The Three Customer Insights Reports Every CMO Should Have

For marketers and advertisers, developing and building a brand is all about connecting with and understanding the customer base. Successful brands have an identity; whether that be the perception of trust, reliability, or a positive feeling; they can have personality or convey purpose, and consumers stay loyal to the brands they relate to.
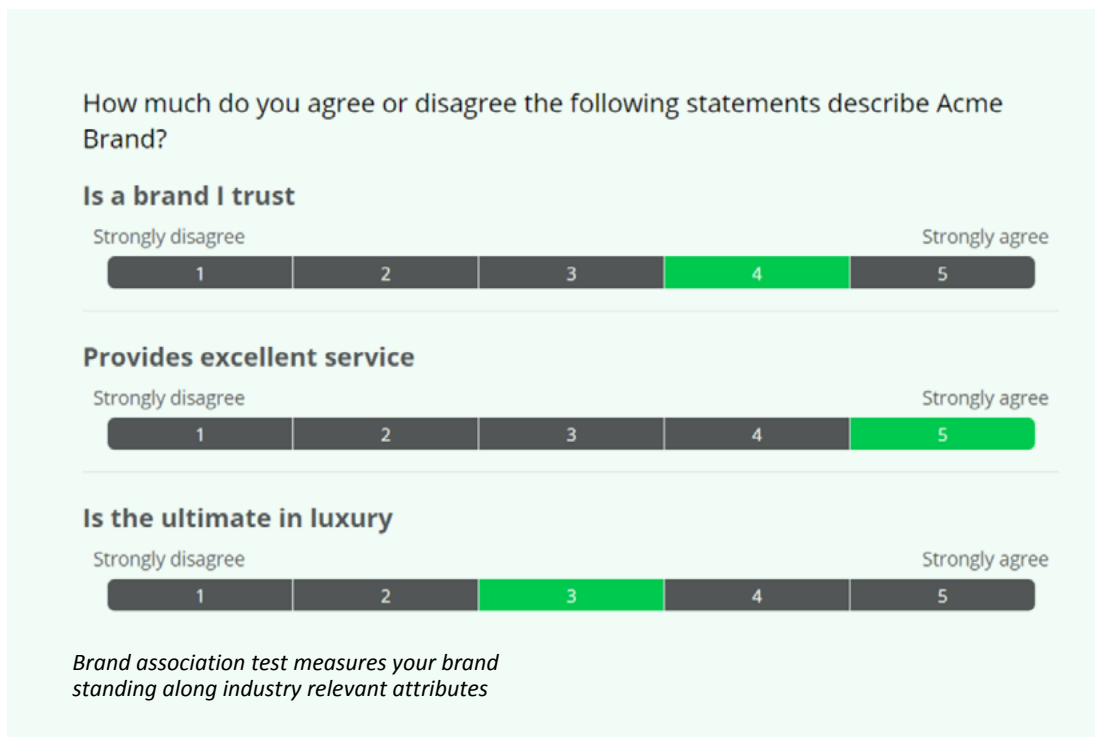
Regular feedback from customers is essential to maintaining a successful brand. When you listen, view, connect and engage with your customers, you can truly understand what drives their behavior and decisions. This empowers you to create exceptional brand experiences. Simply put, it enables you to connect your story to theirs.

In this paper, we'll show you some ways to research and understand how your customers are connecting with your brand. You want to get a deep view of your customer and observe them from a variety of perspectives and situations. Having the right research tools and technology to bring you closer to your customers is key to driving successful customer insights.

Brand Health Tracking

Brand health tracking is an excellent starting point for measuring perceptions of your brand. It's an online survey approach for sampling large sections of the market to track customer sentiment and monitor your brand and business performance.

Brand health tracking utilizes brand association tests. This allows you to measure your brand along attributes integral to your brand or industry. By testing your brand and your competitor, you can assess your standing in the marketplace; your strength and weaknesses, and your competitor's strength and weaknesses.

How much do you agree or disagree the following statements describe Acme Brand?

Is a brand I trust

Strongly disagree — Strongly agree

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Provides excellent service

Strongly disagree — Strongly agree

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Is the ultimate in luxury

Strongly disagree — Strongly agree

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Brand association test measures your brand standing along industry relevant attributes

The 'Brand Purchase Funnel' is an additional set of metrics that are found in brand health tracking surveys. But instead of measuring consumer perception about a brand's identity and attributes, it measures how the brand is performing to drive sales and customer loyalty. The brand purchase funnel posits that a consumer's relationship to a brand will occur in stages. A consumer's relationship to a brand evolves towards increasing levels of intimacy – up to the point where the consumer develops brand loyalty and becomes a regular purchaser of that brand.

Awareness:
Which of these casual dining restaurants have you heard of?

Have Considered:
Have you considered eating at any of these casual dining restaurants?

Ever Tried:
Which of these casual dining restaurants have you eaten at in the past three months?

Most Preferred:
Which casual dining restaurant do you most prefer?

You can capture brand purchase funnel metrics by surveying consumers using a simple series of questions.

Taken together, brand association test and the purchase funnel metrics will enable you to discover how your brand is perceived in the marketplace. Surveying consumers to understand your brand equity and customer loyalty levels is an important step towards developing and executing your brand strategy.
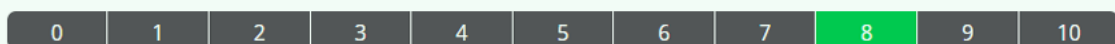
Net Promoter Score

The Net Promoter Score is an industry standard survey method for assessing a customer's overall brand experience. This was developed by Fred Reichheld and introduced in the 2003 Harvard Business Review article: "One Number You Need to Grow". The Net Promoter Score methodology is based around asking customers a single question that is felt to be predictive of both repurchase and referral.

How likely are you to recommend Acme to a friend or colleague?

Not at all likely   Extremely likely

| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

The Net Promoter Score (NPS) is derived from a single survey question used to assess overall brand experience.

Reichheld reported that when customers answered this question with a nine or 10, they were statistically more likely to repurchase from the company and/or refer it — so much so that Reichheld found that the companies that score well on this measure were more likely to grow than were lower-scoring companies.

Like the other brand metrics discussed earlier, the NPS can provide you with a benchmark for evaluating brand performance. It is a convenient and accessible way to summarize the performance of a brand by using a single metric. The NPS for your brand can be compared to your competitors and provide a way to gauge market dynamics within the industry.

Since the net promoter question uses an 11-point scale, there are special requirements for deploying it within an online survey. It needs to be customized for the smaller size screens found on mobile phone devices. It is necessary to ensure that the questions using a long rating scale (like the NPS) display well without getting cut off or shrunk to an unreadable size. At the same time, if survey respondents are using a desktop, the NPS question must render properly for a larger screen device. Advanced responsive design technology, such as that employed by FocusVision Decipher, can detect the device used by the survey respondent and automatically format the survey to render appropriately for the given screen size.
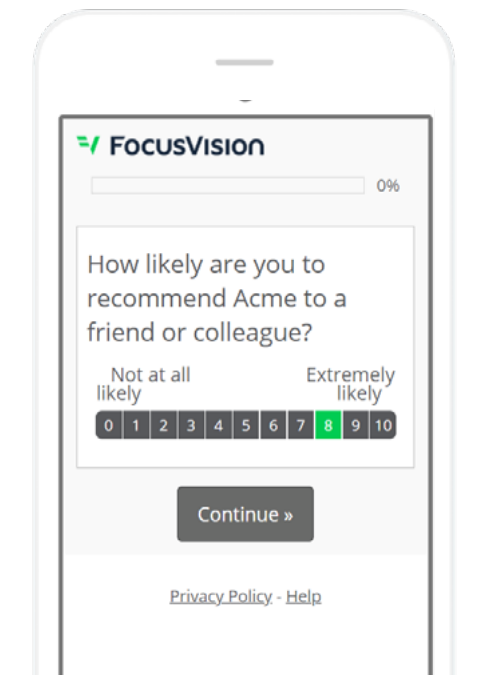

Figure 1. Longer rating scales like those used for the NPS question, need to be reformatted to fit smaller screen devices

Tracking Metrics

Tracking your NPS score or any other brand metrics on a regular basis is key to any successful brand monitoring program. Customer perceptions change. You may shift your sales and marketing strategy, and brand perceptions are also impacted by the external market or seasonal demands. Thus, measuring the health of your brand isn't something you do once or twice, but consistently.
You want to survey customers regularly on the brand metrics discussed in this paper; then track how these metrics improve or decline over time. This will provide your company with an in-market diagnostic or measurement of how your brand (and your business) is performing. You'll get a sense of:

- Business or marketing efforts making an impact
- Where tactical and strategic changes are needed

Here's an example. Figure 2 illustrates the FocusVision Decipher reporting dashboard. These are easy to access, presentation ready scorecard reports. The dashboard shows the results of a monthly tracking survey that asks for respondent awareness of hotel brands. Starting in May, Milton's brand awareness began to show significant growth at the expense of Vacation Inn. This awareness growth may have coincided with a new marketing campaign or a change in business direction. Whatever the case, tracking brand awareness helps Milton's to assess that their work or marketing efforts are achieving the desired outcome within the competitive landscape. For Vacation Inn, the tracking research indicates the need to make a specific strategic and tactical adjustment to counter Milton's growing advantage.
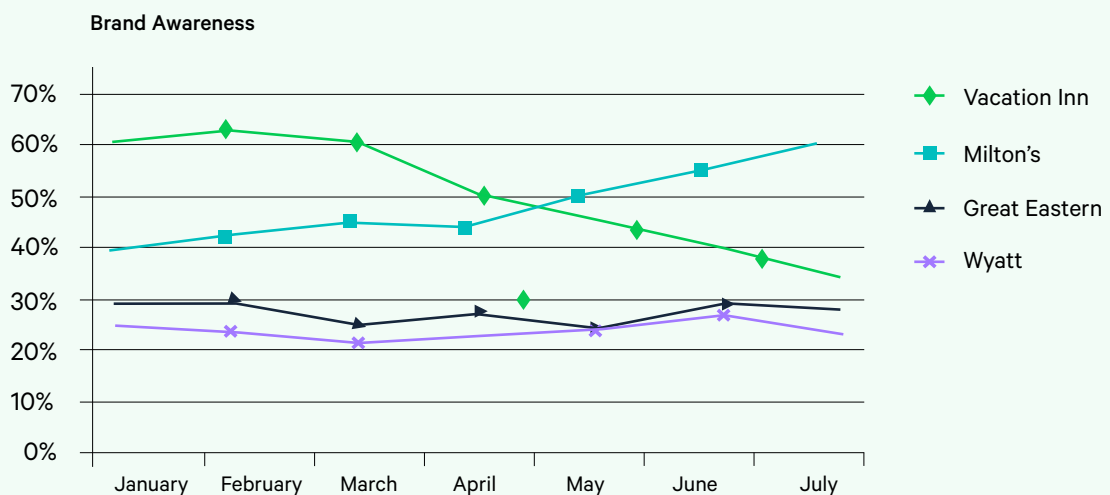
Brand Awareness

Figure 2. What hotel brands are you aware of?
A dashboard report is used to track awareness levels of hotel brands.

When tracking your brand's progress, you monitor gains or losses in brand perceptions during advertising campaigns, current events, or competitive pressures. This helps you assess the impact of these events in the marketplace and helps you stay informed on how your brand is connecting with customers.

Customer Personas

Marketers and designers have long understood the importance of defining customer personas. Personas serve as archetypes that represent a class of real customers. They provide a clear vision of the customer in which to build products or brand campaigns around.

Meet Small Business Steve

Key Characteristics

Occupation: Small business owner
Firm: 3-5 employees
Industry: Custom luxury apparel

Goals:

- Monitor how his customers feel about their purchase experiences
- Track customer complaints; make sure they get resolved
- Address customer issues in a quick and timely manner

Frustrations:

- Most software is too expensive and loaded with features he doesn't need
- Has trouble separating what needs his attention and what can be delegated to staff
- No system for prioritizing the severity of customer complaints

Small business Steve runs an online retail site. His products are customized, and as such, his clients are demanding and require high levels of service and attention. He used to handle his customer service solely via email and phone, but now his business has grown to the extent that his customer services processes require a more stream-lined system. Steve is often travelling or busy with client meetings so it's important for him to delegate work to staff and step in only as needed.

Figure 3. User personas represent a class of users who share a common set of characteristics, goals and needs. User personas describe a type of customer and help designers visualize the individual(s) they are building a product for.

Qualitative research is an excellent starting point for developing personas and forming hypotheses about your customers. Utilizing webcam research technology such as FocusVision InterVu, you can have extended conversations with customers from anywhere around the world remotely, and at your own desk. This allows you to experience your customer needs, values and frustrations. You will also gain insight into the context and situations in which they use your products.

Our work with our own customers at FocusVision provides an illustration of how webcam interviews can be used in the development of personas (see Getting Real: Talking the Talk with Deeper Human Insights). We were interested in enhancing our survey software platform and scheduled 30-minute interviews with a random sample of 15 of our customers. The conversations centered around feedback on potential new features and likes/dislikes about the software. Questions were also used that would present a deeper picture of who the customer was and what motivated them. For example:

- What are your primary job responsibilities/roles?
- What are the job motivations and needs surrounding the use of FocusVision Decipher software?
- Describe a job situation in which FocusVision Decipher is being used; what is being delivered?
- What are your needs and frustrations at work?

During the interview, participants were able to share their computer screens, to show or even demonstrate specifics areas of the FocusVision Decipher software they were referring to. Collecting all of this customer feedback allowed us to see distinctive patterns among those interviewed. There were classes of customers who shared profiles and faced similar situations and needs, which of course, led us to a few key user personas.

Know your customers

Building your brand is about knowing your customer; knowing their minds, their true perspectives: how they think, feel, act. Through research, you can track customer perceptions and learn how to better serve their needs and create brands that they relate to. Getting the deeper view of your customer can require multiple approaches and techniques so that you can observe and collect feedback from a variety of perspectives and situations. Whether its surveys or in-depth interviews; tracking dashboards or mobile friendly surveys — having a comprehensive suite of Insight Technology solutions is so important for discovering what matters to your customer.

FocusVision

To learn more about FocusVision research solutions: