

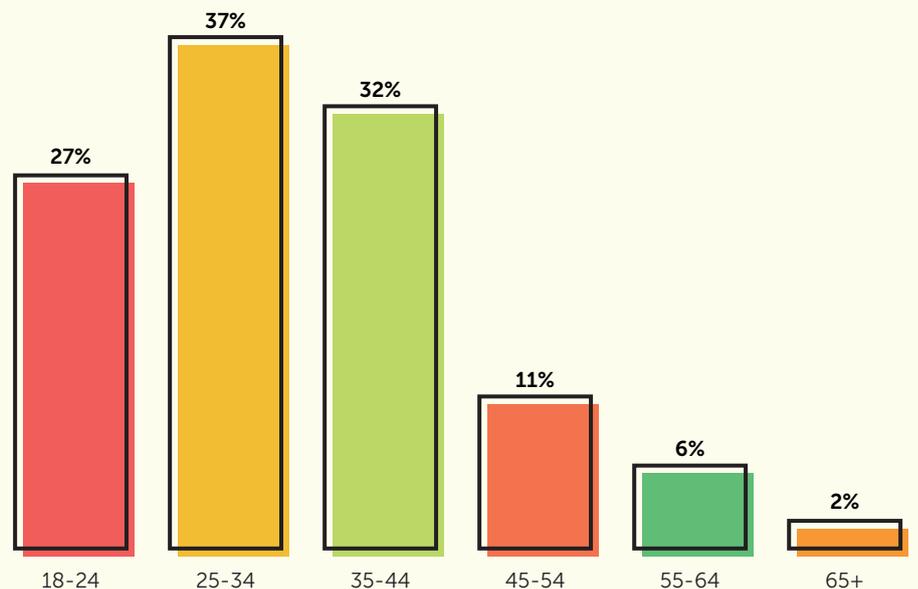
If you work in customer experience or customer insight it's a fair bet that you've spent a bit of time wondering how to ask NPS. How should the question be worded? Should it be relationship or transactional? At the front of the survey or the end? 0-10 or 1-10? But how much time have you spent thinking about how you answer it?

If you're like me, you may have noticed that when you're asked the NPS question it's impossible not to take into account what you know about the way that score will be used. Rather than simply giving a score out of 10, as I would for any other question, I'm very conscious that there is a qualitative difference, a step change, between 6 and 7 or between 8 and 9. That awareness is bound to have an impact on the score I give, and if that's true for me...why not you? And why not your customers?

One of the nice things about working for a research agency is that I can take idle thoughts like this, turn them into questions, and put them to our panel to find out whether the world in general thinks like me. It rarely does, but this time it turns out that there is something important going on.

**Have you heard of Net Promoter Score (NPS)?**

Let's start by understanding how large the issue might be. Around a fifth of our panel have heard of NPS, but this varies widely by age. Around a third of those under 45 had heard of the measure, which means any potential impact on scoring is likely to increase over time. In most cases (74%) those who have heard of it say that it's a measure which is used where they work. The widespread adoption of NPS means that many people have encountered it, even if they're not customer insight specialists.



### Do you know how it's calculated?

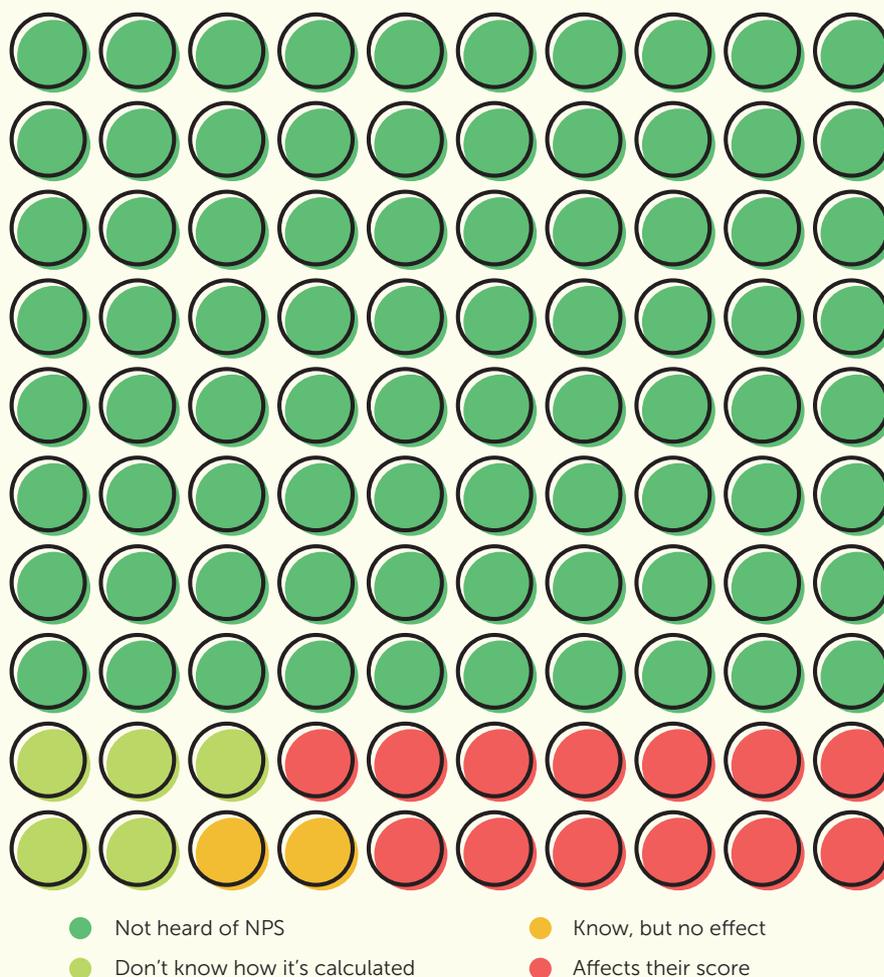
Having heard the term is one thing, but do people know how it works? They do, or at least they think they do. Three quarters of those who have heard of NPS say that they know how it's calculated, which works out as 15% of the total population. That's really significant, and interestingly it's a lot higher than the last time we ran the same questions on our panel in February 2018. Back then we found only 8% awareness of NPS and only 5% knew how NPS is calculated.

### Does it affect how you score?

Now we come to the important bit—does knowing how NPS works affect the way people score it? Definitely. 83% of people who know how NPS is calculated think that it affects the way they score NPS for other organisations.

You can see the overall picture for the entire population to the right, with 12% of the total population saying that knowing how NPS works changes their score. But remember that awareness, and therefore impact, is much bigger for younger people. The proportion rises to 25% of 25-34 year olds. **1 in 4 of your customers in that age bracket is giving a distorted answer to the NPS question because they know how it will be used.**

### NPS: Awareness, Knowledge, Impact



### So what does it mean for NPS?

Let's take a moment to review the highlights of what we've learned:

- **Knowing how NPS works changes how we score it, for most (83%)**
- **Most people who have heard of NPS know how it works (75%)**
- **A significant minority of customers are familiar with NPS (20%)**
- **That figure rises to over 30% for customers under 45**
- **Awareness of NPS has increased significantly in under 2 years**

Put all that together and I think we have a real concern. A rapidly growing number of customers understand NPS because it's used by their employer, and that affects the way they score NPS for other organisations.

The reason is that NPS introduces qualitative jumps between scale points, so that the 0-10 scale becomes, in part at least, a three point scale. Once you know that, it changes the way you score it. In research terms, it becomes less of an interval scale and more of an ordinal scale. The success of NPS, put together with the way it is calculated, may mean that the data we collect is increasingly polluted by customers who know too much about the way their score is used.



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