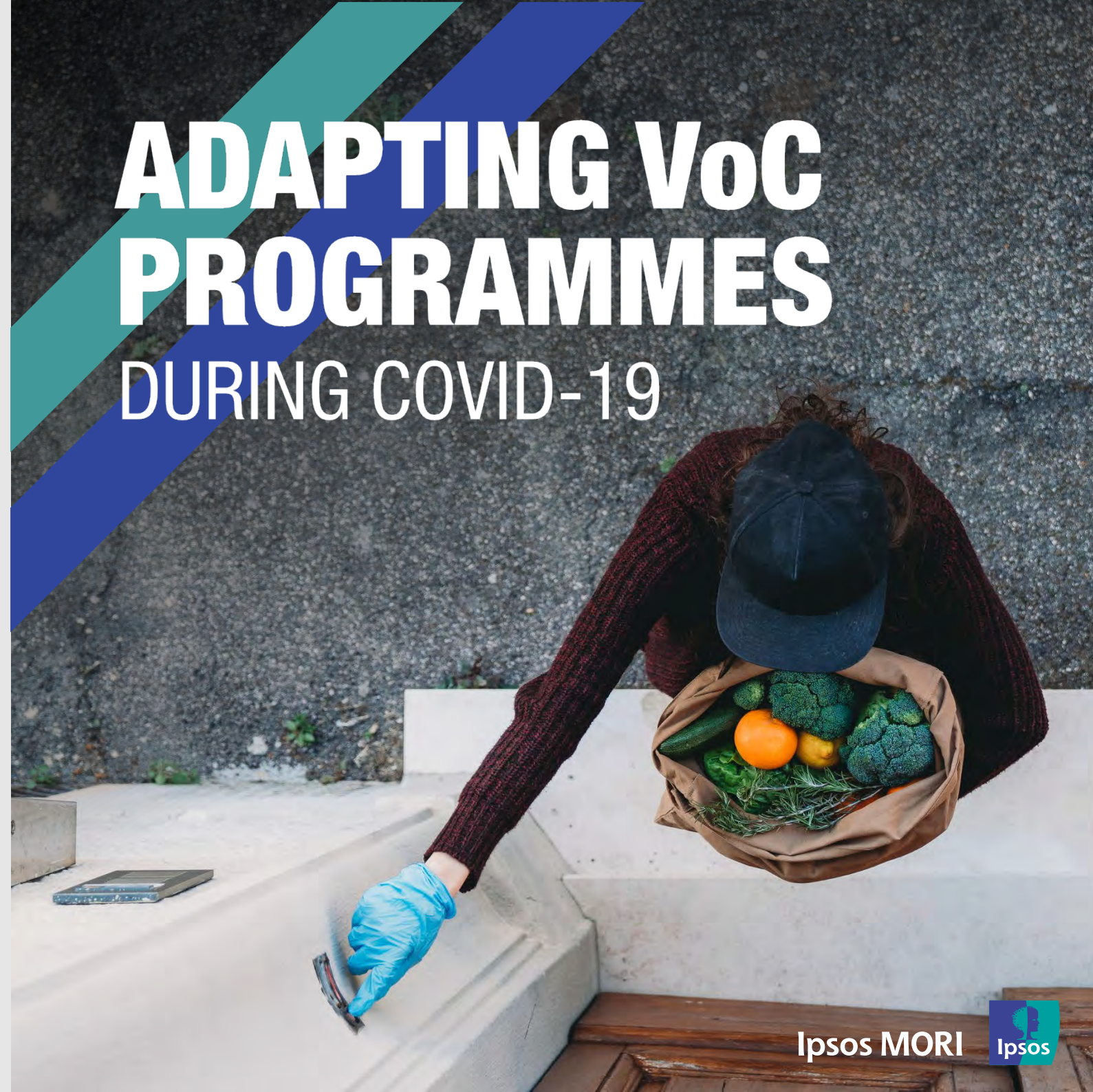


ADAPTING VoC PROGRAMMES DURING COVID-19



Ipsos MORI





How to adapt your VoC programme during COVID-19

Continuing to engage with customers during COVID-19 is a strategic imperative. However, proceeding 'as normal' is neither empathetic nor likely to understand the full picture of changing customer experiences. Here we discuss how your brand must react to the functional and emotional needs of your customers.

As customer wants and needs evolve, your programme needs to stay close to the key functional and emotional dimensions that foster close relationships, so your brand can adapt. Simply put, a failure to adapt your listening programme now, may impact how your business is able to respond as restrictions are lifted and we navigate the 'new normal'.

With the core lockdown period extended – if you haven't already – Ipsos recommends some revisions to your CX programme and options to consider as the pandemic evolves; ensuring your programme is fit for purpose today and tomorrow, whatever that may hold...

Inviting feedback

Review existing survey invitations, such as email copy and subject lines, as well as look and feel. When soliciting feedback, make sure any communication:

- is empathetic to customer's wants and needs which may have changed significantly.
- recognises the changes going on around us and any modifications to business-as-usual-delivery, highlighting relevant COVID-19 actions your business is taking.
- emphasises feedback is actively being used to improve experiences.
- thanks customers for their support (and patience where required).
- is in line with broader Covid-19 communications, with senior stakeholder sign off.

If incentives are used to drive response rates, be in tune with public sentiment and consider donating prize draws to relevant charities.



Review touchpoints

Look at your hierarchy of measures and review it in line with how customers are now interacting with your business.

- Is there a need to add or remove touchpoints for new 'critical incidents' based on the channels customers are using, for example boost feedback collection across your digital estate or contact centre?
- Do changing volumes in traffic require adjustments to sample or the introduction of alternative methodologies, such as video?
- Make the most out of unsolicited feedback such as social media to ensure you're
(a) not collecting something you already know, and
(b) seeking out 'unknown unknowns'.

Questionnaire content

Consider 'thrifting' your questionnaire, asking only what you really need, plus an option to provide more feedback if convenient; some customers have less time on their hands than others.

- Part of your 'thrifting' should include an assessment of key metrics. Is NPS the best measure of your performance or would 'ease' be more appropriate? While your business may obsess about trended data, there will be big differences in year-on-year comparisons anyway, so make sure you think about what's right for now.
- Make sure you have enough questions to understand experiences for physical channel customers who've had to switch to digital or telephony channels. What do they like? What have they found hard? Are they likely to continue post-lockdown?
- Capture if customers have changed their brand preferences during lockdown, and if so, why? This will put you in good stead to understand what to do as the lockdown restrictions are eased.
- As a question; it's OK to ask your customers: 'How are we we're doing during Coronavirus?'... and 'How can we do better?'.

Close the loop

Check your closed-loop governance process making sure your business is engaged and empowered to make a positive difference, and you're still able to meet customer and internal SLA's.

- If possible, increase the cadence you look for root causes within feedback as the rapidly changing landscape means your business must respond quickly with the right sentiment and set of products and services.
- Signpost actions, both internally and with customers, to make sure you deliver and communicate changes based on feedback.
- Provide managers with what they need to inform, train and motivate the frontline and create a central place to store the most up-to-date resources.
- If capacity means you cannot respond to customers as quickly as before, recommunicate timelines for when a response can be expected.

Targets and analysis

Prepare the business for a dip in scores and variances by channel. Clearly articulate and justify any changes in alternative metrics used as outlined in the questionnaire section.

- Mine data, especially verbatim comments, for emerging trends and look at overlaying customer segments based on if interactions have been significantly, slightly or not at all impacted.
- Bring to the business updated predictions for churn, cost to serve by channel and other key metrics.
- Look at how you might re-calibrate targets to take effect of the change in channels, demand and customer segments.
- Seek out new customer groups and behaviours, and how this compares to your core base.

Reporting and internal communications

Data is going to become quickly out of date, so review feedback more regularly than before – and stick to sharing key metrics and verbatim comments.

- Reappraise who, when, how, what and why you share experience data and insights throughout the business. Always make sure feedback is human, pointed, relevant and drives action. Be mindful of individual employee circumstances and departments which have been positively or negatively affected.
- If you don't have this in place already, bring together a cross-functional working group to coordinate a response, quickly disseminate key insights and rally project teams for action.
- Amplify any voice of customer through employee programmes – or set one up. Your employees are critical to understanding and empathising with the customer.

In conclusion

As with all Customer Experience efforts, prioritise these recommendations based on the impact they'll have to your organisation, balanced with speed and cost to realise. Only make changes in line with your brand promise and customer experience strategy – remember that authenticity is key. It is essential to rally a team, bring people on the journey and ensure everyone is working toward a common goal.

Lastly, while there are many 'jobs to be done' please try to pause and reflect. This is a unique opportunity to scrutinise your CX programme, understand its value, ensure it is fit for purpose, future-proofed and has a laser focus on delivering against your key business questions.

For more information

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