



Voice of the Customer (VOC) Best Practices

Ask the right questions of the right people at the right time

What is Voice of the Customer?

Voice of the Customer (VOC) is a research process that captures and analyzes client feedback on their needs, wants, expectations, preferences and dislikes through direct and indirect questioning, ultimately driving positive change in a product, service or business. Sources of VOC are wide ranging and include unstructured data such as call recordings, emails and social media posts. This guide is not an all-inclusive but covers three methodologies that would be most suitable for Squads to use to gather input from clients. The Client Experience team will provide the Squads guidance if, when and which methodology is most appropriate.

Why is VOC important?

VOC is designed to bridge the gap between insight and action. It helps businesses hone their product or service into something that clients truly want and will continue to invest time and money in.



How to Collect Client Feedback

1. Surveys

- a. Before deploying a survey, ask yourself – **What will I do with the feedback I receive?**
If you are unable or disinclined to act on what respondents tell you – don't ask.
- b. Introduce your survey with an invitation that clarifies:
 - i. **What** – What is the purpose of your survey? What are you trying to learn?

- ii. **When** – What is the deadline for completing your survey?
- iii. **Why** – How will your survey positively benefit clients? How will you use their input to improve their experience?
- c. **Close the Loop** on feedback. Show clients you are listening by acknowledging their response with a follow-up message and by taking action on what they tell you.
- d. Surveys should be:
 - i. Short
 - ii. Relevant
 - iii. Dynamic
 - iv. Open-ended

*It is **better to keep customer feeling engaged with a small number of highly relevant questions**. When customers feel like the topic is relevant to them, response rates have shown to rise between 14% and 16%.¹*

- e. **Never ask** a question you already know the answer to. (e.g. How long have you been a client? What department do you work in?)
- f. Avoid:
 - i. **Anonymous surveys** – Survey responses should be confidential; however, if you make them anonymous, the source of the feedback collected is lost and you will be unable to close the loop.
 - ii. **Mandatory questions** – While this will guarantee you get a response; the answers might be invalid because respondents feel forced to answer a question.
 - iii. **Absolutes** – Words like “always,” “all,” “never,” and “every” are too rigid and push respondents into a corner where they don’t feel comfortable giving feedback. Instead, use a scale, asking respondents to rate the intensity of their feelings or the frequency of a specific behavior.
 - iv. **Closed-end questions** – Failing to include open-ended follow-up questions results in missing out on the richest insights from verbatims. Verbatims allow clients to provide context around why they are responding a certain way.

¹ Clarabridge Ultimate Guide to Survey Success



2. Focus Groups

- a. When a small set of six to ten people who **ideally share a common characteristic** (e.g. department, skill set, background) come together to discuss a predetermined topic.
- b. Consider using focus groups to follow-up with a subset of like-minded respondents and dig deeper to **extract additional insight or clarification** on the survey results.
- c. **Be mindful** of group members who may dominate the discussion or intimidate others, as this could spoil their willingness to participate.
- d. **Only include peers** in a focus group. Bringing in a participant's superior could inhibit free expression among the other members.



3. 1:1 Interviews

- a. Interviews can be used as a **tool to ask** survey questions or follow-up **for additional context** to responses already provided.
- b. Individual interviews help evade any possible peer pressure experienced in focus groups and eliminates the potential need to navigate unwieldy conversations.
- c. Gathering feedback 1:1 allows you to **dig deeper** into topics **without interruption**.