

Voice of the Customer



What is the Voice of the Customer?

It is vital to put all your efforts into meeting the needs of your customers. The Voice of the Customer is the statement made by the customer on a particular product or service and captures the customer's voice, expectations, preferences, comments, of a product or service in discussion. After all, the entire reason we have a process at all is for our customer: what they expect from our process is what determines value. Customers can help us deliver successful products or services if we listen; conversely, they can completely break our product or service if we don't.

When should I use it?

- To identify customer needs and expectations
- To get improvement teams face-to-face with end users, in order to build empathy and insight
- To identify problems your customers experience that you may not see from within the process
- To enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty

How do I facilitate it?

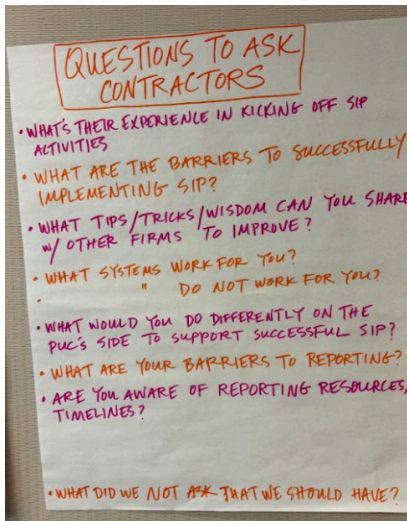
Identify your customers

Think: Who are the end users of my process? Sometimes this is obvious, but not always. Your customers might include people like:

- Applicants who fill out a form for benefits
- Patrons of a facility like a park or a library
- Taxpayers who owe a fee or property owners requesting an assessment
- Internal customers, like hiring managers or employees requesting expense approval

If it's difficult to connect with customers directly, consider connecting with groups who represent your customer. For example, if it's difficult to get immigrant child care providers to take time off to give feedback, see if there is a community organization or advocacy group that can represent their experiences.

- Get diverse representation if possible



Brainstorm questions with your improvement team before your customers join

Schedule the session

1. Set up logistics for the session. Consider privacy concerns and logistical details such as location, time, and duration.
2. Choose a suitable time for the session, typically around an hour. Consider the convenience of participants and ensure their availability. Virtual sessions may be an appropriate option if you have customers in diverse geographic locations (See Tips section for more insights in running virtual VoC sessions).

Prepare questions in advance

1. Clearly outline the goals from the Voice of the Customer (VoC) session. Think through what specific insights and perspectives that you are looking to gain from the customers.
2. Brainstorm collaboratively and have questions prepared ahead of time. Examples of these questions could include: "What does this process feel like to you?" and "When did you face challenges in accessing our service?"

Train participants and encourage a positive environment

1. Before customers arrive, provide a brief training session to the improvement team on how to be present and ask questions non-defensively. Emphasize the importance of learning from customer feedback. Instruct participants that they are to primarily ask questions and never to give advice or feel the need to teach their customers anything. Your improvement team needs to hear what the customers have to say!
2. Create a positive and welcoming atmosphere. You want to gain better empathy, uncover invisible issues, and ensure the process meets customer needs.

Small group format

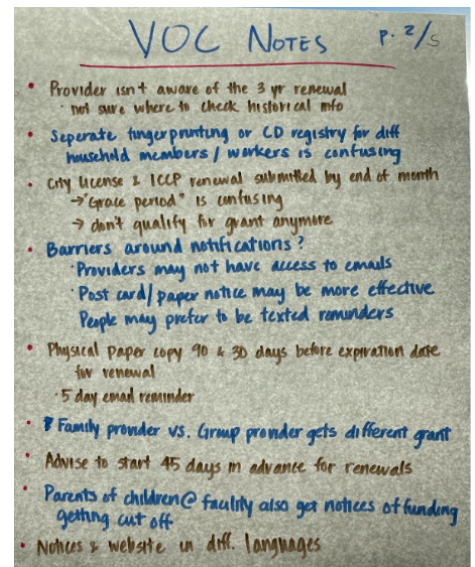
1. Organize the session in a small group format, ideally with 4-5 participants. Utilize a fishbowl-style conversation, allowing the group to ask questions to participants.
2. Facilitate the group in such a way that all members of the improvement team speak and ask questions. As the facilitator, try to take yourself out of the conversation as much as possible.
3. Ideally, your improvement team will be able to answer all the questions they've prepared, in an environment that feels conversational.
4. Assign at least one person to take notes during the session; better still, have everyone take notes to capture nuance and ensure accurate documentation of customer insights.

Express Gratitude

At the end of the session, express gratitude to participants for their time and valuable input. Consider expressing appreciation for participants by providing a token of gratitude, such as a personalized thank-you card or a small gift card, to underscore their valuable contributions during the session.

Follow Up

Based on the insights gathered, initiate follow-up actions to address identified issues and improve the overall customer experience.



"Voice of the Customer Notes"

Tips

- Clearly articulate what your goals are before initiating the data collection process
- Focus on addressing high-impact issues that align with organizational priorities and strategic objectives
- Facilitate the discussion to ensure you hear from all your customers present
- Implement automated feedback mechanisms, such as surveys, social media monitoring tools, and analysis of customer requests or complaints, to capture real-time insights promptly
- When using virtual sessions, consider using break-out rooms or multiple sessions if you have different kinds of customers attending
- You may need to specifically call on people or ask people to use the chat in order to hear from everyone while also keeping the session a reasonable length