Close in on consumer experience

Online tool „TouchPointer" measures customer satisfaction

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Customer satisfaction cannot always be attributed to individual product criteria, it rather results from a combination of several aspects. The online tool "TouchPointer" allows us a comprehensive understanding of the customer's experiences, say **Axel Schomborg** and **Christoph Fritsch.** They also explain how this generates real insights.

In many companies, multi-attributive measuring is a staple of customer satisfaction analysis: How satisfied are our customers overall, in respect to certain quality aspects, in comparison to our competitors, and over time? This staple is important in order to define the relevance for action as well as initial fields of action. Satisfaction or dissatisfaction cannot always be traced back to individual criteria. It is rather the interaction of several different service and product aspects that forms the basis of the satisfaction verdicts and the resulting fields of action. It is now necessary to comprehend this kind of interaction.

Analysing relationship networks

In addition to traditional procedures like regression analysis or decision trees, a common practical method is to identify customers with similar satisfaction profiles; hence moving from vertical analysis to horizontal case-by-case data analysis. This is important in order to consider and comprehend the processes and contact points underlying the different profile clusters.

For more complex studies, the analysis of "relationship webs" – as used in social network analysis – can be a critical advantage. Two different webs are created:

 a) the web of all criteria mutually rated excellent (web of excitement)

 b) the web of all criteria mutually rated inadequate (web of dissatisfaction)

Based on the different centrality values of the individual satisfaction criteria, all essential correlations may be identified for the web of excitement (fig.1) as well as for the web of dissatisfaction.

Fig. 1 Source: Produkt + Markt
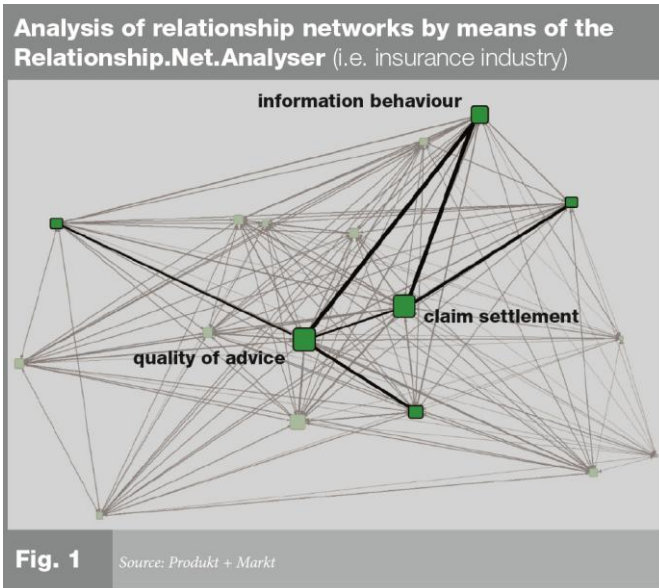
The web consists of hubs and ledges giving some indication of the rate of occurrence, and the strength of the relationship between two criteria. In the given example, excitement about the information behaviour very often occurs in combination with excitement about the service quality and claim settlement. Hence we are able to identify two different sources of excitement: on the one hand, the product consultation, which consists of service quality and information behaviour, and on the other hand, claim settlement, where warranty and information behaviour correlate.

Interlocking quantitative and qualitative research

In order to sustainably manage excitement and satisfaction, it is now necessary to comprehend the identified interfaces between suppliers and customers in their entirety. Hence, in-depth interviews proved to be successful when conducted after the standardised, multi-attributive surveys. The unusual approach: interesting "information carriers" are screened during the standardised interview and directly recruited for the follow-up in-depth study. That allows one to get access to customers with satisfaction profiles deemed beneficial for gaining further knowledge. These may be customers who are generally very satisfied or dissatisfied, who exhibit a profile corresponding with defined criteria, or customers who have had a very complex contact experience. For this purpose, the individual satisfaction verdicts are analysed in real-time during the interview, based on an algorithm defined a priori.

In-depth survey to generate insights

When choosing the methods for the qualitative in-depth phase, the target group, industry, as well as the problem must be taken into account. A few options are in-depth interviews (one-on-one), focus groups (on/offline), or diaries. For this purpose, the Online TouchPointer is also a tried and tested tool. In an in-depth online survey, the customer is asked to reminisce the contact situation. The application of different techniques and stimuli creates a great depth of information and therefore facilitates a comprehensive understanding for the customer's experiences.

The Online TouchPointer's modus operandi is divided into three phases:

- Phase 1: Experience Report

- Phase 2: Experience Graph

- Phase 3: Experience Explorer

First the customer is taken back to the specific situation. Cleverly and vividly phrased introductions and questions are used to trigger memories as lively as possible. From an extensive contact library, the customer then chooses all relevant stages he went through during the contact process and lists them chronologically.

Fig. 2 Source: Produkt + Markt
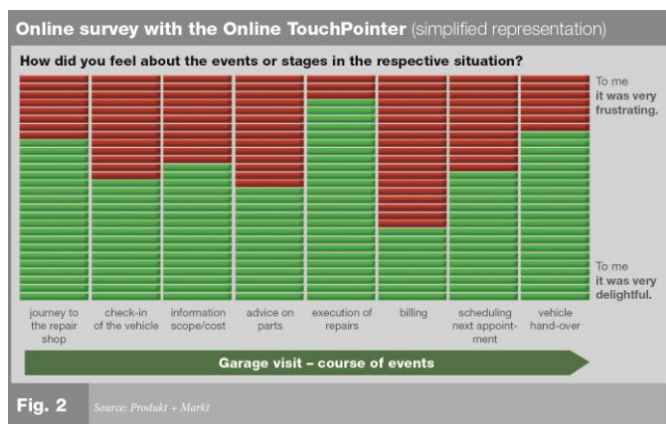
The Experience Graph provides a clear image of all emotional states experienced at the individual stages. The individual stages are also considered for benchmarking. As experience shows, customers dive deep into their experiences with this approach. Additionally, the customer also becomes very involved in the survey, which consequently has a positive impact on the quality of the results (fig.2).

The final phase – the Experience Explorer – intensely deals with the actual experiences from the different stages. For this purpose, one deliberately selects stages that appear to cause high levels of excitement or frustration.

Evolution, not revolution

Customer satisfaction research offers a modern set of methods and techniques which can be used to determine market positions, to identify relevant fields of action as well as factors that promote customer satisfaction, and to generate input for successful improvement activities. In B2B as well as in B2C, online-based surveys are used more frequently. This is not just interesting from a research economic point of view, but leaves a high level of methical freedom as well.

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