



STORYTELLING

MAXIMISING THE IMPACT OF CUSTOMER RESEARCH

Research has been commissioned and insight identified but getting individuals to change their behaviours in order to produce an improved customer experience has proven to be more difficult. Does this scenario sound familiar?

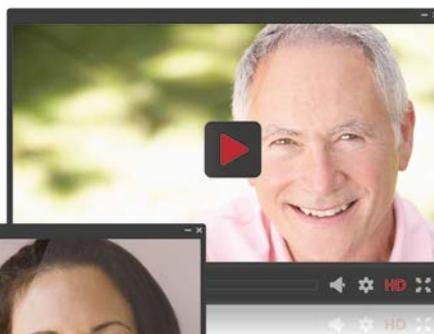
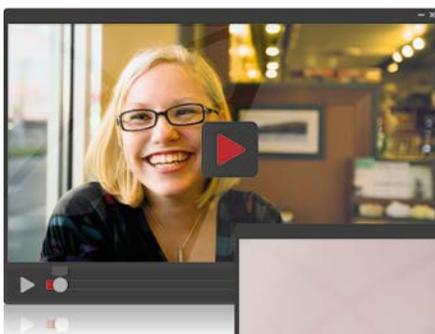
Experience has shown that 'Storytelling' can be an extremely useful tool for organisations to maximise the impact of customer research. Within this article we aim to highlight some specific examples, targeted at various stakeholder groups that have proven to be successful in increasing employees' empathy with the customer.

CUSTOMER EMPATHY DISCUSSION GROUPS

Employees are often more inclined to empathise with an individual customer experience or story than they would with the summation of multiple experiences detailed in a PowerPoint graph. Making the message personal can be a hugely impactful way of communicating to the organisation's people. With themed discussion groups customers are recruited who have undergone a particular customer experience. The group is then facilitated in such a manner as to identify the individual impact of that experience. For instance highlighting any disruption caused, how the experience made the customer feel

and their subsequent opinion of the organisation.

To be most effective these groups should be held in a purpose built venue that enables key stakeholders from the organisation to see, hear and feel the customer's reaction first hand. These groups are not aimed at identifying areas of poor performance, the customer survey insight has already done this. Instead their purpose is to bring the customer into the organisation in a way that helps key stakeholders empathise and form an 'emotional connection' with the customer.

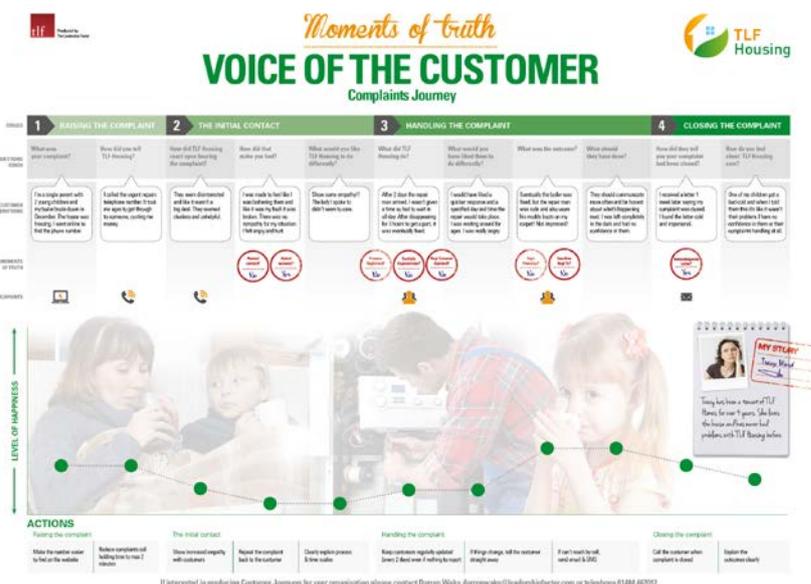


FILMED VOX POPS

There is obviously a limit to how many individuals can attend a discussion group and in a large contact centre environment for example the vast majority of employees will never be able to hear these stories first hand. Experience has shown that the most powerful outputs from discussion groups are those where customers with compelling stories recount their experiences via a filmed Vox Pop. These short films can be used individually or combined into a montage to be used in staff training and customer engagement activity.

CUSTOMER JOURNEYS

Like the Vox Pops, case studies of customers' experiences can be used to reinforce best practice and change behaviours. Again greater empathy can be gained through concentrating on the individual customer using real experiences. In order to generate the greatest impact it is important to use creative design to ensure this output looks and feels different to the majority of reports generated throughout the organisation. As well as being visual Customer Journeys must highlight the key touchpoints and divide them into Moments of Magic, where staff can delight customers and Moments of Misery where they can upset and potentially lose them.



FILM

Film is obviously amongst the most effective communication media and can be distributed to employees much more easily than in the past. Production costs have also reduced to enable the medium to be used more frequently within an organisation's communication 'tool box'. A simple and easily created example would be to use the most compelling comments from recorded telephone

interviews as source material set against an animated or filmed backdrop. On the more traditional end of the spectrum customers can be interviewed in their home to produce a specific case study. In both cases including an introduction to the film by the Chief Executive would help set the scene and make it easy for the final output to be used within training and engagement programmes. As with the discussion groups experience has shown that focusing on personal disruption together with the customers' feelings and emotions will create the most engaging content.

CUSTOMER IMMERSION BRIEFINGS

All the creative material described can be brought together to maximum effect within a Customer Immersion Briefing. These sessions can become the launch pad for driving a step change in an organisation's customer centricity. Films or Vox Pops (ideally with an introduction by the Chief Exec) combined with customer journeys and facilitated discussion will help employees to directly understand customers' issues, clarify how they can make a difference and ultimately play a significant part in changing their attitudes and behaviours.

