doesn't Work

As surveys go through internal review cycles or are re-purposed, quite often a well-constructed, thoughtful, succinct survey can fall prey to over-editing—where reviewers want to include “just one more question” or revise carefully chosen words. Resist the urge to include questions that don’t relate to the overall goal of the survey, use internal jargon that your customer may not understand, create ambiguity by asking about multiple variables in the same question, or request missing customer data that you should already know about your customers.

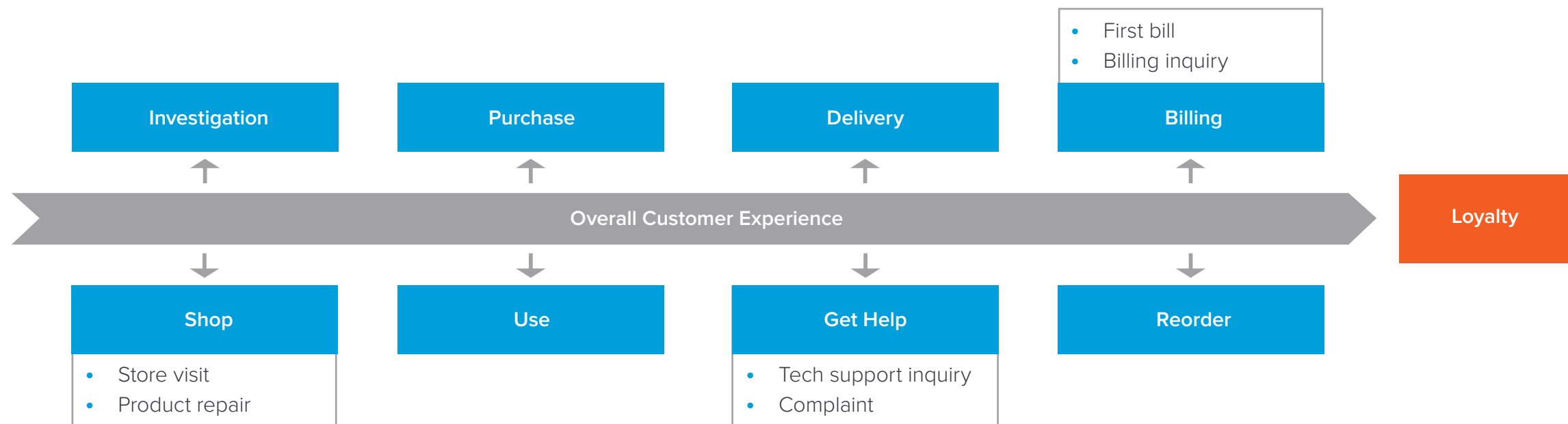
Key Points

- Avoid long, tedious, and boring surveys.
- Make sure each question relates to the singular purpose of your survey.
- Don’t include company jargon or ambiguous, confusing language.
- Don’t use surveys as a way to collect missing customer data.

Connect Surveys to Your Customers' Journey

Each customer experience survey should serve a distinct purpose within your overall VOC program. Therefore, some surveys may be designed to collect information at the time of purchase, return, or a technical support interaction. These surveys deal with a specific “transaction” or “touchpoint.” On the other hand, some surveys are created to gauge your customers’ overall experience with your company—or your “relationship.” As you design your customer experience survey program, be sure to include both transactional and relationship surveys and time the surveys so that they make sense to your customers.

Link the surveys to the customer journey



Outcome: **Surveys make sense to the customer.**

Connect Survey Questions to Your Internal Departments

Just as customer experience surveys should make sense to your customers, the response data, opinions, and suggestions should directly correlate to internal departments. This allows you to funnel the feedback to the appropriate business leaders and employees so they can digest the information to understand what's working, improve flaws in processes or strategies, and generate new ideas from customer suggestions. Therefore, each question should link directly to a specific department or line of business within your company.

Link departments to the customer journey.

Overall Customer Experience Brand Attributes								Loyalty
	Investigation	Purchase	Delivery	Shop	Use	Get Help	Billing	Reorder
Marketing	✓	✓		✓				
Product Mgt	✓	✓			✓			
Sales/Order Mgt		✓	✓	✓				✓
Logistics			✓					
Call Center						✓		✓
Billing Ops							✓	
Accts Payable							✓	

Outcome: Results make sense to employees.

Net Promoter Score®

The Key Metric Behind CEM & the Key Relationship Survey Question

Since Satmetrix co-developed the Net Promoter Score (NPS®), it has become the most widely accepted measure of customer loyalty and retention. It is also the only customer experience metric proven to be a leading indicator of a company's potential growth and financial health. Since VOC is focused on improving customer loyalty, NPS is a key indicator of customer perception of your brand. Therefore, you need to use this question appropriately in relationship surveys to effectively measure your customers' overall experience with your company and opinion of your brand.

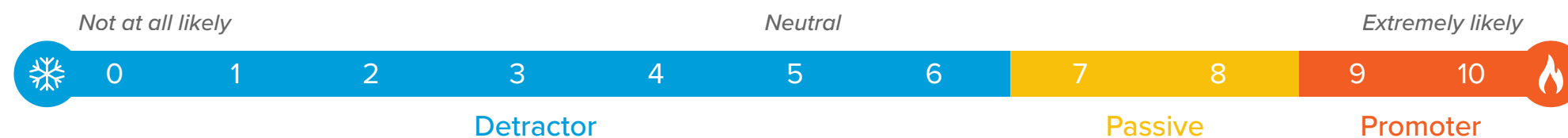
You should always follow the Net Promoter question with an open-ended question, such as "Please tell us the reason for that score." And, you should include a few additional questions that help you identify the areas with high and low satisfaction. Satisfaction questions on a 0-10 scale are a great way to get a high-level view of customer experience across an array of touchpoints.

Key Question

NPS asks the question *"How likely would you be to recommend [company] to a friend or colleague?"* and measures responses on a 0-10 point scale.

Responses to this question fall into three categories:

- **Promoters** - These are your loyal, invested customers. Research shows they will stay longer, buy more, and recommend your products or services to other buyers.
- **Passives** - These buyers may be satisfied, but are not fully invested in your company. According to research, this group could easily be attracted to a competitor with a better offer.
- **Detractors** - This group is dissatisfied with your company. Research shows that these customers are more likely to take their business elsewhere and recommend AGAINST your company.



$$\% \text{ Promoters} - \% \text{ Detractors} = \text{NPS (Net Promoter Score)}$$

Other Key Measures of Customer Experience

While NPS helps measure your customers' opinion of your company -- in other words, your customers' relationship with your company -- as well as your growth potential and financial health, there are two other metrics that can also provide insight. Both metrics covered below help you gauge a single transaction or touchpoint.

Customer Satisfaction Score (CSAT)—This measures your customers' satisfaction with an interaction with your company or with the company itself, and it is a good indicator of short-term happiness. It is not considered a good gauge of financial outcomes.

Transactional Survey Key Question—*"Overall, how satisfied were you with the product/service you received from COMPANY on this occasion?"* 0-10 satisfaction scale (0=Not at all Satisfied, 5=Neutral, 10=Extremely Satisfied)

Relationship Survey Key Question—*"Overall, how satisfied were you with the products/services provided by COMPANY?"* 0-10 satisfaction scale (0=Not at all Satisfied, 5=Neutral, 10=Extremely Satisfied)

Customer Effort Score (CES)—This score measures how easy it is for your customers to do business with your company. It's a good indicator of whether your processes are streamlined or cumbersome. If you can reduce your customers' effort to do business with your company, you can improve the customer experience overall. CES findings often validate employee insights about process breakdowns.

CES Key Question—*"COMPANY made it easy for me to handle my issue."*
Strongly disagree/Disagree/Somewhat disagree/Neutral/Somewhat agree/Agree/Strongly agree

Survey Program Principles & Best Practices

Touchpoint Surveys

Since touchpoint or transactional surveys are based on a specific interaction, the goal is to uncover successes or flaws in processes. As your company uses touchpoint survey feedback to improve internal procedures, systems, and policies, you should see customer experience improvements reflected in these surveys first. If your company is diligent about its CEM program, you'll eventually see improvements in your relationship survey feedback and your customers' loyalty.

Key Points

- Conduct touchpoint surveys continuously.
- Choose a key metric suitable to the type of survey — could be satisfaction or effort.
- Time transactional surveys so they closely follow the specific interaction.
- Use this feedback to validate or improve internal processes and observe how loyalty evolves over time along your customers' journey.

Relationship Surveys

These surveys help you gauge your customers' opinion of your company and should ask questions about overall satisfaction with products, services, and experiences. Thoughtful attention to touchpoint surveys and corresponding improvements will eventually lead to better relationship survey scores and increase NPS.

Key Points

- Send relationship surveys a couple of times per year to any given contact, ideally timed to match the customer journey.
- The key metric for relationship surveys is the Net Promoter Score, which measures loyalty and brand relationship.
- Ask the Net Promoter question, as noted on page 8, at the beginning of the survey to get an instinctive reaction before you ask customers to reflect on various experiences or opinions.
- Use this information to understand cross-functional drivers that may be a drag on customer loyalty.

DON'T merge the two kinds of surveys.
It will confuse customers and give you ambiguous feedback.

Creating Your Survey

Pick your survey type

- ☐ Relationship (NPS)
- ☐ Touchpoint (CSAT or CES)

After you ask your key question, follow it up with an open-ended question.

“Can you give us the reason for your score?”

Craft your questions for success

Be relevant—Questions should apply to your customer/customer set and overall/specific experience.

Be clear—Use language that your customers will understand and make sure wording is not ambiguous or confusing. Consider different phrasing for different customer sets.

Drive action—If your company is not willing to act on a low score, don't include it in the survey.

Focus, focus, focus—You don't have to ask every question in a single survey. Keep your survey short and to the point so you can gain insightful information to drive improvements. Remember! A strong CEM program will include many surveys along your customers' journey.



Examples of Actionable Survey Questions

X	✓
<p><i>How satisfied are you with our pricing?</i></p> <p>This question can lead to a negative response since no one is every <u>really</u> satisfied with price.</p>	<p><i>How satisfied are you with the value of your purchase?</i></p>
<p><i>How satisfied are you with the delivery (lead) times?</i></p> <p>This question implies that you can change production or shipping timeframes and often companies cannot change delivery or lead times.</p>	<p><i>How satisfied are you that we met our promised delivery date?</i></p>
<p><i>How much do you agree that the hotel is caring?</i></p> <p>This question uses odd word phrasing.</p>	<p><i>How much do you agree that the hotel staff cares about you?</i></p>
<p><i>The agent I spoke with was polite and knowledgeable.</i></p> <p>This question includes two different variables.</p>	<p><i>The agent I spoke with was polite.</i> <i>The agent I spoke with was knowledgeable.</i></p>
	<p><i>How satisfied are you that the product has reduced your electricity bills?</i></p> <p>This is a good question, but be sure to time such a question in a survey so the customer knows whether the product has saved them money or not.</p>

Other Considerations

As you create surveys for your VOC program, here are a few other thoughts to consider.

Web/Online Surveys

- Keep them to one or two pages. If they are longer, people often abandon them.
- Don't use a repetitive question format. Instead, put them in a grid with radio button responses.
- Use a maximum of five or six attributes for grid questions. With more, people often pick one response instead of giving thoughtful answers.
- Make every question count—to gain actionable insight!

Telephone Surveys

- Keep questions concise. If they are too long, the listener may have difficulty remembering what you asked or how the responses relate to the question.
- Avoid using an overly repetitive question format. Similar to a grid that's too long, a listener may get bored and give you the same response instead of thoughtful answers.

Use of Mandatory Responses

- Don't force people to respond to every question. Customers usually find this frustrating, and it can lead to abandoned surveys.



CEM Software from NICE Satmetrix

Best Practices Built Right In

Now you know the basic principles of good survey design, but you don't have to go it alone. CEM software from NICE Satmetrix is for customer-first companies and has a best-practice library built right in. Get the tools you need to manage a world-class customer experience program.

Request Demo



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