

FIND OUT WHAT YOUR

CUSTOMERS

REALLY THINK



Many companies use surveys, Voice of the Customer (VoC) programmes or focus groups to find out what their customers think about their products or services.

And yet, customers and businesses alike often end up feeling dissatisfied with the results.

Drivers of that dissatisfaction include:

- Multiple teams pursuing different, uncoordinated strategies;
- Relying too much on customer reviews, testimonials and written feedback and not looking for other kinds of 'input';
- Surveys that aren't fit for purpose, sent too frequently or just [at the wrong time](#);
- Customers wondering what happened to their feedback;
- Misguided targets that reward lower numbers of complaints coming in, rather than a higher number of [complaints resolved positively](#);
- A [fear of social media](#) and lack of training in how to use it productively (apart from broadcasting marketing campaigns);
- Failure to read customer communication closely, interpret it properly, and [take the right action](#);
- 'Politeness' being held up as the number one standard for [good customer care communication](#) without defining what that means; and
- A lack of [cultural sensitivity](#), leading to a one-size-fits-all approach to customer experiences.



This ebook looks at ways you can dive deeper into the hearts and minds of your customers.

It's a multifaceted process — from the way you present your company to the outside world, to your feedback strategy, down to the detail of how to choose the right words and tone when you communicate with them.

Whether you work in customer care, marketing or at a startup where you juggle all kinds of roles, you'll find practical, actionable steps in each chapter to help you find out what your customers really think.

We'll walk you through the process step-by-step:

1. Starting with a critical look at reviews;
2. Helping you get your customer feedback surveys right;
3. Our top tips on turning social media into a feedback channel;
4. How to get closer to 'one-and-done' in customer care by giving customers what they want;
5. The one thing you must always read for before responding to a customer query;
6. What kind of language customers expect from you and why politeness simply isn't good enough; and finally,
7. Some surprising facts about how your customers' cultural backgrounds affect what they want from you.

At the end of this ebook, you'll find a checklist to help you put everything into practice.

Because we all know that getting communication right isn't rocket science; consistently applying what we know is the hard part.

We hope our little book helps you uncover many new insights and build stronger relationships with your customers.

If you'd like to find out more or share your experiences, we'd love to hear from you!

Visit us at from-scratch.net, on Twitter, Instagram or LinkedIn.

Sabine & the From Scratch team

F I N D O U T W H A T Y O U R
C U S T O M E R S R E A L L Y
T H I N K

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CHAPTER 1

WHAT ARE
REVIEWS GOOD
FOR ANYWAY?



Should you use customer reviews?

Maybe some of the following scenarios sound familiar.

You...

- Invite your customers to leave reviews, or simply accept the fact that people will leave reviews on public websites.
- Look at those reviews for insights into customer needs or just use the positive ones for your marketing.
- Have invested in complex tools or copy/paste reviews from emails into a spreadsheet.

These all seem like valid options as long as you're deliberate in your use of reviews.

Or are they?

To quote Guy Letts, Founder and CEO of CustomerSure:

"The biggest benefit comes from making customer feedback part of 'business as usual'."

In other words: **people give feedback for their own benefit — not yours.**

So... where does that leave us when it comes to using reviews?

Customer reviews can't replace a good customer feedback system. But you can respond to each one and make your customer care shine.

You can even mine reviews left for your competitors to find out what's bothering people and do it better.

9 basic — but important — facts about customer reviews

1. Nobody takes the time to leave a review if they feel there's nothing in it for them or for people they care about.
2. If they leave a good review, they will feel good afterwards. They might feel the simple satisfaction of voicing their beliefs and values in a public forum. It's all down to psychology.
3. If they leave a good review which leads someone else to try the same thing, they hope that person will also enjoy the experience and feel grateful for the tip.
4. If they leave a good review for a small company, they may hope to get noticed by the people that run the company.
5. If they leave a so-so review, or even a bad one, they hope someone will read their review and acknowledge it. They almost always want the company to fix their bad experience and turn them into a happy customer after all.
6. If they leave a less-than-stellar review, they hope to spare others the same disappointing experience.
7. Some might want to punish the company for a disappointing experience. At that point, the relationship is often already broken beyond repair. But it's worth trying anyway, because other people are watching.
8. Some people leave reviews even though they're not a customer, and they don't know the thing they're reviewing. (Hello, Amazon... looking at you here!)
9. Very few companies take the time and effort to read all their reviews and respond to each one individually — recording the points raised and addressing the problems that customers experienced.



CHAPTER 2

**EVER HEARD OF
"SURVEYITIS"?**

Customer surveys are now so commonplace that some customers dread them. [Dave Gorman even did a comedy show about them](#). But the thing is, a good survey will help you understand your customers a whole lot better.

You can't look inside people's heads, but these 5 tips will get you closer:

1. Surveys work best if you [always show you're open for feedback](#).
2. Make super-fast surveys part of your routine.
3. Ask the right questions.
4. Thank people who make a complaint.
5. Talk to a handful of your customers directly.

1. Surveys work best if you always show you're open for feedback.

Why do people complain about too many surveys? Because they often perceive them as a company's half-hearted attempt to get information that's readily available. In other words, a case of the customer care team not listening properly. To make things worse, instead of putting in the work themselves, these companies seem to shift the effort to their customers.

If you're always open and honest with people and take their queries seriously, a quick survey here and there will be welcome rather than subject to eye-rolling treatment.

2. Make super-fast surveys part of your routine.

People are more likely to click on one or two things to tell you what they think at [important stages](#), such as:

- after they've placed an order, read your email, or made a return;
- when they've cancelled their membership or left your shop without buying;
- on the day they've received their parcel or signed up for your newsletter.

Focus on the answers you need the most right now, and don't give in to the temptation to make a 10-question survey just because you can.

3. Ask the right questions.

Getting people to overcome their proclivity for politeness is both an art and a science. In his book, [Five Star Service: How to Deliver Exceptional Customer Service](#), Michael Heppell recommends using so-called power questions:

"'What can we do better?' Most people will say, 'Erm, nothing.' To which you can reply, 'Thank you. If there was one thing, what would it be?' Then you need to listen."

[The phrasing of the question really makes all the difference here — and the fact that you're asking them twice.](#)

4. Thank people who make a complaint.

Complaints are uncomfortable, but they give you free customer insights. And for each customer who's willing to speak up, there are [25 who are silently unhappy](#).

That's a lot of potential business you can save by making your more vocal customers feel welcome.

5. Talk to a handful of your customers.

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Two disciplines that feed on surveys are user experience (UX) design and market research. The most successful experts in both fields combine quantitative data from the likes of surveys and analytics with qualitative insights from focus groups, face-to-face interviews and watching people complete tasks in real time. Research has shown that usability studies with [just five people](#) allow you to catch almost all the important issues your customers are facing.

In a similar vein, a few conversations with actual humans can give you the essential themes you should be working on to improve your customer experience.

So pick up the phone and call people, meet them in person or on Zoom if that's not possible. Have a (virtual) coffee and take half an hour to watch them use your product - perhaps by asking them to share their screen - or just listen to their views. Along with all the information you gather, you'll also gain new fans. People will really appreciate the fact you're inviting them to have their say.

Everyone
you will ever
meet **knows**
something
you don't.

Bill Nye

CHAPTER 3

LISTENING ON
SOCIAL

STAND HERE
TO ACTIVATE YOUR
SUPER
POWERS



Have you googled yourself recently?

It may feel a bit weird. But the reality is, we all need to keep an eye on our public persona. It exists whether we monitor it or not. And knowing what's out there is the only way we can shape it.

To quote Don Draper:

"If you don't like what's being said, change the conversation."

It's the same with your business persona. You can only engage with your customers and attract new ones if you're listening to them. And that sometimes means "eavesdropping" on social media.

Listening to conversations on social is certainly not a new idea. Almost every large company has tools that unearth things like tweets and public Facebook posts that mention their brand name — and not just the ones where they've been "@tagged". Dreamgrow have recently compiled a list of [48 free social media monitoring tools](#), which is worth exploring if you're yet to get started.

Even with all the tech in place, there a few important things that many businesses don't do, or don't do right. So there's a good chance at least one of them applies to you too – even if it's just something small:

5 tips for listening to your customers on social media

1. Don't wait till you're "famous". Start monitoring social media from day 1.

2. Don't just listen for your brand name. Include all possible misspellings too.

3. Find out if there's someone else with your company's name (or a very similar one).

Include them in your monitoring, and keep a friendly relationship with them as you grow.

British department store John Lewis famously shares its name with some real people, who are sometimes erroneously tagged by customers seeking help. One was even the focus of their 2018 Christmas ad, as he regularly ends up [fielding customer support questions](#). (screenshot from Twitter search):



4. Especially when you're still quite small, or if you work in a small niche, listen for competitors.

People's questions and the good or bad things they say can be gold for developing your business.

5. Don't just listen — get involved in the right way:

- If people need support, reach out to them — whether they've tagged you or not. [Starbucks](#) do a good job of showing they're listening on social and acting on feedback by creating a website that actively encourages feedback and suggestions.
- If they're praising you, thank them. They'll love the fact that you've been listening.

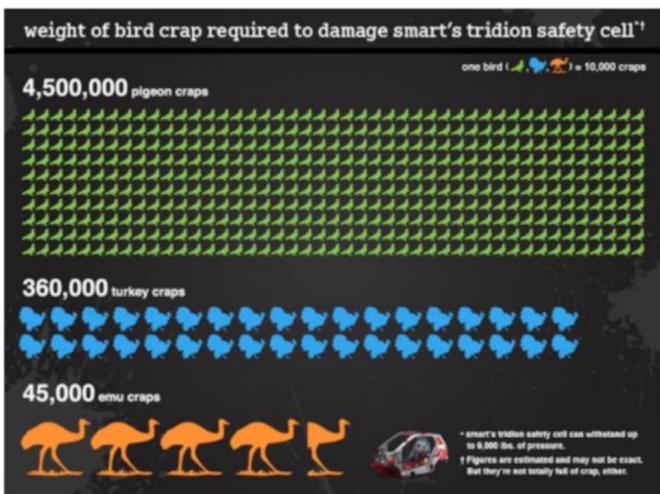
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- Complaints are less straightforward: sometimes it's important to just let people vent. It's best to reply only if you can fix things for them, or if they're talking about your core values or product features. In that case, you might even be able to follow the Smart Cars USA example and turn it into some witty advertising or [reply on a personable level like Spotify](#).
- It's important to strike the balance between avoiding a [15% increase in churn rate](#) from unhappy customers whose issues weren't resolved on social to getting dragged into drawn-out, negative threads.



Couldn't have been one bird, @adtothebone. Sounds more like 4.5 million. (Seriously, we did the math.) pic.twitter.com/aLYScFR3

Reply Retweet Favorite



[\(source\)](#)



CHAPTER 4

READING CAREFULLY

We'll jump straight into an example to show how easy it is to get this right, avoid extra work, and make customers feel understood.

From Scratch's Sabine recently signed up for a software trial that promised she could send video messages by email quickly and elegantly. She played around with the platform, sent a couple of videos to friends and family and then decided it wasn't worth the hassle. As a writer, words on the page come easy to her, and she was unsure about the privacy implications of sending tracked videos.

She decided to end her trial and cancel the service. All the talk about the [data protection laws that took effect in May 2018](#) probably sensitised her, so she wanted to make sure the software company deleted her account.

Below is the email exchange she had with that company and her thoughts when she read their replies. They're a good example of how customers feel about the response to support emails.

Initial customer query

Subject: Delete my account

Hi there,

I don't think your service is right for me and would like to have my details deleted from the system, please.

Thanks,
Sabine

Note how the request is in plain English, using the word "delete" twice — in the subject line and in the email.

Here's their reply:

Re: Delete my account

Hey Sabine,

Thanks for reaching out. Your free trial closed so you are all set. Why don't you feel our service is right for you? I'd love to chat to see if we can help!

Best regards,

Donovan
Customer Care Manager

The problem: she wasn't all set. Instead, she felt as if Donovan was '[mansplaining](#)' the meaning of "free trial" to her — and trying to set up a sales call by asking why she wanted to cancel. Because she didn't want to be a customer from hell, she still answered his question:

Re: Re: Delete my account

Hi Donovan,

I don't think video will replace email for me anytime soon. I just have no need to send videos, and find them clunky and time consuming compared to email or video chat.

Have my details been deleted? I do know that my account has been inactive since the end of the free trial, but I want it to be deleted.

Thanks,
Sabine

Note how the word "deleted" appears twice in the final paragraph, with the quite forceful phrase "I want it to be deleted" making the request crystal clear.

To which they replied:

Re: Re: Re: Delete my account

Hey Sabine!

I completely understand. If you ever want to chat about how you can implement video into your workflow, let us know we are happy to help!

Yes your account has been completely deleted from our system.

If you need anything else let me know!

Best regards,

Donovan
Customer Care Manager

Why did that have to take four emails?! Lengthy email exchanges are costly to the company and their customers.

4 steps to understanding customers better — and get closer to the "one-and-done" approach

1. **Read the entire email twice.**
2. **Complete these sentences:** "This customer wants me to [action words used by the customer]. I can help them feel good about our company by also [implied or emotional need of the customer]." Chapter 5 will tell you more on how to fill the gap in the second sentence.
3. **Take the actions you've identified.**
4. **In your reply, use the exact same words as the customer to describe what you've done.** If they wrote "delete", write "delete". (If you can't do exactly what they've asked you to do, say so — and what you've done instead.)

Point 4 is the crucial bit. We've all learned to vary our word choice to improve our style, but that rule doesn't apply here. Clarifying that fact to support advisors can lead to true light bulb moments.

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CHAPTER 5

WHAT TO READ FOR

In the last chapter, we asked you to identify the “implied or emotional need of the customer.” It’s the one simple action that’s more effective than anything else, whether you use it for writing your sales pages, newsletters, product descriptions or email replies.

“Hold on,” we hear you say. “How can reading between the lines and hearing the unsaid possibly be simple?”

Here’s the secret:

Whenever you’re dealing with someone, you must first listen for their fear of embarrassment.

Be patient and allow the other person to finish their story.

Check if you’ve understood everything. Ask for clarification.

Then, and **only then**, address their **fear alongside any practical needs** they’ve mentioned.

- If they mention unpredictable sizing, are they embarrassed about having bought something that doesn’t fit? Do they **feel they should have known better?**
- If they’re asking about the look and feel of an item, are they anticipating the pain of their birthday present **being rejected** or returned?
- If they complain about delivery times, do they fear the embarrassment of **not having a present under the Christmas tree?**

Let’s say you give your customer just the practical information they’re after.

They know they should go a size up and that the vegan leather is as soft as a melting Vego praline feels. They’re aware that shipping is free for orders of €100 or more, and that they get free next day delivery from €150.

This addresses all their practical needs for information.

But it doesn’t address their fear of embarrassment.

Once you know about their fears, you can reassure them. For example, if someone’s unhappy with the sizing, don’t say:

“We provide handy sizing charts for each product on our website.”

That’ll make them feel even worse.

Instead, empathise with them:

“I’m so sorry to hear the trousers don’t fit. Sometimes the clothes don’t drape the way you’d like or they pinch in unexpected places when you try them in real life. Every body is different. Would you like to swap your trousers for a different size? If you tell us a bit more about your measurements or the fit you were hoping for, I’ll pass your feedback on to the team that looks after our sizing. (A picture would be super helpful if you’re up for it!)”

Address their worries explicitly or through tone of voice, **perfect policies** or even the right colours and imagery.

So how do you read or listen for your customers’ fears?

Richard Mullender is an ex-hostage negotiator at Scotland Yard, and he’s trained hostage negotiators around the world. In his book, [Dispelling the Myths and Rediscovering the Lost Art of Listening \(Communication Secrets of a Hostage Negotiator Book 1\)](#), he lists 5 things to look out for:

1. Descriptive words
2. Imperatives (should, must, ought to, got to)
3. Motivators (want, need, am determined)
4. Emphasisers (very, incredibly, unusually) — attached to descriptive words, they signal an intense feeling
5. Opinions, values and beliefs

He explains:

“Opinions tell you more about the person giving the opinion than they tell you about what they are giving the opinion about. ... By saying [someone is] loud and aggressive they are telling that they do not like loud and aggressive people. Full stop. Equally if they say that they find them friendly, it tells you that this person likes to be treated as a friend, and likes people to be nice. If he were to say that they were weak and not tough enough, we can construe that the person has strong conservative ideals and believes in obeying the rules. We might even say that they are radical in their belief that power is supremely important.”

Your customers want you to speak to their values and emotions.

- They want to see **the right kind of customer reviews** with each item or category on your website.
- They want **an answer that addresses their fears** in your reply.
- They want to be talked to in **the right tone of voice** — scientific, whimsical, friendly, tough...
- They want to see **the right colour scheme** on your website (or even products) because that’s how they know you’re a perfect fit.
- They want their **objections alleviated elegantly** in your sales copy.

- They want **policies** that make it easy for them to say yes.
- They want to hear the **words and phrases that make them feel like you know them** and that they’re safe with you. This could include using **gender-neutral or inclusive language**, as we did when writing the website copy for **Forrist**.

▼ How do I get my free menstrual cup and/or shaving oil?

We're the only online reduced-waste shop to give you free menstrual cups and shaving oil for life. All bodies are welcome in the Forrist, so pick one or both at the checkout.

Forrist menstrual cup

Our menstrual cups are made from medical grade organic silicone.

Like everything else in our online supermarket, they don't come in plastic packaging.

Forrist shaving oil

Our shaving oil comes in a 10ml glass pipette bottle. Choose between organic almond oil or organic grapeseed oil. It's the natural, no-nasties way to remove unwanted hair.

Businesses share loads of information with their customers every day.

Does yours hit the mark by addressing their worries and fears, rather than just the practical information?



CHAPTER 6

**HOW DO
CUSTOMERS
WANT US TO
SOUND?**

**ARE WE POLITE
ENOUGH?**

Whenever we communicate with anyone, we negotiate our relationship with each other. Are we at eye level? Who's got the upper hand? Are you on my side? How close are we?

Our word choice and style, even the use of white space and the tone of our voice all contribute to that negotiation. And the outcome is not purely based on the person who's talking or writing. Both parties create the relationship, as listening and speaking are inextricably intertwined.

At work, many people fall back on the seemingly safe option of being 'polite'. Unfortunately, politeness is not any less difficult to negotiate. It's also relative to the writer, reader, content and situation. Of course, "there are always a few who continue to be convinced that there is an absolute sense of politeness (and theirs is it)" (Tannen 2011). But the conversations we have with businesses about being polite to their customers reflect a growing understanding that it's a nuanced topic.

Sociolinguists like Deborah Tannen distinguish between different kinds of politeness — for example, 'distance politeness' and 'camaraderie politeness', expressions of power and solidarity.

Distance and power are often associated with a more formal, deferential style — for example, when we call someone "Mrs Smith". This kind of language respects people's independence and the power they hold over our relationship. If they no longer want to buy from a business, they're free to leave and buy elsewhere.

In contrast, camaraderie and solidarity are often seen in more informal, involved language — such as "Hello Maggie" or "Hi there, Maggie!" This is a more relationship-oriented style. It emphasises the fact that the business and the customer are on the same side in matters that go beyond a single purchase.

It's only natural that people differ in their personal preferences: some would rather a more formal relationship, while others prefer less formal. But the issue arises when there is a misunderstanding. In other words, you may not interpret something in the same way the person speaking intended it.

"A show of solidarity to honor involvement can seem like an imposition (a violation of independence), condescension (insincere solidarity), or insolence (claiming inappropriate equality). On the other hand, the same ways of talking that show politeness by deference (not imposing) can seem ineffectual (lacking in power), snobbish (pretending to be superior), or pulling rank" (Tannen 2011).

Put simply, you could use someone's first name to be friendly, and they might think you're inappropriately informal and rude. Or if you're incredibly polite, they might think you hate them.

So... how can you express the relationship you seek with your customers — and avoid those pitfalls?

1. **Reflect on the relationship** you really want with your customers — and what kind of relationship your customers might want with you.
2. **Choose your communication style** to fit that relationship, and own it. Ditch the worry and fear, and be consistent in your language. Yes, some people won't like it. But they're not the people you want to attract.
3. **Be consistent.** This one's so important. Have to give bad news? Don't fall into the trap of becoming more formal than usual. Planning a sale? Don't slide into language that's overly chummy. That's not to say you can't alter your tone of voice slightly to fit the situation as you would do naturally when speaking. You just don't want to sound like a different person entirely.
4. **Be explicit.** Use your About page, your Customer Care section or your Mission Statement to tell people how you want to relate to them. This forces you to be clear on what you're aiming for, and it gives people something to latch on to when trying to figure out what you're like.

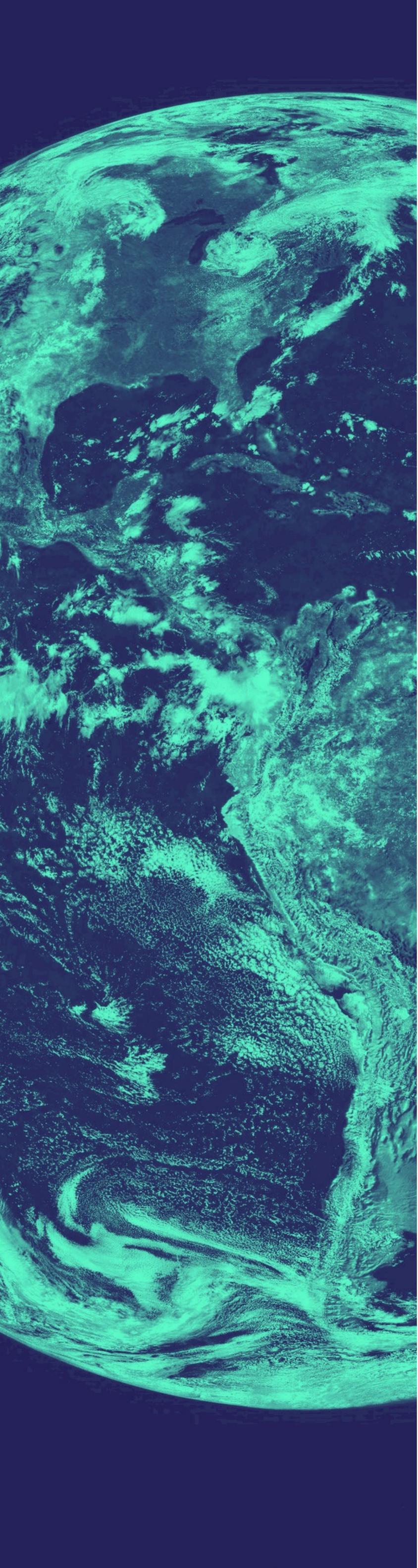
5. If you've never thought about this topic, start by mirroring the style of your customers. If they use first names, do the same. If they're rather stiff and proper, apply a bit more polish and formality than usual. Over time, you'll start to see patterns that can set you off on the path of defining the relationship you want with customers.

6. **Get help.** From focus groups to brilliant books and copywriters (oh, hi), there are many paths to an objective, outside view on how you communicate. Once you know your words resonate with the right people, you can pursue those relationships with more confidence, power and verve.

We thoroughly recommend the book we've quoted from as a starting point:

[Deborah Tannen, That's Not What I Meant! How Conversational Style Makes Or Breaks Relationships. Harper Paperbacks, 2011.](#)

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CHAPTER 7

**BE CULTURALLY
AWARE**

Do you buy your own products and services?

Even if you do, you are not your (typical) customer.

That bold statement is based on a central part of User Experience (UX) Design: [you are not your user](#), so don't assume that something that works for you also works for the people who will use the website/app/phone menu/VR goggles and so on.

Never is this more apparent than when we consider globalisation. Almost every company now sells to people from many different cultures. Some may live nearby; others may live on the other side of the planet. But their background will affect the way they relate to you.

"You are not your user" is the reason why UX teams continuously research, test and improve their designs. As a result, it's fair to say they know a thing or two about what users really think.

[There are two areas in which testing is still relatively rare:](#)

1. Words on websites, in emails, brochures, on the phone and in multimedia
2. Customer care

[It's time to bring research and testing to both of them.](#)

- Some techniques are quick and relatively cheap — they're often called 'guerilla testing'.
- Others are more expensive, complex and wide-ranging — for example, surveying thousands of people to get statistically relevant insights into how they respond to a specific email.
- The good news is there's one method you can start applying today: review your analytics, customer queries, survey results and review scores based on in-depth research from academic and UX teams.

To give you a taster, here's some academic insight into how customers from different cultures think.

10 facts about cultural expectations for customer care

1. [European customers](#) expect customer care advisors to answer 80% of their queries off the top of their heads.
2. [Customers from the US](#) are more ready to accept the advisor having to look things up or ask someone else for information. They're also way more likely to hang up the phone if the queue is too long. On the other hand, they don't usually mind being put on hold, and verbal fights are more acceptable than in British culture.
3. [Customers from the Middle East](#) place greater value on speaking with someone of the same rank as them — someone with authority — compared with European customers.
4. [Japanese callers](#) are usually happy to wait for the phone to be picked up, but they don't like to be put on hold.
5. [Thai customers](#) are likely to regard direct criticism as a sign of bad manners or even offence.
6. [British customers](#) expect service to be prompt, efficient and task-oriented with an emphasis on pragmatic solutions and common sense as well as reliability, authenticity and responsiveness. At the same time, they expect their privacy to be protected and don't want to share very personal details in small talk.
7. [German customers](#) tend to expect objectivity and efficiency. They usually focus on technical issues and don't like conflict. However, they may enter into verbal fights to establish who's right, and they're likely to get passionate — which may come across as aggression to British people.
8. [Portuguese customers](#) want to build a trustworthy relationship first and then move on to the practical problem-solving part.

9. **Scandinavian and Dutch customers** tend to avoid confrontation. They like a flexible attitude that's not too serious. Customers and service advisors treat each other as equals at eye level, and the customer expects to be part of the decision-making process.

10. **Belgian customers** tend to expect a higher degree of formality than Dutch speakers from the Netherlands.

These findings are based on research by [Geert Hofstede](#) and [itim international](#).

Of course, that doesn't change the fact that every customer is different and needs to be treated as an individual.

However, we hope this list sparks some new thoughts about how you can be more in tune with your customers, wherever they're from.

It might even help explain some interesting variations you've seen in your analytics and customer feedback.

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CHECKLIST

DO YOU KNOW
WHAT YOUR
CUSTOMERS
REALLY THINK?

REVIEWS

- SHOW YOUR APPRECIATION TO PEOPLE WHO LEAVE GOOD REVIEWS.
- WHEN SOMEONE LEAVES A LESS-THAN-STELLAR REVIEW, ACKNOWLEDGE IT AND PUT A HIGH PRIORITY ON FIXING THEIR BAD EXPERIENCE.
- EVEN WHEN A CUSTOMER SEEMS TO LASH OUT TO 'PAY YOU BACK' FOR THEIR DISAPPOINTMENT, DO YOUR BEST TO REPAIR THE RELATIONSHIP.
- TAKE THE TIME AND EFFORT TO READ ALL THE REVIEWS YOU GET & RESPOND TO EACH ONE INDIVIDUALLY – RECORDING THE POINTS RAISED AND ADDRESSING THE PROBLEMS THAT CUSTOMERS EXPERIENCED.

SURVEYS

- ALWAYS SHOW YOU'RE OPEN FOR FEEDBACK.
- MAKE SUPER-FAST SURVEYS PART OF YOUR ROUTINE.
- ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS, AND ASK FOR FEEDBACK TWICE.
- THANK PEOPLE WHO MAKE A COMPLAINT.
- TALK TO A HANDFUL OF YOUR CUSTOMERS DIRECTLY.

SOCIAL MEDIA

- MONITOR SOCIAL MEDIA FOR CUSTOMER FEEDBACK.
- DON'T JUST LISTEN FOR YOUR BRAND NAME — INCLUDE ALL POSSIBLE MISSPELLINGS TOO.
- PAY ATTENTION TO ACCOUNTS WHOSE NAMES ARE VERY SIMILAR TO YOUR OWN.
- LISTEN FOR WHAT PEOPLE SAY TO/ABOUT YOUR COMPETITORS TO DEVELOP YOUR OWN BUSINESS.
- REACH OUT TO PEOPLE WHEN THEY NEED SUPPORT, WHETHER THEY'VE TAGGED YOU OR NOT.
- THANK THEM IF THEY'RE PRAISING YOU.
- RESPOND TO COMPLAINTS IF YOU CAN FIX THINGS FOR THEM, OR IF THEY'RE TALKING ABOUT YOUR CORE VALUES OR PRODUCT FEATURES.
- MASTER THE SKILL OF TURNING YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA REPLIES INTO WITTY ADVERTISING WHERE APPROPRIATE.

CUSTOMER EMAILS & MESSAGES

- ALWAYS READ THE ENTIRE MESSAGE TWICE BEFORE RESPONDING.
- MAKE IT A HABIT TO SUMMARISE EACH MESSAGE IN A SENTENCE LIKE THIS: "THIS CUSTOMER WANTS ME TO [ACTION WORDS USED BY THE CUSTOMER]. I CAN HELP THEM FEEL GOOD ABOUT THE COMPANY BY ALSO [IMPLIED OR EMOTIONAL NEED OF THE CUSTOMER]."
- ALWAYS BE REALLY GOOD AT TAKING ALL THE ACTIONS THE CUSTOMERS EXPECTS.
- USE THE EXACT SAME WORDS AS THE CUSTOMER TO DESCRIBE WHAT YOU'VE DONE IN YOUR REPLIES. IF THEY WROTE "DELETE", WRITE "DELETE". (IF YOU CAN'T DO EXACTLY WHAT THEY'VE ASKED YOU TO DO, SAY SO — AND TELL THEM WHAT YOU'VE DONE INSTEAD.)

VOICE & POLITENESS

- KNOW WHAT RELATIONSHIP YOU REALLY WANT TO HAVE WITH YOUR CUSTOMERS — AND WHAT KIND OF RELATIONSHIP YOUR CUSTOMERS (PROBABLY) WANT TO HAVE WITH YOU.
- CHOOSE YOUR COMMUNICATION STYLE TO FIT THAT RELATIONSHIP, AND OWN THAT DECISION WITH CONFIDENCE.
- BE CONSISTENT IN YOUR BRAND VOICE.
- TELL PEOPLE HOW YOU WANT TO RELATE TO THEM (FOR EXAMPLE, ON YOUR WEBSITE).
- WHEN UNSURE ON THE RIGHT KIND OF LANGUAGE, MIRROR THE STYLE OF YOUR CUSTOMERS.
- KNOW WHERE TO FIND HELP, AND THAT YOU CAN GET AN OBJECTIVE, OUTSIDE VIEW ON HOW YOU COMMUNICATE.

WHAT TO READ FOR

WHILE READING OR LISTENING, PAY ATTENTION TO:

- DESCRIPTIVE WORDS
- IMPERATIVES (SHOULD, MUST, OUGHT TO, GOT TO)
- MOTIVATORS (WANT, NEED, AM DETERMINED)
- EMPHASISERS (VERY, INCREDIBLY, UNUSUALLY) — ATTACHED TO DESCRIPTIVE WORDS, THEY SIGNAL AN INTENSE FEELING
- OPINIONS, VALUES AND BELIEFS
- ALWAYS READ OR LISTEN FOR THE CUSTOMER'S FEAR OF EMBARRASSMENT.
- ADDRESS THEIR FEARS IN YOUR CUSTOMER CARE REPLIES.
- ALLEVIATE THEIR OBJECTIONS ELEGANTLY IN YOUR SALES COPY.
- USE WORDS AND PHRASES THAT MAKE THEM FEEL LIKE YOU KNOW THEM AND THAT THEY'RE SAFE WITH YOU.
- HAVE THE RIGHT KIND OF CUSTOMER REVIEWS WITH EACH ITEM OR CATEGORY ON YOUR WEBSITE.
- TALK TO THEM IN THE RIGHT TONE OF VOICE — SCIENTIFIC, WHIMSICAL, FRIENDLY, TOUGH...
- USE POLICIES THAT MAKE IT EASY FOR THEM TO SAY YES.

CULTURAL AWARENESS

- ACCOMMODATE THE DIFFERENT CULTURAL BACKGROUNDS OF YOUR CUSTOMERS IN YOUR BUSINESS PLANNING.
- USE 'GUERILLA TESTING' TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT YOUR CUSTOMERS' EXPECTATIONS.
- CONDUCT STATISTICALLY SOUND SURVEYS TO FIND OUT HOW CUSTOMERS RESPOND TO SPECIFIC PLANS.
- CONSISTENTLY REVIEW YOUR ANALYTICS, CUSTOMER QUERIES, SURVEY RESULTS AND REVIEW SCORES BASED ON IN-DEPTH RESEARCH FROM ACADEMIC AND UX TEAMS.

Hi, we're From Scratch

From Scratch helps impact businesses woo customers and keep them happy.

We're a multilingual team of experts who care about one thing: building a fairer, greener future – which is also more fun.

Using linguistics, psychology and user research, we write copy that drives culture change. Because people say they want to live more sustainably. But they don't. (Cue the attitude-behaviour gap.)

#CultureChangeCopy helps purpose-driven companies and NGOs to close that gap & increase your impact.

Let's make the world a better place, one happy customer at a time.

Contact

Get to know us at from-scratch.net or follow us on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) or [LinkedIn](#).



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