

## Forrester's 2011 Voice Of The Customer Award Nomination Form

Nominations must be emailed to Forrester at [amcinnnes@forrester.com](mailto:amcinnnes@forrester.com) by 5 p.m. on Friday, April 22. No exceptions. All nominees will be notified about the status of their submissions on Friday, May 20.

This nomination form must not exceed seven pages in length. In addition to this form, you may send up to five PowerPoint slides to [amcinnnes@forrester.com](mailto:amcinnnes@forrester.com) to illustrate points made here.

If you have any questions about the process or wish to review information about past winners, please visit [http://www.forrester.com/VoC\\_main](http://www.forrester.com/VoC_main).

Thank you for participating, and good luck!

Company

Adobe Systems

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## 1) What voice of the customer activities are you submitting for consideration?

Please describe how your organization listens to your customers, interprets their feedback, and takes action based on those insights. Please be as specific as possible about the process. This should be the largest portion of the nomination form.

Adobe's mission is to change the world through digital experiences. We help our customers create, deliver, and optimize compelling content and applications – improving the impact and creativity of their communications, enhancing their brands and productivity, and ultimately supporting their success. We partner together with our customers to turn ordinary interactions into innovative digital experiences every day – and we believe that innovation starts with listening to our customers.

Our customers span individuals and consumers, through small and medium businesses, as well as large global enterprises and government institutions. The diversity of our customer ecosystem directly influences our Voice of the Customer programs, as it's critical that we're able to recognize and respond to the unique needs and perspectives of each customer segment. Adobe's Voice of the Customer programs are developed around a central belief that we need to understand the customer lifecycle, unique to each segment, and develop exceptional customer listening capabilities able to be applied at specific touchpoints in a customer's journey.

Adding additional challenge is the diversity in the engagement models and routes to market that best meet the needs of our varying customer segments. Solutions that span both perpetual license products and hosted services are sold through direct enterprise sales, channel distributors and resellers, system integrators and ISVs, as well as online sales via both Adobe and other partners. The complexity inherent in how we engage effectively with all types of customers requires a sophisticated approach to customer listening in order to gain a cohesive view of their entire relationship with Adobe.

Specifically, our Voice of the Customer programs are aligned to key customer touchpoints across the customer lifecycle, with multiple listening initiatives and opportunities ingrained in how we operate. Each of our VoC programs shares the same core objective: Gain greater insight into the voice of our customers, internalize our customers' ideas and feedback, then act on those ideas to continuously improve customers' experiences and produce measurable business outcomes.

While there are numerous VoC programs being executed across Adobe, there are several in particular that demonstrate the unique approach we take to tailoring customer listening activities to specific customer segments, and key moments in the customer lifecycle.

### **Customer Immersion Program**

The Customer Immersion Program (CIP) provides Adobe's senior leaders with the opportunity to experience first-hand what our customers experience when they engage with Adobe. Leveraging recognized best practices from Forrester and other leading technology companies, we've created a program where participants walk in our customer's shoes and view the engagement experience from their lens. Program participants gain a deeper understanding of how we're living up to the Adobe brand promise, and where we have continued opportunities to create meaningful experiences that increase brand affinity.

CIP experiences are structured to give participants visibility into real customer scenarios, from the customer's perspective, followed by exposure to the back-end systems, processes, and procedures Adobe teams utilize to engage with customers. CIP experiences are designed to focus on the experiences of a specific customer segment. Participants in the CIP Consumer program follow a Marketing, Sales, IT, or Engineering track, aligned to the experiences most relevant to their respective business responsibilities. Participants follow a structured one-day program on-site in one of Adobe's Customer Care contact centers; where they complete defined scenarios acting as a customer engaging with Adobe, discuss opportunities for improvement with front-line customer-facing teams in order to capture the voice of our employees, and engage real-time with customers through live customer chats. Suggested experiential improvements are captured throughout the day, and assigned to identified business owners responsible for that element of the customer's journey.

Visit <http://www.adobe.com/special/forrester/> to view a short video, featuring Adobe executives sharing their perspectives on their Customer Immersion Program experiences.

### **Customer Listening Post**

Adobe's Customer Listening Post brings a wide variety of customer touch points together, creating transparency around the experiences of a particular customer segment, and mobilizing teams across Adobe to action by widening the visibility

to customer insights and trends.

From real-time social media management, to understanding the support experience for a particular customer segment, to providing a "mission control" role during critical product launches, the Customer Listening Post plays a significant role in our ability to analyze, assess, and act on opportunities for continuous experiential improvements.

Live feeds into the Listening Post facility (a physical destination on Adobe's San Jose campus) show what's happening for customers in real-time, what they're talking about, and how that aligns with the information customers have provided through traditional surveys and other channels, as well as operational indicators specific to the touchpoints that customer segment is most likely to experience. Examples of data inputs that can be leveraged in the Listening Post include:

- Contact-center metrics that show real-time what customers experience when they engage with Customer Care;
- Top issues trending among the most common issues impacting customers, based on collaborative analysis and assessment by teams in Customer Success, Product Marketing, Community Help & Learning, and Global Marketing;
- Trending discussions across social channels;
- Customer satisfaction data from customer survey responses;
- Customer call monitoring, including visibility to the Customer Care agent desktop during call handling/resolution.

Teams collaborating in the Listening Post can assess the voices of their customers, synthesize the information to form actionable conclusions, and determine which actions have the greatest impact at specific points in the customer lifecycle.

### **Customer Advocacy Council**

Through the Customer Advocacy Council, cross-functional teams across Adobe collaborate to identify the top issues impacting customers, from an end-to-end experiential perspective, in order to drive systematic resolution of root cause issues. Utilizing a variety of inputs, the Council brings the voices of Adobe customers into our organization, and adds a quantitative assessment of both the experiential and business outcomes, in order to drive senior-level ownership and accountability for corrective actions and business transformation efforts.

A key output from the Customer Advocacy Council is a monthly summary of identified top issues, identified by the customer segments each issue most directly impacts. This analysis is socialized with Adobe's senior leadership team and executive sponsors identified. On an ongoing basis, top issues can then be monitored, and business improvements tracked and trended to quantify resulting improvements. Most importantly, the collaborative nature of the Customer Advocacy Council ensures a cross-functional approach to solving complex issues that span multiple functions and organizations across Adobe; recognizing that identified issues likely have impact at multiple points in their customer journey.

### **Social Listening and Collaboration**

Individuals representing Adobe's product development, marketing, and Customer Success teams engage daily with customers around the globe as active participants in customer conversations, in the communities where both Adobe and our customers are a part. An important distinction that separates Adobe's social listening strategy is the element of collaboration. We are part of the discussion, part of the community, and inherently part of our customers' conversations.

In Facebook groups and pages, product teams proactively engage directly with customers to ask for their ideas, suggestions, and questions on topics ranging from new product functionality to favourite features. On Twitter, our customers can choose to follow any number of Adobe teams to keep abreast of news and updates from Adobe – and in turn we actively participate in both 1:1 and 1:many conversations with customers sharing their Adobe experiences. Customers needing individual assistance with a specific concern or problem can engage a team of Customer Care professionals through @Adobe\_Care, gaining fast and effective problem resolution – a service that's been particularly valuable for our consumer and small to medium business customers.

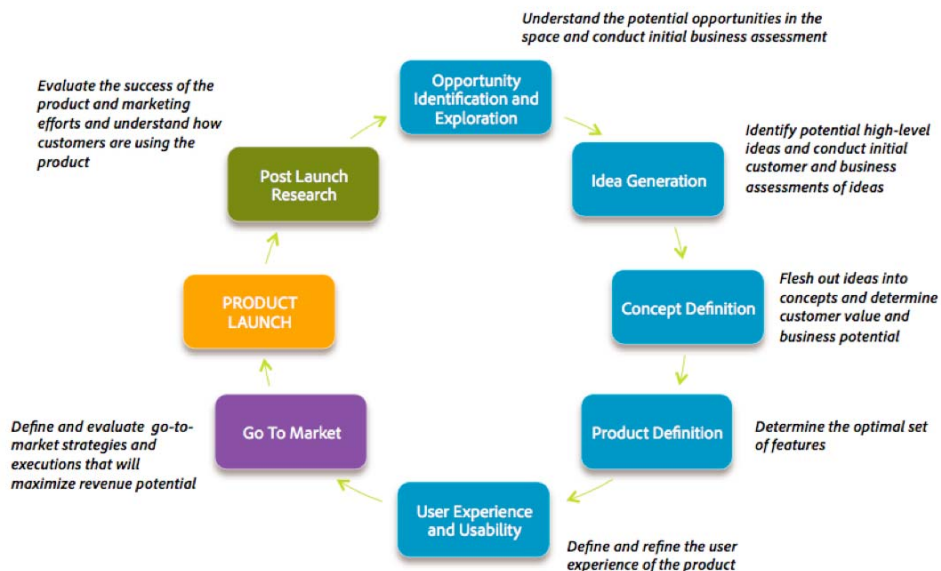
Traditional social media monitoring and measurement is a key element of our strategy; and Adobe utilizes several automated tools to identify customer sentiment, and trending topics, in our customers' conversations. We can easily identify trends in global conversations, pinpoint topics of interest, and assess nuances in our customers' voices, specific to a particular region or segment. Insights gleaned from engaging in our customers' social discussions are then incorporated back into programs such as the Customer Listening Post and Customer Advocacy Council, as a way to directly represent the voice of our customers.

### **Market Research Insights**

Traditional primary market research surveys measure customer feedback in a structured, quantifiable manner to establish

trends in the customer experience and set targets for continuous improvement. Central to our approach is the synthesis of overall customer engagement/loyalty measurements with multiple transactional studies that allow us to dive deep into the touchpoints identified as key drivers of customer loyalty within a customer's journey. The transactional studies provide a pulse on Adobe performance in business-critical areas such as customer purchase experience, customer service, technical support and website satisfaction. Because the surveys are fielded continuously, they allow us to quantify improvement over time and respond quickly when our customers' feedback indicates a potential problem. In parallel, Adobe's research team also focuses on disseminating knowledge and insight about customers and markets procured from secondary information sources, putting the information in the hands of business owners accountable for designing and delivering exceptional customer experiences. Collectively, these insights drive customer-centric decision making.

One thing that a majority of our customers share, across segments, is an incredibly passionate connection to Adobe's products and solutions. In addition to researching specific customer experiences, significant focus is devoted specifically to product research that enables the voice of the customer to be a primary input into all phases of the product development lifecycle. Our customers have told us very clearly and consistently that their experiences with Adobe's products are a determining factor in their overall loyalty. The following diagram depicts Adobe's customer listening approach as it relates to the market research programs deployed across the product development lifecycle. This approach recognizes that our customers' journey often starts before a product is fully released to the public, and that for many of our most passionately engaged customers, they expect to have a voice in early product conception and development.



### Pre-Release Programs

Engaged members of our communities are offered the opportunity to interact with prerelease versions of Adobe products, in order to shape product development and play a direct role in the final products brought to market. Programs are tailored to the specific customer segment that a product is intended for, and typically start with a small number of invited participants that grows to include a much larger user population as the product or service evolves through to launch.

Customers who are part of prerelease programs join them with the specific intent to share their voice with Adobe – to offer suggestions, ideas, feedback, and expectations for what they want to see in Adobe solutions. They have the opportunity to engage with Adobe product teams through a variety of mechanisms, including online forums, user groups, WIKI sites, and direct 1:1 conversations with Adobe developers, engineers, and product managers. Adobe teams then incorporate the learnings from these customers in order to deliver an improved final product to all customers, having early identification of potential quality issues, compatibility issues, and feature requests.

On average, there are 100,000 customers participating in 100 pre-release programs, sharing their voices through an estimated 12,000 posts in online forums and discussion groups, every month.

Adobe's PreRelease programs work in close alignment with other product development programs geared at capturing

the voices of our customers. One example is Adobe Labs Ideas, a program designed to give our customer communities the opportunity to share their ideas for Adobe technologies, have other community members vote on those ideas, and offer feedback. The collective voice of the customer is used to prioritize new features and shapes future versions of Adobe technology. Visit <http://ideas.adobe.com> to see it in action.

Individually, Adobe's Voice of the Customer programs seek to understand the voice of our customers, at specific moments in time, at specific points in their customer journey. Collectively, the insights and learnings from these programs serve to provide a holistic view of our customers' overall relationships with Adobe, representing a full view of their customer lifecycle. Ultimately the success of our Voice of the Customer initiatives stems from our ability to gain greater insight into the voice of our customers, internalize our customers' ideas and feedback, and then act on those ideas to continuously improve our customers' experiences and produce measurable business outcomes.

## 2) How has this activity improved your organization's business results?

Please be as specific as possible about business benefits like increased revenue, decreased cost, or increased customer retention. Please specify how you measure those benefits and the magnitude of the benefits you measured.

We measure the success of Adobe's Voice of the Customer programs at an individual program level, tied to the specific objectives and desired outcomes of each. Across all programs however, success is viewed first from the lens of improvements to the customer experience. Desired business outcomes, including increased revenue or cost reductions are also measured and trended to assess program effectiveness. Examples of specific business benefits have included:

### **Greater Lifetime Value from Truly Loyal Customers**

One of the key linkages Adobe has been able to quantify is the direct relationship between customer loyalty and customer lifetime value. Truly loyal customers are more likely to spend more on Adobe products and services over time. For every customer in our database, Adobe analysts can independently use historical purchase data and upgrade patterns to model an individual customer's lifetime value. Separately, all customers surveyed as part of the customer engagement research are classified into four loyalty categories: Truly Loyal, Trapped, Accessible and At Risk. By combining database analytics with survey data in aggregate, an average lifetime value is calculated for each of the four loyalty categories. When the analysis was last done in 2010, average lifetime value for Truly Loyal "shrink-wrap" customers (customers purchasing individual products through a retail channel) was 43% above At Risk customers in the same segment. For customers purchasing Adobe products through our volume licensing channels, the average lifetime value of Truly Loyal customers was 66% above At Risk customers; and for strategic "named accounts" in the same segment lifetime value was 288% higher. Demonstrating this direct linkage to revenue is invaluable in supporting senior decision makers in making investments in activities that improve customer experiences, thereby increasing the percent of Truly Loyal customers.

### **Experiential Gains and Cost Savings from Resolution of Top Issues**

Issues identified this year from the Customer Advocacy Council have been measured to yield expected cost savings of ~\$22 million USD collectively (spans multiple initiatives), once improvement initiatives have been fully implemented. Expected savings are derived by calculating actual cost per case for associated Customer Care support delivery expenses, factored by the number of customers and cases impacted by an identified issue. The **projected** experiential gain in customer satisfaction scores is determined based on the magnitude of customers touched by a particular initiative, in order to prioritize improvement efforts and balance financial projections.

### **Improved Operational Effectiveness and Customer Experience in Customer Care**

Adobe's Voice of the Customer programs help to quickly surface customer preferences and expectations relative to their touchpoints across the lifecycle. A common pain point that spanned multiple customer segments was the desire for faster problem resolution when customers needed to contact Customer Care. With the insights garnered from Adobe's VoC programs, the Customer Care team launched an intuitive technology solution that empowered call center agents to quickly greet customers, understand and rapidly solve their problem, and easily capture solutions for future use. In addition to the obvious experiential improvement, the associated gains in operational effectiveness delivered substantial ROI benefits amounting to \$340K in cost savings during the first fiscal quarter after deployment, with future year savings projected at \$1.2M annually. Similarly, a newly deployed telephony solution allows customers the flexibility of a scheduled "call back" at their convenience, further accelerating problem resolution and directly answering the need we heard through voice of the customer programs. This technology has improved customer satisfaction and delivered efficiency gains amounting to \$480K within the second half of 2010, with future year savings projected at \$960K annually.

Combined, the two initiatives are expected to deliver in excess of \$2.1M in savings annually.

### 3) How has this activity improved your customers' experiences?

Please be as specific as possible about how your activity improved the perceived quality of the experience your customers have when interacting with your organization. For example, do you better meet their needs, make it easier to do business with you, or make it more enjoyable to do business with you? Please be as specific as possible about the changes you made, how you measured the benefits of those changes, and the magnitude of the benefits you measured.

Central to all of Adobe's Voice of the Customer programs is a measurement component that enables us to assess the experiential impact of improvement initiatives. Following the customer lifecycle approach, we measure customer satisfaction across key touchpoints in a customers' journey, including customer service, technical support, purchase experiences, website visits, and more. We further monitor experiential gains and trends in a customer's overall relationship, incorporating key learnings and insights from the various components of our VoC programs. Specific examples of experiential gains Adobe has realized include:

#### **Transformation of Customer Experiences with Customer Care**

In late 2009, and into 2010, during the transition to a new global service provider for some of Adobe's Customer Care functions, it became readily apparent that Adobe's customers were experiencing service quality issues unacceptable to them, or to Adobe. Despite intense focused efforts to resolve the problems and restore the service experience, the problems continued and customer experience suffered considerably. Customer satisfaction with the service and support experience dropped significant from previous levels.

During this challenging period, it quickly became readily apparent why sophisticated Voice of the Customer programs are essential for companies who really want to understand and manage their customers' experiences. Adobe's VoC programs were instrumental in listening to the pain points customers described, synthesizing their feedback, and most importantly enabling teams within Adobe to identify the root cause issues that were impacting the customer experience. Rather than focusing on just the pure service delivery at the end of the customer touchpoint with Customer Care, business owners were able to map their key learnings to specific touchpoints much earlier in the customer lifecycle, and identify the associated business processes and procedures that needed to change. In parallel teams responsible for training and enablement programs for front-line agents utilized customer feedback to identify gaps in agents' skills and capabilities, and modify agent training programs to focus on developing new skills aligned to customer needs, by segment.

By using VoC insights and key learnings, we were able to make the necessary changes in our operations to transform the customer experience, and restore the service experience for millions of customers around the world - resulting in an 98% gain in customer satisfaction annually among the desktop customer segment, reaching 85% overall satisfaction by the end of 2010, 14% higher than before the transition had even begun.

#### **Improvements to Core Business Processes Expected to Increase Customer Satisfaction**

Programs such as the Customer Immersion Program and the Customer Advocacy Council are closely linked together, based on the roles each plays in identifying top issues, quantifying the impact to customers, and then creating broad awareness among Adobe's senior decision makers to drive improvement initiatives. In one example, a systemic issue with complicated processes surrounding customer returns, refunds, and exchanges was surfaced through our VoC programs, and championed through the Customer Immersion Program. A resulting improvement initiative, sponsored by the Customer Advocacy Council, is in progress to dramatically simplify the experience for customers, through a streamlined process that drastically shortens the time a customer waits for a refund to be completed, eliminates unnecessary paperwork required from customers, and reduces the required approval cycles to complete a return or refund. These processes touch 132K customers per year, and the changes are expected to reduce the time to resolution for a customer by 89%.

#### **Proactive Social Media Engagement Increases Website Satisfaction for Digital Video Customers**

Adobe's social media engagement utilizes very targeted approaches to each customer segment. We've applied a very focused effort to engage proactively with creative professionals utilizing Adobe's digital video products, with members of Adobe's Customer Success organization active in these vibrant online communities. Within 1 customer segment alone, there has been a 22% increase in website visitor satisfaction, for visitors seeking help and assistance with Adobe's Premiere Pro product. During the same time period, call & case volumes to Customer Care for the same product set decreased by ~750 cases per month.

Across all of Adobe's VoC programs, we're continuously looking for signs from our customers that our efforts are having an impact, and that their experiences with us are always improving. Anecdotal proof points, when taken in aggregate and

supported by corresponding quantitative measures, help to bring our customers' voices to life and demonstrate on an individual level the impact we're having with customers. This tweet from a customer sums it up: *"I want to send a public THANK YOU to @Adobe and @Adobe\_Care for taking care of my issue promptly and with class. Twitter customer service!"*

#### 4) How is your voice of the customer program owned and managed?

Please describe the individuals and teams inside your organization that are responsible for the voice of the customer program and the roles that they play. Please also describe any vendors that support your program and the roles that they play.

Delivering exceptional customer experiences is explicitly a part of Adobe's culture and values, and touches all employees across the company. Leadership begins at the most senior levels of the company, including engagement by Adobe's CEO, with joint program accountability shared between Adobe's SVP, WW Field Operations and SVP, Global Marketing. Responsibility for customer experience VoC programs is shared across several functions, with senior leaders in Adobe's Customer Success, Product Management, Engineering, and Global Marketing organizations collaborating to lead specific initiatives and programs.

A centralized approach to program governance provides a structured method to evaluate experiential improvement initiatives and prioritize efforts. Collaboration continues to be a hallmark of these efforts, with a mix of front-line individual employees and senior leaders working together to assess efforts and collectively track progress. As an example, the Business Process Improvement Council convenes monthly to review a slate of approved process improvement initiatives, determine required funding, and monitor progress. The BPI Council is led by the Sr. Director, Business Process Improvement, and co-sponsored by Adobe's SVP of Corporate Development; our Chief Technology Officer; and the VP, Office of the CEO.

Hands-on work is shared across Adobe. Examples of individual roles involved in ongoing VoC programs include:

- Vice President, Customer Success
- Senior Director, Customer Care
- Senior Director, Business Process Improvement
- Director, Social Media
- Director, Services Marketing
- Customer Experience Improvement Leader
- Customer Experience Program Manager
- Customer Advocacy Product Manager
- Social Media Collaboration Manager

Several key business partners play critical roles in supporting Adobe's customer listening programs, including:

**Walker Information:** Adobe partners with Walker Information for specialized Customer Loyalty research. Walker uses a combination of behavioral and attitudinal metrics to classify Customer Loyalty. The programs executed with Walker span point in time satisfaction surveys that measure customer perceptions of Adobe's performance regarding their primary engagement points, through to a system of continuous measurement that identifies performance and improvement opportunities on a quarterly basis. In addition Walker provides regression analyses to determine the key drivers of customer loyalty.

**CustomerBLISS:** CustomerBLISS helps customer leaders and their companies transform organizational thinking by bringing often silo-based operations together to understand the customer perspective. Adobe has utilized their framework for developing customer experience leadership competencies that support designing and delivering optimal customer experiences.

**Foresee Results:** As part of our efforts to measure customer perception at specific points in their lifecycle with Adobe, we measure website visitor satisfaction, to better understand the needs of specific customer segments and personas utilizing Adobe.com. Foresee Results provides these services to Adobe, using the model based on the nationally recognized methodology of the University of Michigan's American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) that systematically ties website elements to customer satisfaction and future behaviors with bottom line impact.

#### 5) What are the most innovative characteristics of your program?

Of the practices described above, please highlight one or two specific activities or processes that stand out from those of your competitors. If you have not yet described the most innovative aspect of your program, please describe it here.

We believe an aspect of our program that is unique to Adobe is our customer lifecycle-driven approach, where customer listening initiatives are tailored to the specific segment, and then the touchpoints and interactions that make up a customer's journey.

What truly makes this unique however is our ability to then synthesize key learnings across the lifecycle, in order to draw relevant and actionable conclusions that can be translated into actionable improvements. Whereas other companies may focus deeply on feedback from a particular channel or medium (ie. social media monitoring), we see greater value in the connecting our customers' voices across channels and engagements, to create a holistic view of their relationships with us.

Also, we believe that listening to our customers is just the beginning. Helping Adobe's senior leaders and executives understand what it's like to BE a customer is a critical aspect of Adobe's Voice of the Customer programs. The Customer Immersion Program guides senior executives through real customer scenarios and journeys, using the same resources and tools available to customers, and interacting with Adobe's front-line employees in the same manner that customers do. Program participants take away first-hand experience of what it's like to be an Adobe customer; with most leaving the program having agreed to sponsor specific improvement initiatives based on their experience.

We see tremendous potential to drive even greater impact from the Customer Immersion Program by embedding the core philosophies from the program into Adobe's leadership development programs, further embedding a customer-centric culture even deeper into our corporate DNA.

#### 6) What advice would you give to other organizations to make their programs successful?

Please provide one or two specific pieces of advice that you would give to another organization facing a similar situation.

Adobe has experienced significant growth in the maturity of our Voice of the Customer programs, since their initial inception. Here's what we've learned:

**1) Utilize customer journey mapping to make your customers' experiences real, to the people in your organization not directly familiar with what customers actually experience.** Detailed, thorough customer journey maps leverage defined customer personas to tell a customers' story, identifying the specific touchpoints across the complete customer lifecycle. One of the most valuable aspects of good customer journey mapping is the organizational alignment they facilitate, bringing cross-functional teams to a common understanding of the desired customer experience, and the role they play in delivering that experience.

**2) Help others in your organization to "connect the dots" to create a holistic view of your customers' end-to-end experiences,** and put customer-centric information in the hands of business owners who need to make customer experience decisions. Facilities like Adobe's Customer Listening Post serve to synthesize the voices of our customers into an understandable, actionable set of information that business owners can use as part of their daily operations.

**3) Collaborate, collaborate, collaborate.** Seek out ideas from your front-line employees who are closest to the customers on a daily basis, and listen to the voice of your employees. More importantly, empower them to take action and remove the roadblocks preventing them from implementing their most creative ideas.