# Innovating Analytics in Customer Care Beyond the Voice of the Consumer

In an October 7, 2015 webinar entitled "Rewire the Digital CX to Create a WOW Customer Experience!" participants were presented with the following scenario:

You have a (fictional) 10% extra budget to spend on customer experience (with no strings attached). Where do you spend it?

43% of respondents, the highest of any category, indicated that they would spend their dollars investing in analytics.
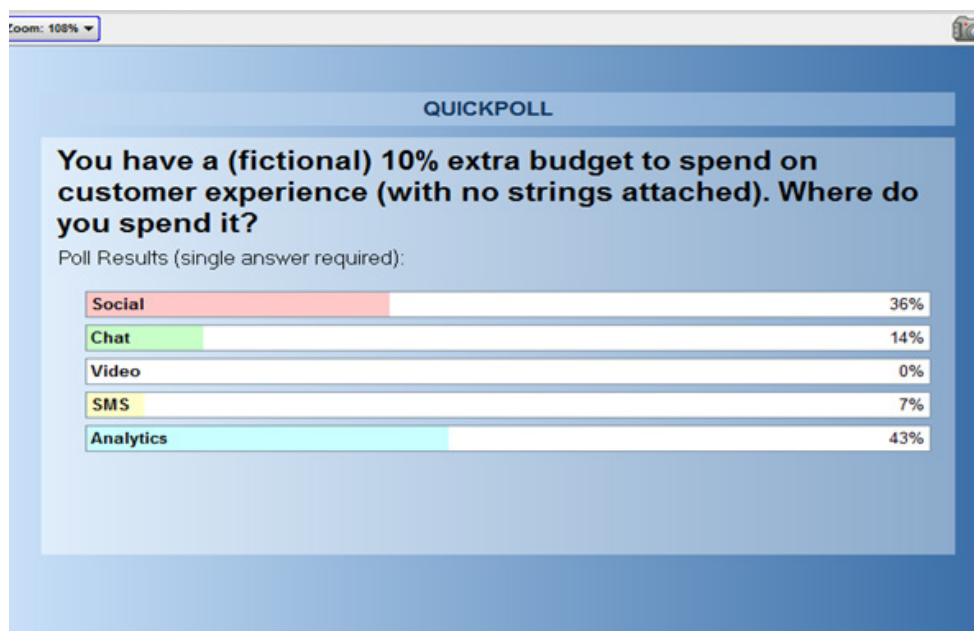
In reality, most of us these days are patiently waiting on the Genie in the Bottle to get this 10% extra budget to use however we want. Instead, we have to rely on cold hard ROI proposals to build our case for funding. When it comes to justifying the investment in analytics, particularly for a customer service organization that has been traditionally seen as a cost center, this can be a huge challenge.

Voice of the Consumer Analytics ROI is typically centered on the ability to deliver actionable insights that will lead to positive outcomes such as new product innovations, incremental revenue, brand building, and loyalty. Standard industry practice focuses on normalizing data to arrive at contacts per million units (normalized rates) by product category and subject type, and then stratifying top contact types classified as complaints, praise, inquiries, and suggestions.

But what if you could offer your organization insights that had never been tapped into before, and mitigate risk (cost avoidance!) while you're at it? What if you could deliver, for the first time, a **very different** voice of the consumer that had never been heard before? Let's call it a "new language" all together?

You can! It starts with simply doing things differently with Voice of the Consumer data.

Apply innovation to VOC data analytics with the same passion and tenacity as you would when developing new product offerings.

- Consider non-traditional approaches.
- Look for connections in seemingly disparate data sets.
- Ask "what if?"
- Have no limits when exploring correlations.

Here are a few techniques to get you started…

Difference algorithm

Comparing data sets to understand the difference between actual and expected ratios

Use example: compare U.S. (or country if available) census data and overall contacts (can be by product group, UPC, category, etc.) to see where complaints are in line with the expected ratio, or higher/lower than the expected ratio

Measuring sentiment/demeanor

This is important to look at when determining how to allocate resources / capital for quality improvements. Not all complaints are created equal, this helps identify low rate issues that may be having a significant negative impact to the brand

Use example: a measurement / scale for rating consumer sentiment/demeanor is needed. For complaints, a high sentiment score (negative) is important to consider as the contact normalized rate may be low, but the negative sentiment leads to loss of future sales and negative word of mouth. Typically the quality teams are prioritizing based on the highest rates, when there could be issues with low rates that are having a greater negative impact to the brand that goes unaddressed.

Analysis of key dis-satisfiers as an indicator of re-purchase intent

Similar to sentiment, this is used to look at specific subject code types at all levels (brand, product group, UPC) and provide quality teams feedback on top issues that are driving dis-satisfaction. The consumer is asked "will you purchase the product again"? Data is collected as yes/no/maybe and it allows for a simple way to look at top issues for which consumers indicate they will not re-purchase

New product or product change probing questions and data collection

This technique allows for a comparison between a normalized rate base line against the same from similar existing product lines or past product launches

Typically new product introductions and product changes will demonstrate an early increase in complaints that tend to level off after 90 to 180 days depending on the product lifecycle. This is an early warning system that allows product developers, packaging engineers, quality professionals, etc. to quickly respond to issues, and when needed, add probing questions to the CRM system to collect the needed information to quickly identify a root cause so it can be addressed. When a response to an issue is addressed in a timely manner, a best practice is to reach out to the consumers who had called in and let them know about the changes that were made as a result of their feedback. ("WOW!" is usually the response.) Offer an additional coupon or sample to win them back, and track the redemption to help measure your efforts.

Early warning systems

There are many ways to leverage statistical process control to run data daily to identify notable increases or decreases. A best practice is to run the data at the most granular level possible on an absolute basis (looking at every UPC and every subject code) to measure increase or decrease week over week, month over month, and year over year. There is a good deal of product knowledge required from the Analyst as factors to consider including recent product changes, seasonality, supply chain, etc. The numbers alone will not tell the story, having a strong working knowledge of the products and intuition will also come into play here. It is important to use this as a starting point and always follow up to a notable increase/decrease by normalizing the data and looking at data codes.

Agent flag for review – empower front line employees to initiate a review

Empowering the customer service agents to flag cases for further analysis is important for many reasons. Importantly, there are times when serious issues may "get lost" under a subject code heading that does not adequately describe a potential risk of illness, injury, property damage, etc. The representative dispositioning the case may code this under a general feedback code that may not sound off alarm bells, yet their gut feel is that there is something critical at stake. A trained analyst can review the call or email to determine if there is a potential risk, issue, or highly negative sentiment that warrants sharing or further investigation.

On the flip side, this is also an excellent way to efficiently and effectively identify "news worthy" brand loyalty stories or other emotionally charged feedback that is worthy of being passed on to stakeholders in the organization as a means of building pride and validating the importance of everyday efforts. Every voice of the consumer report shared with senior leadership should start and end with a "tell me something good" header.

Leverage multiplier impact in normalization process

For every one consumer who calls to share an issue or their opinion, there are X number of consumers who also had the same experience / opinion and did NOT reach out to share their feedback. This is referred to this as the multiplier. Factoring in a multiplier is incredibly important because you may have an issue with a very high multiplier for which the data will appear as a low count, yet when the multiplier is factored in it could rise to the top. For example, you could have exactly five contacts for two different issues that when normalized are at the mid-point as a normalized rate. If one has a multiplier of 25, and the other 10, and the multiplier impact is calculated, the new rates will establish a significantly different ranking.

Leverage multi variate analysis to determine product or category health

A product health scorecard can be established by defining variables and factors that inherently contribute to the likelihood of consumer complaints, and measuring alongside other variables that are important to consider in the overall value proposition of the product to the organization. Use weighted calculations based on the level of importance of each variable to arrive a product health scoring.

Consider the complexity factor

One of the most important lessons a voice of the consumer analyst can learn is that *not all complaints are created equal.*

Do not underestimate the importance of inherent or otherwise complexity factors in the product (temperature controlled supply chain, marketed to children, number of preparation steps, shelf life, etc.) It is often a best practice for quality and manufacturing teams to focus on the "highest normalized complaint rates", spending time, effort, and dollars on what is seemingly the most relevant issue to resolve. Taking the time to identify inherently complex factors related to the product, and taking these factors into consideration to arrive at an acceptable normalized rate range, can save the organization valuable time and money.

It is not uncommon to have products with very low complexity and corresponding low complaint rates that are actually performing significantly worse than the highly complex products with higher rates. Often times these products stay under the radar, resulting in quality or other issues going unaddressed.

Discovery – seeking out unique patterns versus comparing data sets

This requires a trained analyst who is very knowledgeable about the product or service offerings and can have an open mind when seeking out unique patterns. As opposed to assigning data sets to be analyzed side by side, seeking out unique patterns in both structured and unstructured data is accomplished by randomly pulling in many different data sets that would not normally be compared side by side and looking for correlations.

Event day reporting at the manufacturing plant level

Establishing a threshold for customer complaints at a manufacturing level is a must do for any Voice of the Customer program. Any time the total number of complaints on a given day, week, or month is exceeded, a deep dive analysis should be performed. This is important because there may have been an "event" on a given day that caused a series of issues that may span multiple subject codes. Any one given contact for a subject code may not trigger a review, but when subject codes with a common root cause are combined, the issue becomes more significant. This is also an important measurement in risk mitigation and for meeting regulatory expectations.