



FIVE KEY BENEFITS OF USING AUTOMATED SURVEYS TO GAUGE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

A WHITE PAPER



In today's challenging business environment, measuring and monitoring customer satisfaction and loyalty is one of the most discussed topics at water coolers, in board rooms and call centers.

Businesses want to know whether their customers are happy with their products and services; if they will purchase again; and if they had a negative experience, what are the reasons for their perceived poor level of service.

With all of today's emerging technologies, enterprises might overlook one of the most effective, customer-friendly, and cost conscious forms of gauging customer satisfaction: just ask them.

With a few simple questions to customers within a strategic window of time after an interaction, automated surveys empower businesses to understand in real-time just what their customers think of them and the quality of their customer service. And, if appropriate, allows them to take immediate action based on the feedback they receive.

For the purpose of this white paper, the term "Automated Survey" shall be representative of any survey delivered in an automated fashion via automated voice, SMS /text messaging or email technologies.

AUTOMATED SURVEYS STILL MOST EFFECTIVE METHOD OF MEASURING CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Now more than ever, customers can voice their opinions in an instant. This unprecedented level of consumer involvement and visibility is prompting businesses to increase the ways in which they can proactively gather customer feedback. By proactively seeking feedback from their customers, businesses are attempting to put themselves in the best possible position to gain insight into any customer service shortcomings before they are made public for all to see.

Next-generation Web technologies as well as blogs, customer review sites, community forums, social networks, content feeds, Twitter and Facebook, make it easy for consumers to tell all about their recent interaction with their bank, cable provider, health insurance provider, credit card company or other product or service provider they do business with. Industry experts believe that investing in technology to gather feedback and improve service before customers broadcast their frustrations to the world is vital, especially in the era of social networking.



Research suggests that consumers put great trust in their social networks. An eConsultancy survey showed that a highly-rated product increases the likelihood of others purchasing the product by 55 percent. A similar eMarketer survey revealed that half of respondents said they considered information shared on their social networks when making a decision—even higher among users ages 18 to 24, at 65 percent.

It is clear that retaining customers is a key priority in good times, but it is even more imperative in today's challenging economic climate and increasingly complex customer communications landscape.

It is no wonder why enterprises continue to rely on automated surveys to gauge customer satisfaction and take immediate action on those responses that warrant it.

Surveys are a clear part of any business' customer service strategy. With little investment, enterprises can leverage automated surveys to determine everything from how well a service was performed at a customer's residence or business to whether or not a customer was happy with the level of interaction with a call center agent, retail store, website or even a doctor's office visit.

BENEFITS OF AUTOMATED SURVEYS:

- **PROACTIVE**
- **IMMEDIATE**
- **CONSISTENT, NIMBLE & SCALABLE**
- **COST-EFFECTIVE**
- **ACTIONABLE**

Regardless of industry, enterprises can realize five key business benefits to leveraging automated survey technologies. Let's explore the ways in which automated surveys can help your business reach its customer satisfaction goals.

KEY BENEFIT #1 AUTOMATED SURVEYS ARE PROACTIVE

It is not enough for businesses to deal with issues as they arise. They must be able to anticipate customer needs.

Automated surveys enable businesses to proactively identify customer satisfaction issues. This proactive approach sends the message that customer input is valued and important, which in and of itself builds customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Waiting to react to customer feedback until it is communicated via public channels (i.e. review websites, social networks, etc.) can cost a business time and money, not to mention possibly skewing its public reputation. By leveraging automated surveys to proactively ask for customer feedback, a business can also identify not only how they will address issues ahead of time, but also assist in turning possible customer experience or customer service weak points into positive competitive differentiators.

By knowing that a customer is dissatisfied within close proximity of a negative interaction, businesses also have much more of an opportunity to retain that customer. If a customer provides a "poor rating" to specific questions in an automated survey, for example, a business may choose to automatically connect that person with a call center agent to immediately address their concerns.



By knowing in real-time how the customer feels, decision makers have a compelling opportunity to minimize a poor customer experience—possibly even turning it into an overall positive customer experience that will be shared with other current or prospective customers.

As critical as these surveys are today, being proactive doesn't end just there. Businesses should consider leveraging other Interactive Messaging solutions that are integrated with automated survey technologies to proactively communicate with customers via Interactive Voice Response (IVR), SMS /text, email or on the internet on a wide range of topics—whether it be an update on the status of an order, a prescription refill reminder or even when a bill is due.

AUTOMATED SURVEYS CAN HELP YOUR BUSINESS REACH ITS CUSTOMER SATISFACTION GOALS.

- **IMMEDIATE RESULTS**
- **ACCURATE ACCOUNTS**
- **CONSISTENT & NEUTRAL**

KEY BENEFIT #2

AUTOMATED SURVEYS ARE IMMEDIATE

Much like the way in which restaurant diners immediately 'vote' on their service and meal by giving a tip, understanding how customers feel about your business is much more valuable when they are able to tell you immediately after an interaction.

Automated surveys can instantly help a business understand if a customer is happy or not—and why. Many businesses do this in one of two ways: leveraging automated surveys for inbound calls into a call center or by reaching out to customers soon after-the-fact in an outbound survey. Both methods are extremely effective in gathering immediate data about customer satisfaction.

From an inbound perspective, leading survey technologies can also help companies that leverage automated surveys take it one step further by immediately asking a customer after their call if their issue was resolved; if their call center representative was courteous and helpful; and whether they would call again.

If a customer is not happy with the level of service they have received, the business instantly knows it—and can take actions to improve that customer's satisfaction.



This kind of data can be used to take action in a number of ways—from offering discounts or promotions to retain a customer after a poor interaction, to helping individual CSRs and their managers better address and analyze call center interactions in order to implement the appropriate measures to guarantee continuous improvement.

Similarly, a company may leverage outbound automated surveys to better understand an interaction soon after it has occurred.

Let's use a cable provider as an example. With thousands of installations and visits to customers' homes, it is important for the provider to know when a technician has successfully installed a new service and that the customer is happy with the experience.

After a technician has indicated the service call is complete, the cable provider can automatically initiate an outbound survey to that customer. The provider can understand immediately if the customer has had a pleasant experience and is satisfied with the services that were performed.

Consequently, they can also learn immediately if the technician's visit resulted in a poor experience even before the customer has had a chance to voice his or her concerns—or told their friends on Facebook.

This type of outbound survey has been leveraged across many industries, from healthcare to telecommunications. Retailers, for example, use post-purchase surveys via automated voice or SMS /text messaging immediately after an in-store or online purchase to instantly gauge customer satisfaction.

There's no question that stale data prevents a business from responding to a customer's needs while the experience is still fresh in their minds.

Automated surveys enable a business to act within a precious window of time in which a customer is more likely to accurately remember the interaction and is more receptive to completing the survey.

KEY BENEFIT #3

AUTOMATED SURVEYS ARE CONSISTENT, NIMBLE AND SCALABLE

In order for a business to fully benefit from customer feedback, questions must be delivered in the same order and in the same way each and every time.

Consistency and neutrality are the cornerstones of collecting good data. Automated survey technologies preserve consistency and neutrality for every customer interaction. They ensure that the customer feedback is unbiased, neutral and error-free, which leads to smarter and more informed decision making.

In some cases, customers would prefer to answer automated survey questions over those from a live call center agent, particularly when giving negative feedback. Automated surveys provide a risk-free way for customers to provide open and honest, yet confidential feedback.

In addition, automated surveys can scale rapidly to meet the needs of a particular promotion or business goal. To do this with call center staff would be costly and ineffective. Businesses can rely on automated survey technologies to perform multiple functions within an organization at any given time. This frees up call center agents and other staff to address mission-critical customer needs while preserving the ability to rapidly address changing business goals.



TOGETHER, YOU WIN.

**KEY BENEFIT #4****AUTOMATED SURVEYS ARE COST-EFFECTIVE**

We all know that it costs more to acquire a new customer than it does to keep an existing one.

Using surveys to keep close tabs on customer sentiment and taking immediate action is fundamental to any customer/business relationship. Automating this process maximizes the potential benefits.

Besides lowering costs and increasing agent productivity, businesses that leverage automated surveys can adjust questions on the fly based on earlier customer responses.

This goes beyond discovering what happened to finding out why it happened. Live agents can do this as well but only after considerable training and practice, which further reduces productivity.

Businesses can extract further value by leveraging solution providers that provide automated survey solutions in a hosted delivery method. With hosted solutions, businesses pay based on how much they use the survey technologies at any given time vs. incurring the costs of buying and maintaining in-house equipment or having live agents handle this critical part of your business.

KEY BENEFIT #5**AUTOMATED SURVEYS ARE ACTIONABLE**

Using automated surveys to collect data is just the first step in improving the customer experience. To truly harness the power of automated surveys, businesses must take action on the data that is generated.

As a first step, cutting-edge automated survey solutions should graphically illustrate all customer feedback from inbound and outbound surveys so that key decision-makers can identify and address issues in real-time.

Web-based dashboards enable key stakeholders to understand what type of feedback is being generated from a particular survey at any given time and what type of action is appropriate.

NOW MORE THAN EVER, CUSTOMERS CAN VOICE THEIR OPINIONS ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCES WITH VIRTUALLY ANY ENTITY OR BUSINESS IN AN INSTANT.



In addition, many companies use negative feedback from automated surveys to immediately reach out to a customer. For some businesses, that means calling the customer directly for more feedback and offering an apology and even possibly discounts or complimentary products or services as ways to hopefully retain loyalty and a long-term profitable relationship. For others, it might mean immediately rescheduling another technician to return to a customer's home to address an unsuccessful installation or technical problems.

Some service providers even leverage the call center feedback to help new CSRs or technicians to more effectively hone their skills in order to prevent future negative customer feedback.

The beauty of the data is that it can empower your business to take action across a variety of areas. And each and every time you take action, you proactively improve customer satisfaction.

WHAT'S NEXT FOR AUTOMATED SURVEYS? AN EXCITING FUTURE AHEAD...

No doubt, automated survey technologies are evolving at a rapid pace to help businesses address emerging needs.

For example, survey solution providers are incorporating analytics capabilities into the automated survey technologies to better help enterprises predict which customers are more or less likely to be satisfied and what retention strategies might be most effective.

In addition, industry observers predict that automated survey technologies will become even more pervasive across all business segments and not just those with customer-facing roles.

In a survey of its client base, DMG Consulting found that 75 percent of businesses surveyed reported

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**90 PERCENT OF BUSINESSES THINK
CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE IS VERY IMPORTANT**

**80 PERCENT ARE TRYING TO USE IT AS
AN AREA OF DIFFERENTIATION**

they are sharing customer feedback with other areas of their organization with the goal of delivering an enhanced customer experience.

Forrester Research's own annual surveys on the customer experience echo this trend. In its recent survey of 141 executives across many industries, 90 percent of businesses think customer experience is very important to their companies and 80 percent are trying to use it as an area of differentiation.

It is imperative for businesses to understand quickly not only what may have gone wrong with a particular customer's experience, but also know when it went right—and why.

Leveraging automated surveys—whether it occurs after customer interactions with your business or is used to identify a particularly negative experience as it is happening—is the key to action.

ABOUT CSG INTERACTIVE MESSAGING

For more than 20 years, companies across numerous industries including Financial Services, Telecom, Business Services, Cable & Direct Broadcast Satellite, Marketing Services, Retail, Healthcare and Media & Entertainment have utilized CSG Interactive Messaging to drive business results and maximize every customer interaction.



Seamlessly integrating Interactive Voice, SMS/text, Print, Email, Web and Fax, CSG Interactive Messaging helps the world's leading companies connect with their customers in the most cost effective, efficient and customer friendly ways possible.

Each month, CSG Customer Communication Management solutions touch more than half of all U.S. households. And every year, we send and receive more than one billion interactive voice, SMS/text, print, email and fax messages to and from more than 50 million end users.

CSG Interactive Messaging is delivered through multiple channels and is fully integrated, enabling our clients to evolve their use of Interactive Messaging functionality as their business needs change and grow.

Our hosted solutions enable businesses like yours to rely on CSG to cost-effectively and efficiently deliver Interactive Messaging functionality and expertise while continuing to focus on what your business does best—serve your customers.

ABOUT CSG

CSG simplifies the complexity of business transformation in the digital age for the most respected communications, media and entertainment service providers worldwide. With over 35 years of experience, CSG delivers revenue management, customer experience and digital monetization solutions for every stage of the customer lifecycle. The company is the trusted partner driving digital transformation for leading global brands, including Arrow, AT&T, Bharti Airtel, Charter Communications, Comcast, DISH, Eastlink, iFlix, MTN, TalkTalk, Telefonica, Telstra and Verizon.

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