

B2B


CX SESSIONS

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**Maximising the value of
VoC programmes**





In Quarter 4 2020, Ipsos' teams in the UK, France and The Americas convened a roundtable with a cross-industry group of business-to-business CX executives. We debated and shared our reflections and experiences of the challenges in maximising value from Customer Experience Voice of the Customer (VoC) programmes.

Specifically, we discussed how seismic changes in operations due to COVID-19 has presented both challenges and opportunities.

Special thanks to our roundtable participants, CX executives from: KONE, an escalator and elevator company; Alight, a cloud-based provider of integrated digital human capital and business solutions; Claro, an information, communication and entertainment company; and Sodexo, a global food services and facilities management business.

THREE THREE THREE KEY LEARNINGS

Three key findings were surfaced that transcend industries, customer types and operating models:

1

B2B CX: Beyond the foundational

VoC programmes are increasing in sophistication across organisations

2

Four pain points in the VoC journey

Common sticking points hold VoC programmes back from their full potential

3

VoC: An agent of change

Apply a CX capability and maturity framework to contextualise improvement plans

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IT IS ONE THING
TO COLLECT
FEEDBACK. THE
CHALLENGE IS
TO MANAGE THE
EXPERIENCE AND
DIRECT IT TO A
CERTAIN END STATE

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B2B CX: Beyond the foundational

1

Across the board, irrelevant of industry type, and the nature of VoC programmes in play, there is agreement that VoC programmes are increasing in sophistication, and that they are now more widely recognised and valued across organisations than ever before:

1. The **culture of customer-centricity has matured** a great deal since work first began in the CX space; CX is no longer simply an activity or programme confined to the marketing, research or insights function. CX has been grasped by the sales teams and multiple other groups across the organisation. It is now recognised as business-critical at board level and CX language is increasingly widely used, by leaders, and all the way through to employees on the front-line
2. Significant **VoC infrastructures for gathering customer feedback are in place.** Often multiple strands or feeds of data are brought together, including relationship and touchpoint surveys which is being overlaid with operational data such

as complaints, contact centre metrics and customer transactions. This infrastructure represents a considerable investment, both in terms of the mechanisms for gathering and processing feedback, and the commitment to the philosophy of gathering and acting on customer feedback.

3. The consensus among the group is that the **programmes are delivering a good picture of the high level, macro level performance** and trends over time. At the level of individual customers, closed loop processes are in place and people are following up with dissatisfied customers to address problems.

Yet, despite this, there is clear sense that VoCs are not living up to their full potential as agents for change. Why is that?

Four pain points in the VoC journey

Two immediate obstacles that hold back VoC from achieving its business transformation potential are, firstly the persistence of the familiar pain points that continue to annoy customers year after year. Although these stories have been heard many times before, they are proving stubbornly resistant to resolution. And secondly, driving concrete tangible improvements in the customer experience off the back of the VoC feedback, something that has been brought into sharp focus by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our audience had some fascinating insights on why these two frustrations continue to plague VoC programmes. Four themes stood out:

- Journeys are often much more complex in practice than they appear to be on paper. This means it is vital to have a detailed understanding of what really happens at a local level before solutions can be developed. Doing this at a local level means having the right people involved – for example from operations and customer service – to make things happen and ensure ownership of the solution.
- While the VoC can identify issues and their impact on the customer experience, effective root cause analysis requires a mix of skills. These include analytical, customer handling and operational skills. Bringing these together requires overcoming silos and building cross-functional teams.
- Even with the right skills in place and a detailed knowledge of the customer journey, building on previous experience of what works and doesn't work isn't easy. It is still a real challenge to embed a culture of implementing CX change based on customer feedback while aligning that to the customer brand promise.
- Finally, with the ongoing digitalisation of the customer experience there is the battle to secure bandwidth and resources for technological transformation. There is a very real need to demonstrate clear and tangible returns on investment that will be delivered by changing the customer experience.

2

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UNDERSTANDING THE DIFFERENT CUSTOMER JOURNEYS AS THEY ARE TODAY AT A LOCAL LEVEL IS KEY

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VoC: An agent of change

We zoned in on the pain points surrounding VoC and by-and-large the biggest ‘hill to climb’ is the ability to pivot the programme and operationalise it.

But with limited resources and large remits – how do insight teams garner the internal support to create a groundswell of change to engage the business and unlock value?

The answer is to level-up. In short, success with VoC programmes is about so much more than the VoC itself.

If we look at their experiences and insights in the context of the Ipsos CX Maturity Framework – a maturity framework based around six core competencies that are key to driving high performance in CX – we can see that changes to the VoC programme itself are only part of the answer.

Within the CX Maturity Framework, the VoC programme is a key component of any insight ecosystem. Yet activating the feedback is something that can’t be done in isolation by an insight or CX team. It requires cross-functional teams who are tasked with fully operationalising feedback within the business and have the tools to do that effectively. In doing so they are building on existing knowledge of customer journeys and how those are reflected in operational models. They are able to create change by securing resources with strong business cases for CX improvements. And they are guided by a clear CX roadmap and service exemplars that link improvements to customer experience to the business’s brand promise to customers.

This is no easy task, but it is a vital one in meeting the CX challenges of 2021.

THE IPSOS CX MATURITY AND CAPABILITY FRAMEWORK

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So what now?

To extend the reach of VoC, increase profile and unlock its value for the benefit of the business, we surfaced four next best actions:

1. Establishing a return on CX investment

The link between CX success and financial performance is widely acknowledged. Yet, even in data rich organisations, it can be a challenge to create a tangible, robust link.

This is fundamental in the quest to create allies, raise profile and secure investment for improvements.

Ipsos' ROCXI (Return on CX Investment) modelling looks at share of customer spend, retention, advocacy and operational efficiency gains. It demonstrates the financial return of improving CX and presents 'what if' simulations to support decision making and resource allocation. To find out more about the importance of CX in building a powerful business case for change, and how to set

about quantifying the impact of CX on business performance and unlocking resources accordingly, head to our recently published white paper: 'Money Talks or Budget Walks'¹.

2. Stakeholder engagement

B2B organisations have a complex network of internal stakeholders who consume insights with varying levels of engagement. Airtime with key audiences is vital for bringing the organisation on the journey.

Ipsos supports stakeholder engagement and creates compelling content to unlock access to senior stakeholders through best practice exemplar workshops, strategy and vision sessions, roadmap development and training on what leading CX businesses are doing.

3. Frontline engagement

VoC insights flow through the business, but often stop prematurely. Our roundtable participants see coaching and supporting best practices in using feedback to create and mobilise action plans as central to VoC success.

Ipsos runs company-wide and/or department-specific CX training and enablement sessions to clearly articulate value and what that means for every employee in the organisation. In recent years this part of the Ipsos offer has grown exponentially in line with the need from insight teams to promote VoC and transition from an insular programme to activity that is fully adopted across the business.

4. CX maturity assessment

Our roundtable participants were clear about the challenges that lay ahead – and that a mix of quick wins and longer-term gains are critical to maintaining engagement with the VoC.

To this end, Ipsos runs a CX competency and maturity assessment to provide objective and impartial feedback of how the organisation as a whole is performing where CX is concerned. The output of the exercise provides an opportunity to benchmark, identify priorities and create ownership for improvements.

¹ <https://www.ipsos.com/en/money-talks-or-budget-walks>



Listening:

To learn more about what makes for a great B2B relationship, and to get some advice on best practice B2B CX measurement and management, listen to Season 1, Episode 12 of our Ipsos Customer Perspective podcast: <https://www.ipsos.com/en/customer-perspective-ipsos-podcast>

Further reading:

Find out more about Customer Experience latest thinking here: <https://www.ipsos.com/en/knowledge/customer-experience>

About B2B CX Sessions

A series of roundtable discussions with CX practitioners and experts who work in B2B. We're an inclusive group who debate the key issues facing customer experience in a B2B context. Findings, insights and new best practices are shared with peers across our community with a view to improving the maturity and capability of CX in B2B.

If you have a topic suggestion, would like to get involved in a session roundtable or would like to contribute in any way, please contact helen.wilson@ipsos.com