SurveyMonkey®

DEMAND GEN REPORT

The B2B Practitioner's Guide To

Data-Fueled Marketing

For successful B2B organizations, keeping a pulse on customers' changing needs is critical. In today's digital environment, 87% of customer experience (CX) professionals say customer feedback is more important than ever.

Gathering and acting on feedback throughout the customer journey can help B2B organizations:

- Stay in touch with what is happening in their customers' worlds;
- Uncover new market opportunities and drive business decisions;
- Guide content marketing initiatives to develop campaigns that resonate with customers; and
- Support customer success initiatives and enhance CX.

"Leveraging feedback at all stages of marketing can be a competitive differentiator and can play a role in shaping your entire marketing strategy," said Jack Foster, Sr. Director of Demand Generation and Marketing Operations at SurveyMonkey. In fact, 52% of companies that collected customer feedback changed their business strategy based on what they learned, versus only 30% of companies that did not.

This guide will share practical tips to help B2B practitioners fuel data-driven marketing, sales, and customer success initiatives through gathering feedback and assessments.

Developing A Natural Dialogue With Customers

Feedback from your customers, prospects, and the market can uncover new opportunities and offer data to inform business decisions. In 2020, **60% of organizations added new touchpoints** to listen to customers in new places. With so many opportunities to gather customer feedback, where should you start? **Leela Srinivasan**, Chief Marketing Officer at SurveyMonkey, suggested these best practices:

Review What You Already Know

Begin by auditing the data your organization already has, how and where you collected it, and where you stored it, Srinivasan advised. "Take stock of what you know and what you have."

Pinpoint What You Need

Create a consensus about the type of feedback you want to collect and why. Focus on areas in your business you are looking to measure over time, whether that's customer satisfaction, new product/feature adoption, or exploring your customers' changing needs.

Decide When To Request Feedback

Identify the customer touch points that offer an opportunity to gather the kind of feedback you seek. Collecting feedback, such as Net Promoter Score (NPS), on an ongoing basis can help measure longer-range impressions, Srinivasan said. Other common touch points or milestones for requesting feedback include:

- After a customer service interaction
- After a purchase
- After implementation

- After closing a sale
- After losing a sale

Determine Whom To Ask For Feedback

Expanding beyond existing customers to get feedback from prospects or the public yields valuable market research that guides brand and product development and provides a competitive advantage. However, **fewer than one-third of organizations** collect such feedback.
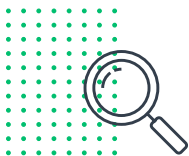
Feedback Spotlight: Market Research Insights

Daniel Scharff, Head of Insights and Analytics at **JUST**, a food startup offering plant-based egg alternatives, relies on surveys to gather a wide range of market research. He uses SurveyMonkey Audience to conduct DIY market research and sends over 40 surveys annually. Questions are sent to a variety of segmented audiences and high-quality results can be collected within minutes. The end-to-end market insights gained from SurveyMonkey have informed JUST's product development, marketing messages, global expansion, and more.

Design Your Survey

"Start with the end in mind," said Srinivasan. "Know what you're trying to prove or disprove and ask questions that will elicit the information you need." Tips to keep in mind include:

- **Tailor it to the customer journey** — Whether it's in-store kiosks, SMS polls, or technology that gently surfaces on your website or in your app, look for the least intrusive way to collect data.

- **Engage the customer** — Keeping questions short and sweet will garner you more responses; a relaxed, informal tone makes responding feel less like a chore and more like a conversation.

- **Balance qualitative and quantitative questions** — "There's power in the quantitative, but the qualitative often has more [emotional] impact for the audience," explained Srinivasan.

- **Look for the "why"** — Dig for reasons behind customers' responses. "Companies often miss the mark here," noted Srinivasan. "Understand the why through the customer lens so you can continuously improve how you are showing up, adding value, and engaging your customers."

- **Test and re-test** — Run internal tests to get input on the questionnaire design to make sure it works properly.

Use Trusted Sources And Domains To Gather Feedback

Seeking feedback beyond your existing customers and social media followers can provide valuable insights to drive business growth. However, when reaching out to a wider audience, it's important that those responses are trustworthy. Using an experienced provider to field your survey can expand your reach while ensuring respondents are qualified.

"Working with reputable third-party software can increase both your response rates and the quality of responses," noted Srinivasan. For example, TechValidate by SurveyMonkey can gather customer testimonials and proof points while providing the validation of a third party.

Choose Technology That Can Give You A Leg Up

As companies increasingly rely on customer feedback to drive marketing decisions, gathering input quickly is essential to responding nimbly. The right technology can help you design better questions so you can efficiently glean critical information from respondents. Combining artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning, and data from 21 years of conducting surveys, **SurveyMonkey Genius** can make suggestions to automatically help optimize survey design.

Gathering data is only the first step — you need to analyze the responses before you can act on what you learn. Technology incorporating AI can facilitate rapid analysis of text responses, giving your business a competitive edge in understanding customer sentiments. Using machine learning and natural language processing (NLP), SurveyMonkey Sentiment Analysis can draw quantitative insights from qualitative data such as text responses.

Incorporate Data Into Systems Of Record

To get the most value from customer feedback data, look for a solution that lets you integrate results with the tools your team already uses. Integration with your CRM, marketing automation, collaboration, and analytics apps enables faster decision-making and quick actions to benefit from your findings. For example, SurveyMonkey integrates with a wide range of popular marketing business apps, such as Salesforce, Tableau, Hubspot, and Marketo, so users can use their existing tools to glean additional insights from customer data.

Take Action

"The whole point of gathering feedback is to close the loop and act on what you learn," said Srinivasan. "Get in front of executives with the 'so what?' of the data and an action plan to improve customer experience based on what you've learned, plus the metrics that will move it from a business standpoint."

Leveraging Feedback To Fuel Content Marketing Initiatives

Although **61% of B2B marketers** said content marketing is one of their most important marketing tactics for the next 12 to 18 months, 43% noted lack of meaningful content is a significant challenge.

Data gathered from customers can power effective marketing content. **Three-fourths (75%)** of people think content containing data is more trustworthy than content without data, while 73% said it's more persuasive. Marketing professionals also overwhelmingly prefer the idea of including more hard data in content, with **98% wishing they had more data-fueled content**.

Collecting customer feedback can help marketers fill gaps in their existing content marketing strategies. "The most powerful voice in marketing is your own customer's voice," Srinivasan pointed out. Sharing customers' praise for your product or service is potent persuasion.

Survey data backing a topic your audience is interested in and relevant to your brand will uncover data you can use in content to:

- **Build brand awareness:** Unique, original data is attractive to the media. Share findings with reporters, partners, and other brands to attract media coverage and raise your brand's profile.

- **Get leads:** If your data is valuable enough to your audience, prospects will share their contact information to get it. Data-based gated content such as white papers or webinars can generate leads while providing value.

- **Drive organic traffic:** Create SEO-optimized articles or blog posts based on your data and link to them from social media and other pertinent sites.

Maximize results from your customer data by repurposing content in a variety of formats. "The results of one survey can be used in multiple channels — blogs, articles, white papers, infographics, webinars, presentations," said Srinivasan. "There's really no limit."

It takes time, coordination, and lots of approvals to analyze survey data and turn the insights into useful content. "That's a heavy lift, especially for smaller teams," Srinivasan noted. The right software can help. For example, TechValidate by SurveyMonkey automates a collection of case studies, testimonials, and other content.
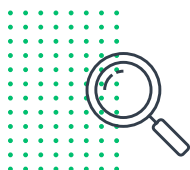
🔍 **Feedback Spotlight:** Creating Content That Resonates

Data has always been key to supporting the marketing message at financial services company **Brex**. When Aliza Edelstein, Director of Brex's Product, Partner & Content Marketing team, was tapped to speak at a trade show, she gathered feedback to develop her presentation using SurveyMonkey Audience.

In just two days, Edelstein collected both qualitative and quantitative feedback that helped pinpoint her customers' challenges and create a value proposition that would resonate with the audience of financial decision-makers. The insights she gathered became part of a research report that Brex distributed to the trade show audience and promoted online and in social channels before the show, boosting interest and demonstrating thought leadership.

Acting On Customer Data Insights For Sales Enablement

A whopping **82% of people** trust their peers' opinions more than brand or product copy. No wonder sales teams are always looking for customer stories and hard proof points to help win new deals, noted Srinivasan. "Prospects buy based on emotion with data points to back it up," she said.

Customer feedback can provide the insights marketing teams need to better align with sales and cater to prospects and customers. "Using customer surveys to gather testimonials, proof points and case studies and providing the sales team with easy access to those assets helps them accelerate progress and close more deals," said Srinivasan.

To collect the data you need, she suggests to:

Capture Customer Sentiment At Scale

The more responses you gather and the greater variety of customers you get feedback from, the better. Insights into the opinions of customers in specific verticals, personas, and company sizes is key to developing relevant content and persona-targeted messaging for your customer base.

Gathering data for each segment of your target market can be daunting. A third-party service software like **TechValidate** can streamline the process by collecting responses at scale, then filtering and analyzing them to deliver usable data.

Find Out Why Sales Were Won Or Lost

Ask customers about needs, challenges, timelines, and other concerns around the purchasing decision. Srinivasan recommends soliciting feedback from customers after each sale is made or lost and sharing the data internally with sales and cross-functional partners. "Win-loss surveys are gold," she said. "Understanding what customers value and what motivated them to purchase or not purchase will inform your future collateral, talk tracks, positioning, and more."

Explore The Overall Purchase Experience

From their first website visit to their onboarding, collecting feedback at different stages of the customer journey helps you deliver a more customer-centric experience. Just be mindful of how you're collecting feedback; for top-of-funnel prospects, like web visitors, think of simple, one-click ways to collect feedback with the help of **Usabilla by SurveyMonkey**.

Feedback Spotlight: Crafting Customer-Driven Content

SaaS company **Apptio** had a problem: Jargon-heavy product marketing messaging made it hard for buyers to get non-tech buying team members on board with Apptio's solutions. The company's sales team was struggling — its sales cycle averaged 240 days.

Jarod Greene, Apptio's VP of Product Marketing, turned to TechValidate by SurveyMonkey. By sending customers brief surveys on their concerns, unmet needs, and the value Apptio provides, he can quickly collect feedback and create testimonials, case studies, and other product messaging using customers' own words. Employing consistent messaging across sales and marketing has improved Apptio's sales pipeline, shortened the sales cycle by 25%, and boosted revenue.

Turn Customers Into Advocates

Use feedback to uncover potential advocates for your organization. By running an **NPS survey**, you can actually quantify who are your company's "Promoters" and "Detractors." Customer testimonials, quotes, ratings, and reviews from your star customers are a compelling element of advertising, sales collateral, or referrals.

Share What You Learn

"Ensure that the feedback you're gathering is flowing into other key systems so your team can act on it," Srinivasan advised. No one likes siloed data, so using a feedback solution that integrates with popular martech solutions you're already using, such as Salesforce, Zendesk, HubSpot, Marketo, and Eloqua, can help.

Feedback Spotlight: Cultivating Customer Advocates

Redis Labs, a provider of in-memory database platforms, sought customer insights to facilitate the sales process. Polls powered by TechValidate by SurveyMonkey revealed how and when customers want to engage with sales and the challenges buyers face in getting internal buy-in.

VP of Sales Enablement Lisa Contini credits TechValidate with helping create "evidence-based sales enablement." In two years, Redis Labs has published more than 80 case studies, developed a robust library of customer-based collateral, such as case studies and references, and expanded its customer advocacy program from 15 to 1,800 active advocates.

Boosting Customer Success Initiatives With Customer Feedback

CX has long been a differentiator for forward-thinking organizations, but COVID-19 shed an even brighter spotlight on it. Among organizations experiencing financial growth since COVID-19, 92% say customer feedback has become more important. With pandemic restrictions preventing events, meetups, face-to-face sales calls, and in-store experiences, digital feedback is vital to keeping a pulse on the customer experience.

In a recent survey of CX professionals, only 47% report their company's revenues have grown since the pandemic began. Some common traits among these top-performing organizations are:

1. **Agile:** They can pivot quickly based on new information;

2. **Customer-centric:** They prioritize the customer experience;

3. **Collaborative:** They work cross-functionally toward common goals; and

4. **Holistic:** They connect insights from the end-to-end customer journey to see the big picture.

Of these, agility is the most important. In tumultuous times, an organization's survival can hinge on its ability to nimbly revise product roadmaps or revamp marketing strategies. Customer feedback can help dictate where companies should pivot to adapt to evolving customer priorities, while ensuring these efforts are firmly grounded in data.

Some best practices to consider when using feedback for CX include:

Building A Cross-Functional Team

"Anyone who touches the customer — marketing, product, CX, engineering, customer success, sales, and operations — can benefit from gathering customer feedback," said Srinivasan. Each team should have input into the survey process and the ability to conduct their own surveys.

Eliminating Silos

Both the process of gathering customer feedback and the results should be accessible to the entire team. "Consider developing a survey library that allows anyone in the organization to deliver a consistent feedback experience," Srinivasan suggested. "Make sure there's a brand-approved logo, survey platform, imagery, style guides, templates, and approved questions."

Feedback Spotlight: Learning Why Customers Buy

During the pandemic, **Audio Network**, a B2B music company that creates original tracks for television, film, advertising and digital media, focused on client retention. To better understand customer needs, Chief Product Officer Matthew Hawn implemented SurveyMonkey Enterprise.

Feedback collected with SurveyMonkey Enterprise helped identify the services and features salespeople should focus on to increase yield, boost repeat business, and create an upsell path.

"Feedback also created an early warning system about retention opportunities and gave us a better sense of our customers' needs at a time we were cut off from day-to-day sales calls," Hawn said. Customer feedback flows directly into each customer's Salesforce account, providing more authentic talking points for the sales team.

Being Consistent

When everyone can ask for feedback, you risk over-surveying customers. Visibility into survey touch points and a solution that integrates with existing tools, such as Salesforce, can prevent bombarding customers with repetitive questions. Additionally, opt for an enterprise-level solution so you can gain visibility and control over user activity.

Measuring And Sharing Results

Link CX feedback with operational data to help assess ROI and gain a holistic view of the customer. Think outside of marketing and sales and share findings with all key stakeholders across the organization, including product, engineering, and design. "Feedback can help define product roadmaps, as well," said Srinivasan. "There's a difference between a salesperson saying they lost a customer because we don't have Feature X and being able to show that 27% of lost deals cited lack of Feature X as a reason."

Feedback Spotlight: Insights To Power Expansion

In just two years, eco-conscious sneaker company **Allbirds** has expanded to more than 18 global markets, facilitated by DIY market research using SurveyMonkey Audience. Using a third-party agency to conduct market research was expensive and time-consuming, so Director of Analytics Dinesh Gaur switched to SurveyMonkey Audience.

Before entering new markets, Allbirds conducts market research surveys to benchmark everything from pricing to brand perception. They also use SurveyMonkey Audience to monitor brand health across key markets, delivering real-time feedback that Gaur can act on quickly when opportunities or problems arise.

Choose The Right Technology To Automate Feedback Collection

Look for solutions that are scalable, flexible, customizable, and integrate with your existing martech stack. Choose solutions that are user-friendly and easy to implement with minimal training so your team can get up and running quickly.

Feedback Spotlight: Planning a Pivot

Gathering customer feedback enabled **TripActions**, a corporate travel and expense management company, to pivot their offering after federal, state, and local governments began implementing lockdowns in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Within 48 hours, TripActions, a company built for one of the industries hardest hit by the pandemic, had developed sophisticated dashboards to help their customers keep their employees safe by telling customers where their employees were, had been, or planned to be in relation to the rapidly spreading disease. The dashboards, coupled with the industry leader's modern, flexible technology, helped travel leaders react quickly, formulate a response, and adapt as needed based on each situation.

"I think there's plenty of companies that didn't react as quickly and won't be in as good a situation as TripActions coming out of this," said Nina Herold, Chief Product and Operations Officer of TripActions. "But we're going to get through this because we're customer oriented, we listen to their feedback, and we quickly act on it."

The Future Of Data-Driven Marketing

The B2B organizations that grew revenues in 2020 displayed curiosity about the customer experience and agility to pivot based on what they learned. In 2021 and beyond, these traits will be even more vital to success.

"Customer feedback was fundamental to surviving and thriving in 2020, and I don't see that going away," said Srinivasan. "There's still so much we don't know about how the world is going to evolve. Collecting feedback is more important than ever to help companies keep a pulse on their customers and understand how their market is changing."

Truly listening to customers can uncover new opportunities, guide business decisions and align marketing and sales efforts, giving organizations the insights they need to pivot instead of being left behind.

SurveyMonkey®

SurveyMonkey is a leader in agile software solutions for customer experience, market research, and survey feedback. The company's platform empowers over 17 million active users to analyze and act on feedback from employees, customers, website and app users, and market research respondents. SurveyMonkey's products, enterprise solutions, and integrations enable more than 335,000 organizations to deliver better customer experiences, increase employee retention and unlock growth and innovation. Ultimately, SurveyMonkey's vision is to raise the bar for human experiences by amplifying individual voices.

www.surveymonkey.com

DEMAND GEN® REPORT

Demand Gen Report is a targeted online publication that uncovers the strategies and solutions that help companies better align their sales and marketing organizations, and ultimately, drive growth. A key component of the publication's editorial coverage focuses on the sales and marketing automation tools that enable companies to better measure and manage their multi-channel demand generation efforts.

www.demandgenreport.com