4 creative ways to gather customer data to improve CX

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Improving your CX strategy: Findings from the 2024 Customer Experience Survey

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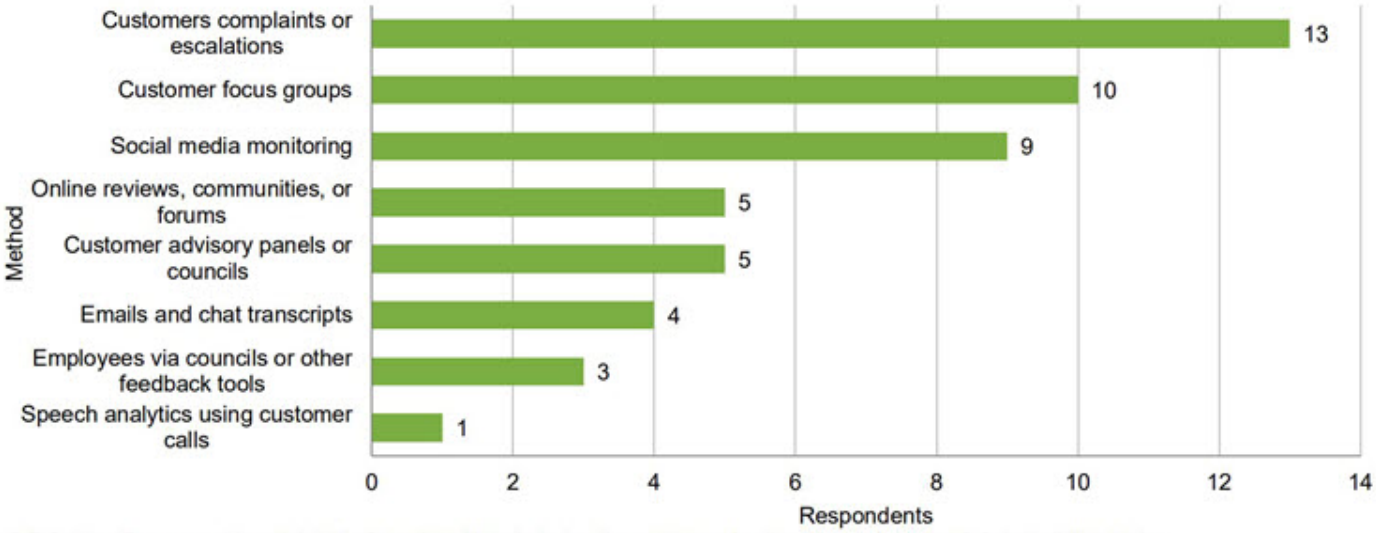
Research shows that survey response rates are declining. But that doesn't mean voice-of-the-customer (VOC) feedback is getting sparse. But it presents a new challenge, and utilities seeking feedback might have to get a little creative with their sources.

Utilities can find value in unsolicited data sources to better listen to and understand the struggles or successes customers are discussing. From there, the utilities can tie the data sources together to create the most holistic view of the customer experience. Doing so will help utilities identify opportunities to improve customer service, programs, and satisfaction.

In this blog, we'll highlight some of the nontraditional VOC data sources utilities are using and how they're putting the collected data into action.

How utilities gather customer feedback beyond surveys

In a recent E Source exchange, we asked participating utilities how they were collecting VOC data outside of the traditional survey.



© E Source. **Base:** n = 14 participants. **Question:** How do you gather customer feedback beyond surveys? Select all that apply.

Customer panels

For a more intimate, consistent form of customer feedback, consider setting up customer advisory panels for both residential and business customers. Customer panels aren't as representative of the wider customer base as quantitative surveys. But they can establish a deeper connection and result in valuable feedback that helps programs and services thrive.

Colorado Springs Utilities recruits panel participants through multiple channels, including newsletters, social media, and escalated complaints. It constantly refreshes the panel and works to add new customers.

Southern California Edison works with several business advisory panels to better reach and understand certain customers, including:

- California Manufacturers & Technology Association
- California Large Energy Consumers Association
- California Small Business Advisory Panel

Employee insights

Utility employees who interact with customers daily are a great resource for soliciting VOC feedback. Not only do contact center representatives hear feedback firsthand in their conversations with customers, but they're also often a customer's first point of contact and have the rare opportunity to share what they're hearing and collaborate on solutions to make improvements.

PG&E's Process Improvement (PI) Council is a group of employees who provide ongoing engagement with the CX team around contact center process improvements and projects to enhance CX. The PI Council identified process improvements around delayed bills that resulted in over $886,000 in savings.

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Speech analytics

A newer tactic is using speech analytic software to gather feedback. While its primary use has been helping train employees and identify trends or issues that require prioritization, speech analytics can be a great addition to a VOC program due to the real-time insights collected on call volumes.

PG&E uses speech analytics software from Verint to gather near-real-time insight into what's driving call volume in its contact centers. The utility also created a speech governance team of individuals from PG&E leadership and frontline employees.

ComEd uses speech analytics software from NICE to analyze call data and improve CX. The utility has used speech analytics to improve first-contact resolution, service connections, and the outage experience.

Social media

Monitoring social media is a great way to receive direct feedback from a larger sampling of customers engaging in conversation or responding to something shared by their utility. Social media is a direct line to those customers and is an opportunity to engage with them and learn. Don't forget to consider nontraditional forms of social media like Nextdoor or other community forums where utility-related topics come up often.

Make sure to close the loop and share the data with these stakeholders so they can benefit from it and understand the value of it.

The next level

Ultimately, there are many ways to tap into what customers are saying beyond the traditional surveys. Getting buy-in and support from leaders and other teams across the utility can help with this form of data collection. Make sure to close the loop and share the data with these stakeholders so they can benefit from it and understand the value of it.

Members of the E Source Customer Experience Strategy Service can compare their VOC programs with other utilities' successes by watching our on-demand webinar, Improving your CX strategy: Findings from the 2024 Customer Experience Survey. Not a member but want to watch? Contact us for access.

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