A business case from Quicksearch

To act quickly on individual customer feedback

Perstorp

quicksearch
feedback solutions

Perstorp is a traditional manufacturing company, established in 1881.

The brand is often associated with its Perstorpsplattan laminate board, laminate flooring and the vinegar included in its product range for many years. Nowadays, Perstorp focuses exclusively on chemicals, with an annual turnover of approximately USD 1.5 billion and employing approximately 1,400 employees. Perstorp provides products used as components in other products, including paints and coatings, as well as animal feeds intended for chickens and pigs. Perstorp has offices in 26 countries, with production in seven of these.

Perstorp has customers around the world, and since 2016 has worked with Quicksearch on continuous customer follow-up work. Using Quicksearch's feedback system and NPS® consultants, Perstorp is provided with actionable customer insights daily, based on the NPS® (Net Promoter Score®) method.

But how do you manage the internal operations involved in actually acting on these insights and achieving improved profitability? We sat down with Vice President Market Intelligence Anders Nyberg, who told us about how they created a global customer satisfaction team, to help ensure the right people act on the continuous feedback provided by their B2B customers.

1 Who are Perstorp's customers?

We are situated relatively early on in the value chain, which means that our just over 4,000 customers are mainly other manufacturing companies.

For example, we sell our products to companies that produce the resins used in products such as paint. The resins manufacturers then sell their products to paint manufacturers, who in turn produce paints sold through Bauhaus and similar outlets to consumers or to professional painters.

2 Which customers do you include in your customer feedback surveys? How do you ensure a good response rate?

We include all our customers in the surveys we conduct. Two of our surveys are generated automatically following a transaction, such as when a sale is made. We have implemented a number of limits to ensure our customers receive no more than one survey per quarter.

We make sure the surveys are kept short, and we take care to mention that they will take no more than two minutes to complete, although I believe that most can finish the survey in under a minute.

Our surveys are in English, however for certain countries, including Brazil, China, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan, we have made the decision to use local languages in order to minimise the risk of the survey language having a negative impact on the response rate.

However, at the same time we have noticed that the response rate is higher in Mexico than it is in the US, even though the surveys are in English, and similarly we have a higher response rate in France than we do in England. This shows that language barriers are not the only factors influencing the response rate amongst our customers.

3 What is the purpose of and objectives guiding your continuous customer follow-up work?

We started conducting customer satisfaction surveys a long time ago. However, it would take far too long to find out that a customer was unhappy, and even then, as the responses were aggregated by region, we couldn't be certain which customer had given that particular response.

Thanks to Quicksearch, we can now react quickly to any feedback from individual customers. We can also make structural improvements if we notice a recurring pattern.

4 You currently conduct surveys in three areas: Account Management, Complaints and Delivery & Logistics. What makes it so important to continuously follow up on these processes in particular?

In terms of Account Management and Delivery & Logistics, we noticed from the previous surveys that these areas have a significant impact on customers' overall impression of Perstorp. This was why we felt it was particularly important to carry out regular follow-up work in these areas.

Complaints was an area in which we'd previously seen room for improvement, but we hadn't yet managed to crack that particular nut. We felt that we ought to be able to do an even better job in that area, and realised that we'd be better equipped to do that if we received almost instantaneous feedback.

5 How has your relationship with your customers developed since you began conducting continuous surveys?

The vast majority of the customers we get in touch with for follow-ups are positive about the initiative. Most of them are already satisfied, but in general there's something we can do to strengthen the relationship even further.

At the same time, I found that we saw an even bigger difference internally, when employees throughout the organisation realised the impact an individual can have on how customers perceive us as a company.

In my view, we used to focus far too much on the negative, when something wasn't 100% perfect. Now, we're also told when customers appreciate what we're doing, which has given us a positive boost in terms of moral, and an incentive to do even better. When it comes down to it, it's all about making a difference for the customers, so that they will continue choosing us as a supplier.

6 How do you manage both ambassadors and detractors?

To manage individual feedback, our customer service staff or the salesperson responsible in the country in question contact any customer who has given us a score of 0–6 on the NPS® scale. We apologise for them not having had a positive experience, ask if there is anything we could do differently, and make efforts to improve in the future.

In terms of ambassadors – those who have given us a 9 or 10 – we ask for their permission to use some of their open-ended comments in our communications, for example as quotes on social media. We hope that we can demonstrate to customers that their participation is valuable not least because it allows us to offer them even better service going forward.

7 Could you give us any examples of insights stemming from the measurements that have led to changes?

Certainly – one example is when we were made aware of that our shipments to certain countries were not as fast as those some of our competitors could offer. So we passed this on to our Supply Chain and Logistics department, and assessed the changes we could make in order to provide the same delivery times as the competitors offering the best solutions in this respect.

It was thanks to our customer surveys that we found out about the different transport solutions our customers wanted and that our competitors were already offering. With relative ease we were able to meet the customers' needs and strengthen our relationships.

8 How have you organised your internal operations to allow you to act on feedback within different areas of the business?

We've assembled a team that is cross-functional in that it includes employees from our Customer Service, Sales, Logistics and other units, as well as cutting across geographical or regional areas of responsibility. This means that we have employees who feel a sense of ownership for their area and who, when we identify areas for improvement, can step up and manage the implementations.

9 What would you say your keys to success have been in terms of internal operations here? And what challenges have you faced?

You need to be well tuned-in in order to be able to identify the right people at the right levels and with the right skills to work on this internally. You have to ensure that the global organisation is represented in its entirety and not just choose people who sit around the corner from you. If you don't keep an eye on what's going on elsewhere in the world, you run the risk of not reaching full potential in terms of skills in the different areas, such as Customer Service, Logistics and Sales. Naturally, this limits the impact of the follow-up work.

I'd also say that the results of Quicksearch's surveys form a great basis for dialogue involving a number of different areas within the organisation. This kind of conversation is not always simple, as different people tend to have different perspectives on things. However, as we use common, tangible data from a neutral and vital source – our customers – as the basis, we've found that we've done very well in coming to a consensus in terms of the causes behind the challenges faced, and our next steps in managing them.

10 What do you do with the information you receive?

We have our automatic follow-ups for scores of 0 to 6, as well as quarterly briefings with the team, where we go through everything that's happened and our next steps in relation to any developments. Additionally, each month we also release our overall results on the Intranet, to which all employees have access.

In addition, we have ensured that more than 200 employees can also access all the data via the Quicksearch portal.

Updating the results is also a standing item on the agenda at our regular sales meetings around the world, with several different departments taking part.

The results are also presented at certain intervals at the senior management meetings, as well as being conveyed in reports shared with the Board of Directors, with the NPS® included as an element of this.

11 How do you view your NPS® value?

We're seeing some different changes within the three areas we measure. Account Management has fallen a little during 2018, but it's not a major drop compared to our 2017 scores. In some regions we almost felt that we were at 'too high' a level. One example I can give is our NPS® in North America, which was almost +80. Naturally, we don't want our NPS® scores to drop, but on the other hand we are not overly concerned if it drops slightly in parts of the world where it has been exceptionally high. The marginal benefits of having an NPS® score that is too high are somewhat limited. We set the bar at +30, and we were hitting that target for 8 of the 9 business units last year. All in all, we are very satisfied with our results.

An area in which we did not reach our full potential during 2018 is Complaints. The challenge here has been in the time taken to resolve complaint cases. When we receive a complaint, we look at all aspects of what we could do, however this can result in it taking some time to respond to the customer. Even if we have managed to find a solution, the customer will be dissatisfied with how we've handled the matter due to the process taking so long.

In terms of Delivery & Logistics, the results are at the same level or slightly better than before.

12 What were your requirements for and expectations of a supplier of customer surveys?

We wanted a stable, secure system. We knew that the new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) was in the pipeline, so having a partner who could manage that smoothly was key.

We're very grateful that Quicksearch is as flexible as it is as a company. Although we get new portal users on a regular basis - we couldn't, initially, predict how much interest there would be - they are always very fast to assist where needed and ensure that we can provide access to the system to everyone who wants it.

13 How have Quicksearch's tools and consultants supported you in successfully delivering actionable customer insights for your organisation?

Our Quicksearch consultant has been fantastic in terms of taking onboard all of our ideas, as well as knowing the GDPR inside out. When we want to modify anything, the consultant is always on hand with good ideas and tips. We appreciate being able to benefit from Quicksearch's experiences and lessons from other customers. It means that we can make similar progress in our work, without learning 'the hard way'.

14 How do you think your collaboration with Quicksearch has gone?

We have a good relationship and our collaboration has worked well. We are very happy customers!

Ensuring that we constantly do that bit better is an ongoing job. Working with Quicksearch has, for example, led us to adjust our surveys so that we can ensure an even higher response rate.

15 What advice and tips would you give someone just starting their journey through the feedback process?

Step 1 - Having a good partner, such as Quicksearch, really helps.

Step 2 - Create a sense of ownership within your organisation. For optimal results, it can't just be a one-person job; you have to ensure that people understand the value of it, and feel involved. This is, after all, something that can benefit almost everyone in the company when it comes down to it.

16 What does the future look like for Perstorp? What are your next steps?

We are looking to implement a new CRM system and along with Quicksearch we will be integrating some features to ensure that people don't need to access two different portals to see the results for individual customers. Our aim is to be able to see the customer's results directly through the CRM environment. There's a great deal of information flowing through the company, as well as a whole host of systems for managing it; the easier we can make it for people, the better the chance that they take on board the information.

17 We usually end our customer case articles with our favourite question, the recommendation question. On a scale of 0–10, how likely are you to recommend Quicksearch to a friend or acquaintance?

10. Customer-centricity is a strategic focus area for us at Perstorp, and Quicksearch has been key in our new working methods in terms of customer satisfaction measurements. What's more, we want to continue to develop in this area, and we are confident that Quicksearch will help us approach this exciting journey in the best possible way.

Here at Quicksearch we've learnt that the implementation of customer surveys through IT and software is only one part of the job.

What matters and what will determine whether a company succeeds is how they respond to and act on the feedback they receive.

One of Perstorp's foremost success keys is to make sure that the organization has the best conditions for responding to the customer feedback. Internally, within its global organization, they have assembled a team, with the most appropriate players on the pitch, to be able to regularly develop the customer experience.

With 20 years of experience and knowledge of customer feedback Quicksearch offers a consultative support in this work.

We help companies develop through customer and employee feedback

- 😍 Over 20 years of experience of supporting HR and CR departments with feedback
- 😍 We develop and manage our own systems
- 😍 Act on the results easily and quickly with our role-based result portals
- 😍 NPS® certified consultants

Reed more about our services on the next page.

Get inspired, find information and learn more about feedback in our Knowledge Center.

"At Telia, we are constantly working on improving our services, processes and information to cater to our customers' needs. In this systematic work, Quicksearch is a very important partner which contributes with practical solutions for collecting customer feedback as well as support how we can translate research results into insights and activities. We have a flexible and solution-oriented collaboration which is important to us"

Anne Mede-Ageling
Customer Insight Manager
Telia Sverige

"What I appreciate most in my collaboration with Quicksearch is the professional support we have from our project manager. The competence and drive of the project manager in following the project plan as well as her accurate feedback on how we should formulate questions, gives us an effective implementation process and results that we can act on. In addition, both I and our managers think that the result-portal is easy to navigate and provides good support in our work"

Terese Schoultz
HR-Manager
Bergman & Beving Logistics AB

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Do you want to know what make customers and employees recommend your company?

Please contact us at: marknad@quicksearch.se

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