

Do you want to know a secret?

It is one of the best kept secrets in business, but there is a group of people out there who know just what you need to do to improve your business and make it succeed.

Your customers!

They won't tell you unless you ask!

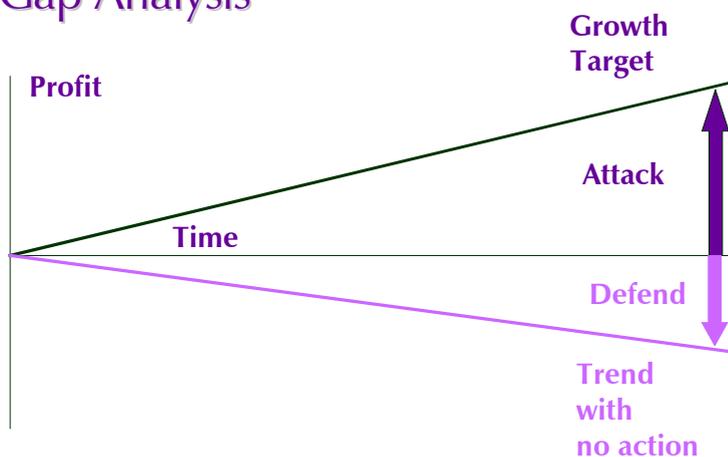
Even then they might not tell you what they really think about your products and services and what they really want you to do.

Ask them properly and they will tell you how to delight them.

The "Voice of the Customer" - helps you get beyond the polite feedback of customer surveys, lets you put things right before the customer complains or simply walks away!

Most companies lose between 10 and 30% of their customers each year and often don't even know who they are!

Gap Analysis



It is a rigorous structured approach that captures the customer's needs, feelings and desires. It helps you discover what they are saying to each other. It is a proven method, it is safe and it delivers results. We can guarantee you will be surprised with what you find out

Voice of the customer helps you identify the most appropriate approaches to defend your current market share and profitability and develop strategies for winning new business to meet your growth targets. Through a better understanding of what your customers really want, you will be able to develop challenging goals and understand how to achieve them.

Process

The purpose of the Voice of the Customer is to get to know the customer's expectations, by listening to their voiced desires and as yet unperceived turn-ons which is achieved through a dynamic process of structured, focused questioning.

The objective is to unearth the key issues that affect your customer's business and to highlight concerns that they may as yet be unable to build into their specifications and requests. The person quoted here gave reasonably positive responses to the company's Customer Satisfaction Questionnaire. This response in a "Voice of the Customer" interview gave an opening to focus on the issues of concern that lay below the surface.

"I'm not sufficiently dissatisfied to complain, but I'm not so satisfied that I would comment on it - I'm certainly not delighted."

Engineering Design Company's Main Customer.

Unlike other forms of market research it addresses the underlying idiosyncratic emotional needs of the customer and looks to their future strategies and goals. This gives you the knowledge you need to can align your future services/products and processes to these unspoken requirements. It helps you get ahead of your competition and stay ahead.

Voice of the Customer Philosophy

Why “Voice of the customer”?

To gain a robust understanding of the customer requirements which are

- Objective
- Dynamic
- Detailed

To ensure the information received from the customer is

- Balanced
- Credible
- Process specific
- Self sustaining

This allows you to identify and address the critical issues and plan for future competitive advantage.

Winning growth companies understand they must

- Listen to the voice of the customer.
- Measure themselves against best in class.
- Change how they operate to meet customers’ requirements.
- Continuously introduce differentiated products and services into new and existing markets.

The organisation needs to consider the following customer drivers in order they can achieve competitive advantage in all existing and future needs of the customer for:

- Cost and price
- Quality
- Delivery
- Innovation and development
- Customer Care

The process also involves your customer in your change processes and provides excellent opportunities to build on existing relationships. It can provide a solid foundation on which to establish a Customer Relationship Marketing or Key Account Management structure.

Full training and support is provided so that the approach is built into the fabric of your business’s operational processes and procedures. Eventually, it becomes part of your standard business practice and you will wonder how you ever managed without it.

Mini Case Study – Wrought Iron Company

This owner managed firm based in NW England manufactures high quality, bespoke gates, fences and architectural ironwork for both modern and heritage applications.

They were one of the first customers to use our Change4 programme, which includes “Voice of the customer” as one of its elements.

The process was very useful in identifying areas for improvement and also opened up a new business line which is expected to provide significant increases in turnover and profit.

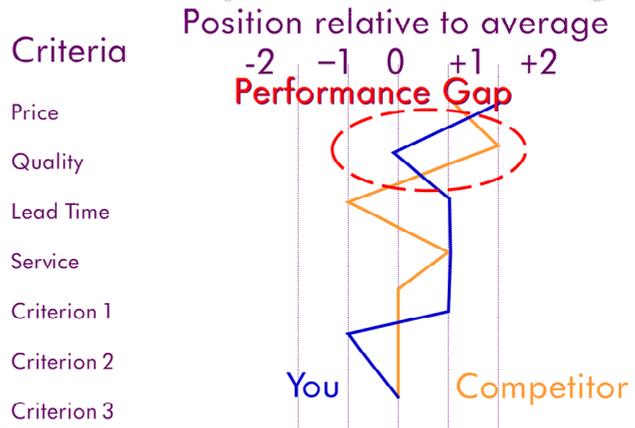
As a result, the company now provides a maintenance, refurbishment and consultancy service mainly for highly prestigious conservation sites.

Advantages

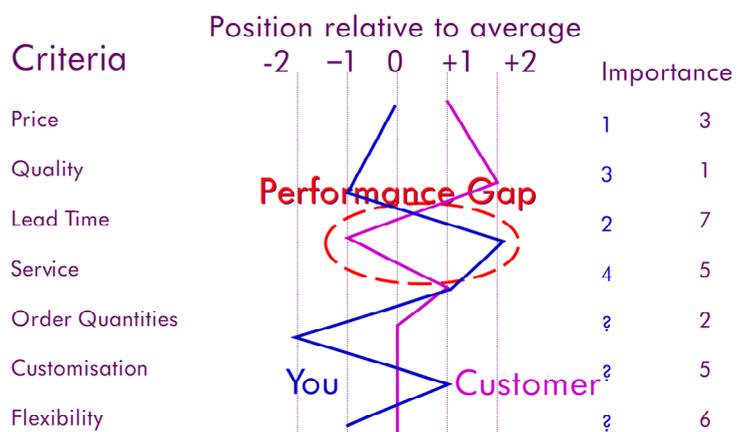
We recommend “Voice of the Customer” because it works and delivers tangible business benefits. Used wisely, it can provide a focus for change management. Because it is built on the needs of customers it provides a vehicle for motivating staff and aligning their actions to the company’s objectives.

- Change is driven by hard facts and customer requirements not the latest management and fad.
- It allows you to build on your current business by consolidating your position and penetrating existing markets.
- Allows you to understand your customers’ changing needs for:
 - Product/Service Quality
 - Price
 - Delivery
 - Whatever they feel is important
- It measures performance where it really matters – in the customer’s eyes!
- It allows you to identify the most appropriate areas for improvement.
- It identifies potential areas for growth.
- It allows you to target resources on customers’ real needs.
- It encourages you to find simple, effective solutions to problems.
- It integrates marketing and operating strategies by providing shared focus and understanding of customer needs.
- It ensures that your processes are aligned to the needs of the customer.
- It allows you to select the most appropriate management tools and techniques for improvement.
- It provides a mechanism for measuring and rewarding progress.

Competitive Positioning 1



Competitive Positioning 2



Note

That in the diagram above, the supplier can't fully satisfy their customer because they are unaware of the criteria the customer is using to evaluate performance. They are potentially in danger of losing this customer because they don't know how importantly the customer sees the question of order quantities.

It Works

There are practical benefits to applying “Voice of the Customer” but as you will appreciate, the value is only realised when you take action in response to the customer feedback.

Voice of the customer ensures that you get high quality feedback from your customers about the things that concern them. Not simple ticks in the box in your questionnaire about the things you think they ought to be concerned about. If you think you know what your customer wants, we have a very simple demonstration that will convince you otherwise.

So the only reason for not implementing “Voice of the Customer” is if you are not willing to listen to and act on the feedback you will get!

“Left to our own devices, we do more and more that is of less and less interest to the customer”

Ron Zempke

What have you got to lose?

We are so sure that “Voice of the Customer” will improve your business that we are prepared to give you a guarantee. If we can't increase your profits by at least what we charge, you can have your money back.

We will also demonstrate to you before we do any work just how powerful a technique this is. We know that we can do this because we know you are someone's customer. So we will demonstrate the technique on your business. You will then identify what you would really like to say to your suppliers, if you thought they might listen!

So give us a call, we are there to help and what have you got to lose?

For further details, please telephone us on 0161 487 3520 or email jim@fulcrum-management.co.uk

Warning

Using “Voice of the customer” is not enough to ensure success – you have to take action as well.

Some time ago, we introduced a client to the techniques as part of a Senior Management Development Programme. The client was a light engineering company offering custom built products to a very specific market.

The analysis showed that none of their key customers were likely to be purchasing in the next few years. So we recommended diversification – unfortunately, the client did not like what we had to say and took no action

Their order book has now dried up, they've laid off all their staff and things are looking bleak.

Information can help - action brings results.