

# CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE IS WHAT HAPPENS BETWEEN THE SURVEYS

DHL Supply Chain UKI  
with Ipsos CX UK



In cooperation with



## DHL Supply Chain UKI's Customer Experience Management programme has evolved from a simple survey into a cultural success story.

Last year, they achieved strong new business growth, and were very successful on contract renewal and growth – customers are staying and doing more with them.

Here, the DHL team shares what they've been doing to drive a survey response rate that has more than doubled with 85% of customers rating them at 8 or above for likelihood to recommend.



## No time to read? Grab these three takeaways

**Make targets meaningful** – get them on the agenda, build in accountability, and make the most of opportunities to drive them home

**Demonstrate the value of surveys** – with timely recognition for top-performing colleagues, and by closing the loop with customers to show that you are listening and acting on what they've said

**Elevate CX within the business by being visible** – put yourself out there to work with and listen to customers and customer-facing colleagues as much as possible: make sure they know you have an open-door approach, and share your learnings



**Peter Drucker once famously said that culture eats strategy for breakfast.**

**At DHL, culture eats metrics for breakfast.**

At DHL, we create better customer experiences whenever we can. Switching survey platforms has helped us to drive significant culture change, giving easy access to survey responses and data to our leaders – our CEO logs into the platform every couple of hours so that he can recognise and thank colleagues whose customers have scored us at 10/10.

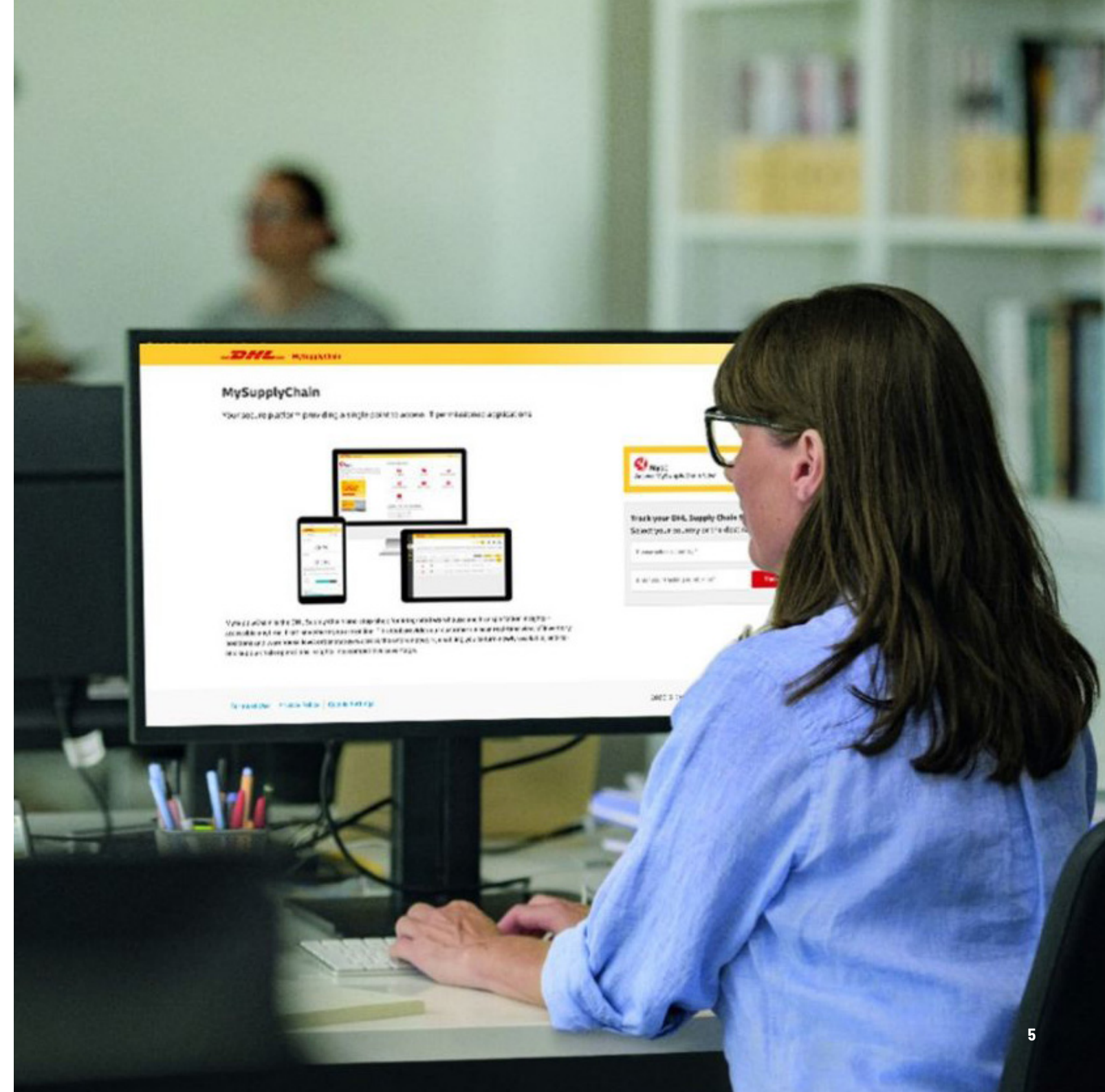
With top-down sponsorship, we've developed a community of advocates who champion the importance of listening deeply to what customers are saying.

And here are some of the ways we've done it.

## **We've made targets meaningful**

When you're working on any CX programme for a major global enterprise, it feels like a huge task, with processes and people to manage to drive change. When we recently carried out a CX Maturity Assessment with Ipsos UK, we were extremely pleased to see the areas that came out particularly well. Being able to see our strengths and where we've made significant improvements is extremely rewarding, and knowing what we're going to tackle next and the benefits we can gain from more positive changes is exciting.

DHL is highly customer centric. We have strong senior sponsorship, and across the organisation, the measure of our customers' likelihood to recommend us is seen as the next most important target after safety – everyone understands what its value is to our business. And as we are a target-driven business, we get it on the agenda, and make the most of it. If there is no accountability or understanding for scores, it becomes meaningless – or worse, manipulated. Our leaders and colleagues recognise their scores' importance as an accurate and genuine reflection of the relationships we're building with customers.





## We demonstrate the value of surveys – to customers as well as employees

A few years ago, our survey response rate was 30-40%. Now it averages 85%, as our customers know it's worth doing – they know we are listening because of the actions we've taken based on their feedback. In fact, around 55% to 60% of customers give us verbatim comments, as they know that we will have a conversation with them once they have completed the survey. This is extremely valuable to us.

Every customer is personally onboarded into the programme and has an assigned colleague to follow up on their feedback once they have completed a survey. Firstly, to say thank you and then to seek the opportunity to discuss their feedback in more depth, to understand the emotion behind the result and agree actions and next steps for the relationship. We track progress and confirm to the customer when actions have been successfully closed, reinforcing the value of completing the survey. This cycle creates opportunity: every piece of feedback is a green shoot that we can nurture to make a difference for each customer.

Our colleagues also know how important the surveys are, as our CEO, Saul Resnick, personally calls to congratulate those given 'gold' ratings within a couple of hours of seeing positive customer feedback. To someone in the warehouse, or a driver, having Saul get in touch matters a great deal – they feel seen – and it tells them how seriously our senior leadership takes customer service.



Question:

**What makes a VOC programme successful?**

Answer:

**When you make it part of the everyday**

We ask our customers to rate how much they think we care about their business as a kind of temperature check. This is one of the questions that is most useful for helping us to drive change, and the scores really resonate across our business. At the moment we're averaging about 8.8 out of 10.

We have eleven strategic and relationship drivers that we score, and each of them has a functional owner, so they have become business targets. And of course, we don't want our relationships with customers to be purely functional: we'll ask, "What's important to you?" to get an answer that invites conversation. We want our customers to buy into the value we give them and see us as an asset.

**“ DHL cares about my business. ”**





## **We provide business workshops that deliver real value for our customers**

We want to understand our customers better and contribute to helping them improve their processes. We also want to show that we understand their business – how it works, and what they do every day. This is why we deliver customer workshops that look at continuous improvement, supply chain mapping, situational analysis, and strategic and tactical actions.

Lynne Tate, our Senior Customer Experience Manager, is a CX superstar with an entrepreneurial spirit and incredible tenacity. She is fully committed to listening to our customers and one of the many differences she has made to our business is to craft and expand these workshops far beyond their original function as an account management tool. She has created a safe and trusted working environment that encourages open and honest conversations and the spirit of true partnership.

Lynne and her colleague, Nicola Johnson-Quine, now deliver 40-50 workshops a year across the business. These workshops have become a valued part of our programme, enabling us to listen better, understand more, and create greater value for our customers. She's facilitated the growth of partnerships and relationships, while building our credibility as a supplier. This, in turn, has helped to build the credibility of the CX team as a central function within DHL.

 **If we understand our customers and their needs, they are more likely to stay longer and do more with us.** 

**Lynne Tate,**  
Senior Customer Experience Manager, DHL

## **We've elevated visibility to embed CX**

Our Customer Experience team collaborates with those who are speaking and interacting with customers every day, adding learnings from their experiences into a central resource repository for other colleagues to access. We connect with a wide range of teams to onboard, train, support and deliver customer-facing best practices, and by proactively demonstrating our know-how and capability we've earned trust and credibility across the business, while elevating the team's presence.

Our survey is key to our CX programme, but it's just the tip of the iceberg – the most visible part, but only a part of all that's going on. And while our CX platform has been a catalyst for change, it's only information sitting on a database – unless everyone gets involved in acting on what we've learned. It's the involvement of our entire business that makes the difference and enables us to deliver continuous improvement based on insights. It's the actions of our colleagues that make a visible difference for customers and drive positive movement in our CX scores.

We have to make sure we're driving initiatives to make this happen, from Love Your Customer week to our Recognising Excellence events, which are held every four months to recognise employees. Our CEO always attends – both structured and 'in the moment' recognition are important. Anyone can put forward a nominee, and it's another opportunity for our front-line employees to connect across the Group and share their positive experiences and best practices. Our customers often recognise DHL employees within their own programmes.

We use other initiatives to create a buzz around scores, tapping into the naturally competitive spirit of our teams, who take pride in what they're doing. They compare scores and strive to outdo each other – but beyond the peer rivalry, they know that we're a business-critical service and our customers rely on us. This is why it's important that we demonstrate tangible value and build real relationships with them.

What we do is about people, more than anything.



## In summary: Four tips for improving customer experience

### Champion a customer culture

Create common behaviours that are simple to adopt and help colleagues with guided conversations. For example, provide templates and supporting guidance (such as for customer recovery), and put customer feedback and improvement actions onto meeting agendas. But avoid 'survey fatigue' caused by bringing feedback into everyday conversations.

### Build a team of customer advocates

Central CX teams are often one step removed from the customer conversations. Having a wider team of advocates who can observe and advise on customer interactions in the operations breeds a richer source of examples and experiences to share. A matrix team of advocates also helps to cultivate a customer-first mindset far wider than any small team can achieve.

### Follow up with every customer

Simple actions can make a huge difference, such as saying 'Thank you' and calling the customer. Think about how a customer survey programme can support your ability to achieve this.

### Celebrate success

Invest in events that connect colleagues, spotlight improvements and share best practices. This is a great way to engage colleagues and demonstrate the importance of delivering great customer experiences and allows colleagues time to network and learn from others, as well as meet interested Board members and senior stakeholders in person.



In our world of rapid change, the need for reliable information to make confident decisions has never been greater. At Ipsos we believe our clients need more than a data supplier, they need a partner who can produce accurate and relevant information and turn it into actionable truth.

*DHL Supply Chain UKI chose IPSOS strategic and advisory CX partner and the Medallia platform for their VoC programme.*



### **Linzi Hindle**

Customer Experience Director  
DHL Supply Chain

### **Jamie Thorpe**

Chief Experience Officer  
Ipsos CX  
[jamie.thorpe@ipsos.com](mailto:jamie.thorpe@ipsos.com)