



Beyond surveys: Go deeper than customer feedback

Customers say more than what they tell you in surveys.
Harvest conversational data to understand the “why” behind the “what.”

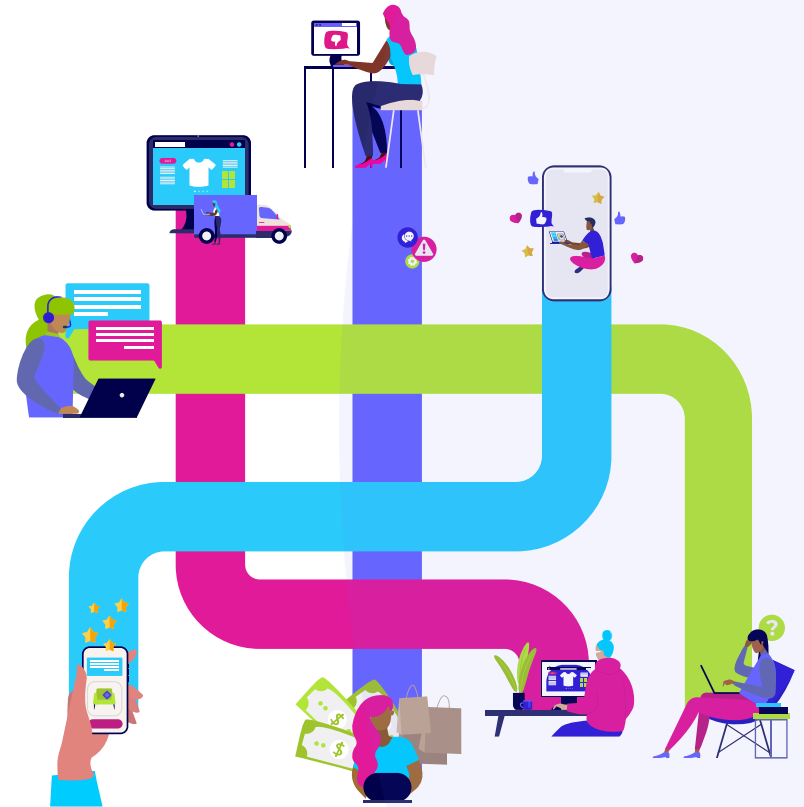
Introduction

More than 5,000 organizations worldwide now have a dedicated customer experience leader, more than 40% of whom report directly to the CEO. “This increasing level of CEO oversight shows the importance of CX to the bottom line, hence the need for measurement,” says Ed Thompson, vice president and distinguished analyst at Gartner.

But are brands really measuring the customer experience, or just customer feedback?

Managing CX means identifying and quantifying friction points in the customer journey, determining the root causes of those friction points, and resolving the problems at their origins. But friction points can occur anywhere in the customer lifecycle — marketing, purchase process, shipping & logistics, product or service issues, returns & exchanges, billing, online user experience, and many more. That's a lot of places to monitor for issues.

However, knowing how a customer feels about a brand or product is entirely different from knowing why they feel that way, or what to do about it. If your organization relies on surveys alone to provide the answers for why and what, then you're missing part of the story.



Why surveys miss the mark

Most companies today capture customer feedback using net promoter surveys, customer satisfaction surveys, and point of sale surveys — all great tools for associating an experience with a numerical value. An aggregated feedback score provides a benchmark for how customers feel about a brand, sub-questions within surveys can provide color around sentiment, and verbatim comments from individual customers can help fill in some of the gaps.

There is indisputable value in the customer feedback garnered from surveys. But when brands use them as the primary method of gathering customer experience insights, they fall short.



Low response rates and polarity bias

Response rates for surveys are minimal — often in the single digits. Even worse, the few who do participate in surveys are usually outliers who have had either a particularly good or a particularly bad experience. This skews results to under-represent the sentiments of the customer base as a whole.

Ambiguous feedback

While surveys can be helpful in determining the general areas in which customers have poor or great experiences, they rarely provide enough context to identify the root cause of friction.

Think about the verbatim comments you've seen in surveys. Most are left blank. When feedback is provided, there's typically not enough detail or context to paint a clear picture of a customer's issue, let alone how to solve it.

For example, say a respondent answered an open-ended survey question with "Not helpful. Agents couldn't help solve my issue." This feedback doesn't provide the context or detail needed to understand the initial issue, nor does it help the brand figure out why the failure occurred. Without understanding the root cause of the friction, the brand is left without any clear, actionable insights that they could use to improve CX. This heightens the risk that the issue(s) will persist over time, frustrating customers and costing the brand money.

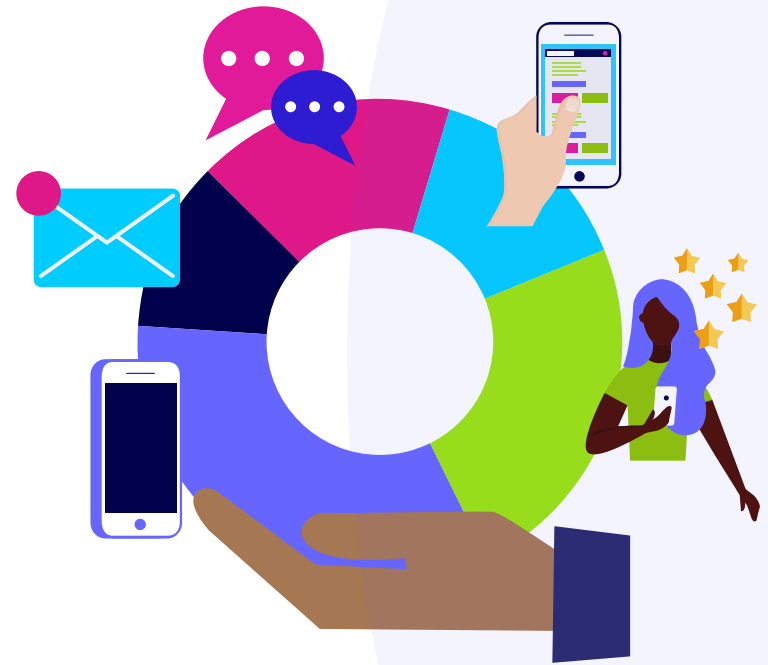


The best channels for VoC data

Now that we understand the limitations of common customer feedback approaches, let's turn our attention to the data sources that will provide the scale, detail, context, and actionable insights necessary to move your CX forward.

Phone calls – and increasingly chat – represent the bulk of customer interactions for most companies. However, brands now provide at least three to four different customer communication options with some offering as many as 10. That's a lot of complexity to manage, but the data from each of those channels has a specific value for companies.

Let's look at some of the most common and high-volume channels for tracking the voice of the customer (VoC).



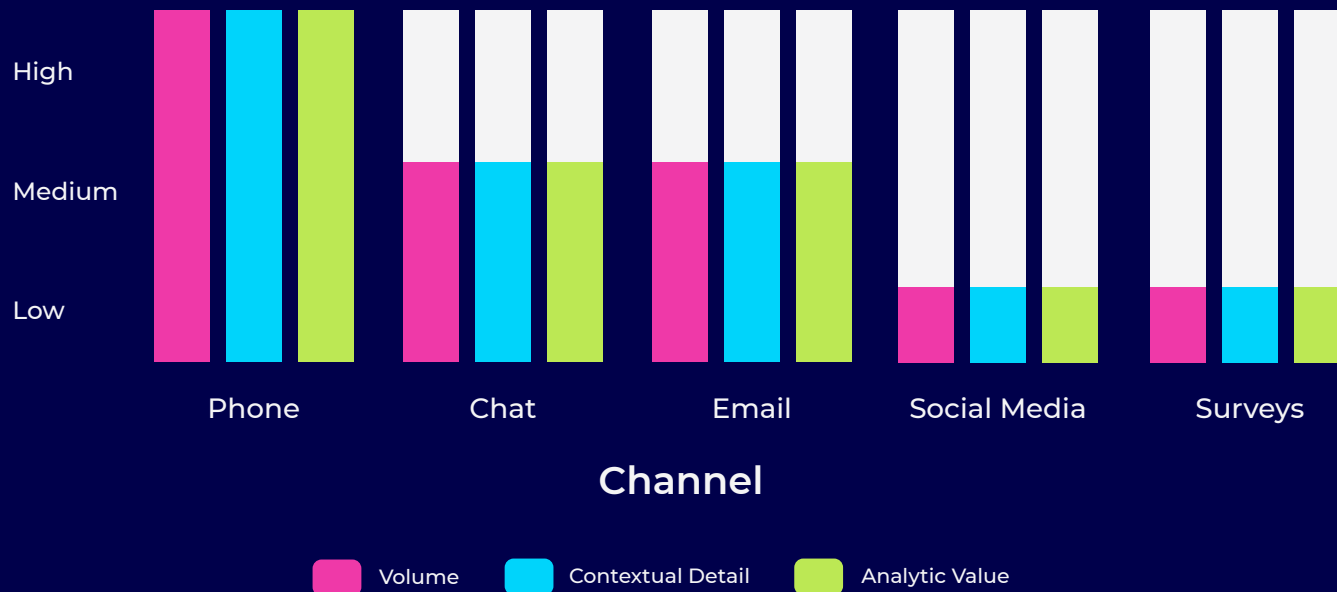
Phone

Typically the highest volume channel for most companies, phone is also the richest channel in content. Customers are far more likely to give details around issues over the phone than they are through native text channels.

Using speech analytics to ingest, parse and understand phone calls, businesses can discover why customers are calling to uncover intent, what your agents and customers are actually doing to pinpoint key behaviors, and how your customers feel from an emotional perspective.

Chat

Usually the second highest volume channel, chat sessions are generally more succinct than phone calls, but there is still a good two-way dialog. It's sometimes easier to identify the specific customer issue in chat, but customers usually offer less detail than they do over the phone.



Email

Email is usually the lowest in volume of all traditional contact center channels, but that doesn't mean it's void of VoC value.

Consumers tend to use email for sharing higher-level complaints, suggestions, feature requests, and praise. Emails can communicate more complex sentiments, so they tend to contain a depth of details and context to support a particular subject.

Social media

Consumers don't hesitate to share their opinions of a brand on social media. Bolstered by data from other channels, social media data can help provide more color and depth to the customer experience portrait.

Social media comments tend to be terse, so they're not always as rich in information as communications on other channels; but they're also emotional, so it's easy to discern sentiment from them. This makes them a valuable source of VoC data.

Surveys

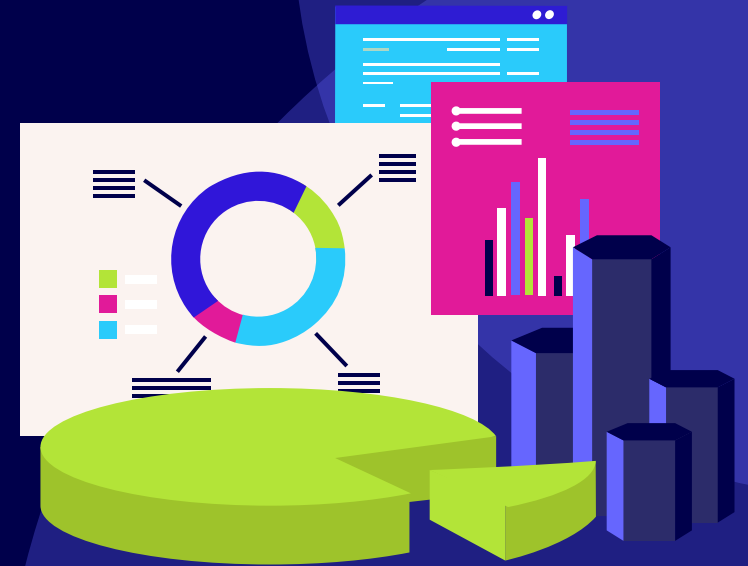
Low volume, minimal detail and polarity bias leads survey data to derive low analytic value. That said, the numerical representation of a customer's satisfaction with a company and its products can be a consistent indicator of overall sentiment over time. Surveys are best used in conjunction with the other channels just mentioned.



Tying VoC data together with customer experience analytics

Now the question remains – how can the value of each channel be collectively leveraged to generate actionable insights for customer experience improvement? Fortunately, customer experience analytics solutions have been developed for this purpose.

In its most basic sense, customer experience (CX) analytics is the systematic discovery, collection, and analysis of customer data to gain intelligent insights for smarter decision making. The data can come from any channel where you interact with customers: phone support, social media, ecommerce, web chat, SMS, email, even reviews on your website or other sites.





The magic in CX analytics solutions is the ability to aggregate customer interactions regardless of channel, normalize disparate sets of data (different communication platforms, CRM tools, etc.), and apply a classification model across the normalized data. By doing this, a user can look across the entire customer communication ecosystem for themes, trends and patterns of customer friction points in the data.

Orvis is a good example of this. They used CX analytics to identify a high volume of conversations about returns, and to their surprise, discovered that a return process they thought was working well was actually slow and cumbersome. The frustrating process led customers to return items far more often than exchanging them. Orvis modified the process, resulting in greater revenue preservation, happier customers, and a two-minute reduction in call time. Most importantly, Orvis now converts 58% of return-related calls into exchanges. None of these improvements would have been possible without an automated way to analyze customer feedback across channels.

Wrap up

Managing CX is vastly different from soliciting customer feedback. While there is value in affixing a number to the customer experience, that's largely where the value of surveys ends.

Fortunately, your customers are providing that detail every day in the form of phone calls, chats, emails and more. Cloud computing has made harnessing the potential of that comprehensive data set more achievable than ever before.

An omni-channel customer experience analytics platform is the key to leveraging that information to make fast, data driven decisions about your products and services, your marketing, and your business processes. To manage the customer experience across that spectrum, you must be able to identify and resolve customer friction points quickly and effectively.

[Request a demo today](#) to learn how Khoros CX Insights can unify, analyze, and convert customer feedback across channels into actionable insights that drive satisfaction, retention and quantifiable business results.



How much can CX Insights save you?

Eliminate friction, cut costs, and improve customer loyalty. Fill out our interactive ROI calculator to see how much your business could be saving with CX Insights.

[Calculate your ROI](#)