How to Use an Insight Community to Build and Launch Successful Products

Y

You want to be a product superstar. But, like most innovators, you run into some common problems:

▣ Customer feedback fails to keep pace with the speed of business or is anecdotal, so decisions too often get made by gut instinct or hunches.

▣ Out-of-date information on trends, markets or customers that leads to bad assumptions and unrealistic business cases.

▣ Capital and resources are wasted by investing in the wrong products or features.

▣ Once a product is launched issues are diagnosed too late, after sales have been negatively impacted.

visioncritical.com

2

Imagine if you could develop products with up-to-date, timely information and the feedback that you need, enabling you to release products with the confidence that comes from understanding your market, your customers and your product.

That's all within your grasp: you need an insight community. A Vision Critical insight community is designed to help your company make data-driven and customer-validated decisions at every stage of the innovation cycle so you can minimize the chance of product failure and maximize the ROI of your projects.

In the following pages, we demonstrate how an insight community can improve each innovation cycle stage: Customer and Market Knowledge, Idea Generation and Screening, Product Building, Go-to-market and Post-launch.

1. Customer and Market Knowledge

For most companies, market and customer information is infrequently gathered and insights on targeted personas are rarely updated. Out-of-date information on trends, markets or customers can lead to misconceptions about needs and the market landscape. An insight community allows you to create living and evolving competitive landscapes, segmentations and personas.

Ongoing, real-time customer and market information:

▣ Combine the data that you generate from your community with external sources to build and manage target personas and segments.

▣ Create business cases with the confidence that comes from using fresh customer insight.

◘ Track and test with these same users throughout the innovation cycle to get additional insights on the evolution of your product (which user types appreciate which changes)

Up-to-the minute competitive profile:
◘ Find out who your competitive set really is and map how you are perceived against them.

◘ Deep dive to explore opportunity areas to determine where there is room for growth.

◘ Track movements over time to see how campaigns are affecting perception of your product.

Single view of the customer across the business:
◘ Distribute customer information throughout the organization to ensure that there is clear alignment and understanding

of who you're building your product for and who you should be selling to.

2. Idea Generation and Screening

You may be wasting millions of dollars and thousands of hours by investing in the wrong products or features. Simply relying on the gut instinct of the highest paid person or reacting blindly to competitive offerings is not the answer. An insight community allows you to generate and refine ideas quickly, capture customer feedback earlier and invest in the features and products that promise the greatest ROI.

Early-stage idea validation:

▣ Using IdeaScreen you can quickly and easily test the appeal and sales viability of your feature or product ideas—often with results in days rather than months.

◘ Using an integrated algorithm, ideas are tested against each member's full background and personas (questions that have been previously collected and stored). The result is not just a "go/no-go" but a comprehensive understanding of which segments are likely to have an interest in your idea.

Co-creating with your customers:

◘ Break out of your traditional way of doing things by brainstorming with your customers to truly understand where customers actually find value in your product.

◘ Use the same customers who uncovered the problem to test prototypes and messaging in order to ensure that ideas fit the product's performance and promotion.

3. Product Building

Making the wrong decision or faulty assumption early in the development cycle can have expensive consequences. When you don't have the timely or high-quality customer insight you need, critical data is ignored and decisions are made based on hunches and incomplete data. Your insight community is an always-on resource that creates an ongoing feedback loop to gather critical data about product functionality and features. Insight communities help build products that customers actually want.

Beta testing:

🔹 Find a group of customers to give you feedback on early stage products.

🔹 While transactional data tells you what is happening, your community tells you why your customers are taking actions.

Feedback from idea-to-launch:

■ Quickly and effectively test ideas and concepts throughout the innovation cycle—from feature prioritization to product plans to go-to-market activities like pricing, positioning and promotions—before you invest.

■ Test with the same group so you can validate that there is consistency in communication of the idea, the execution and how it is promoted.

■ Get our best practice activities and survey, developed through 15 years of research experience, in our Templated Learning Streams.

Product optimization:

■ Re-test iterations to mark improvements or regressions. Test against other products you have studied to discover bundling opportunities and portfolio optimization.

4. Go-to-Market

During the product building and go-to-market phase, feedback is often anecdotal. The result is that insights are open to interpretation and can be difficult to understand, communicate and share. This can lead to conflict and misalignment as decision makers use these anecdotes to validate their gut instinct rather than using data to guide their decision. An insight community will give you clear, quantitative insight at the pace of business so you can make data-driven decisions with confidence. An insight community can provide unprecedented clarity as you bring products to market.

Agile marketing:
▣ Test and iterate around message, positioning, packaging, promotion and creative in order to determine your best approach.

Price testing and elasticity:

◉ Understand the price elasticity of your category and product in order to create the optimal pricing strategy across your portfolio.

Line optimization:

◉ Predict the effects of various product line and bundling alternatives so you can maximize the value of your brands and products.

5. Post-Launch

If you're relying on transactional data, you can't diagnose in-market issues until it's too late—transactional data only tells you about product performance issues after the fact. An insight community allows you to get clear metrics to understand product health in real time—and gives you an opportunity to deep dive between the cracks in order to quickly triage problems.

visioncritical.com

Price testing and elasticity.:
Understand the price elasticity of your category and product in order to create the optimal pricing strategy across your portfolio.

Soft metric tracking:
◉ Track soft metrics like attitude, share of wallet, brand usage and competitive landscape.

◉ Integrate with sales data to understand how these metrics affect purchase behavior.

Early warning alert system:
◉ Get alerts when there are changes in attitudes before they affect sales.

◉ Deep dive on problems with the same customers in order to find solutions

Key moment feedback:
◉ Get customer experience feedback from

your customers at key moments during a transaction.

■● Work with negative experience consumers to deep dive on problems and workshop solutions.

Conclusion

Innovation demands trade-offs and tough decisions. Each choice that's made can have significant downstream effects, where initial bad assumptions magnify, causing bigger problems. Relying on gut instinct, conventions, listening to the most senior person in the room or copying competitors is simply too risky. With a Vision Critical insight community, you'll have actionable feedback from a trusted source, and fully-equipped to innovate with confidence.

Customer Intelligence in Action:
DeWALT

● Competition in the durable goods space is fierce. For the construction tool manufacturer DeWALT, launching products that meet the needs of tradespeople means bringing core customers into the decision-making process. In the past, the company would visit construction sites and interview workers who used its products—a long and expensive process. To improve its market intelligence, DeWALT launched a Vision Critical insight community of more than 10,000 end-users of its tools, including 6,000 professional tradesmen.

● The insight community allows DeWALT to ideate and test assumptions early in the innovation cycle, boost collaboration between business units, test efficacy of packaging and significantly reduce the cost of research.

● Feedback from the insight community provides DeWALT with the competitive advantage of a better understanding of the unmet needs of its customers. The company is able to remain agile and innovative—and create products its customers actually want to buy.

Customer Intelligence in Action:
WOLVERINE WORLDWIDE

● U.S.-based manufacturer Wolverine Worldwide produces popular footwear brands like Sperry, Keds, Saucony and Chaco. To keep ahead of trends and make products that people actually want to buy, a company like Wolverine Worldwide can't rely on traditional research methods, which are inefficient, slow and don't provide a deep understanding of customer needs. Wolverine Worldwide's solution: launch five branded insight communities to incorporate 20,000 consumers into decisions about product innovation and marketing.

● The insight communities give the Wolverine Worldwide brand family instant access to consumer opinions. Since the communities' launch in 2015, some 1,000 new footwear styles have been tested and screened with consumers. In one instance, the company used customer feedback to convince a skeptical retailer that a new line of Sperry shoes would have wide appeal. The retailer, seeing the Sperry Insiders insight community give the design a vote of confidence, placed an order for 60,000 units.

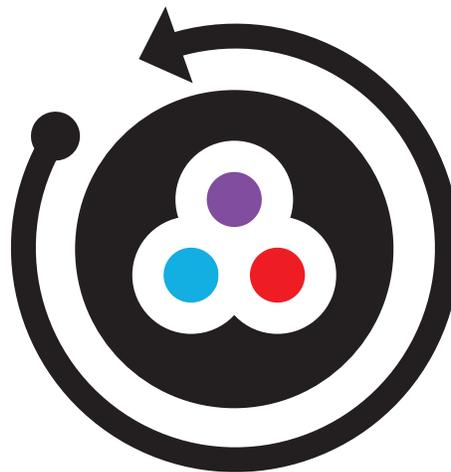# VISIONCRITICAL®

COLLECTIVE WISDOM STARTS HERE
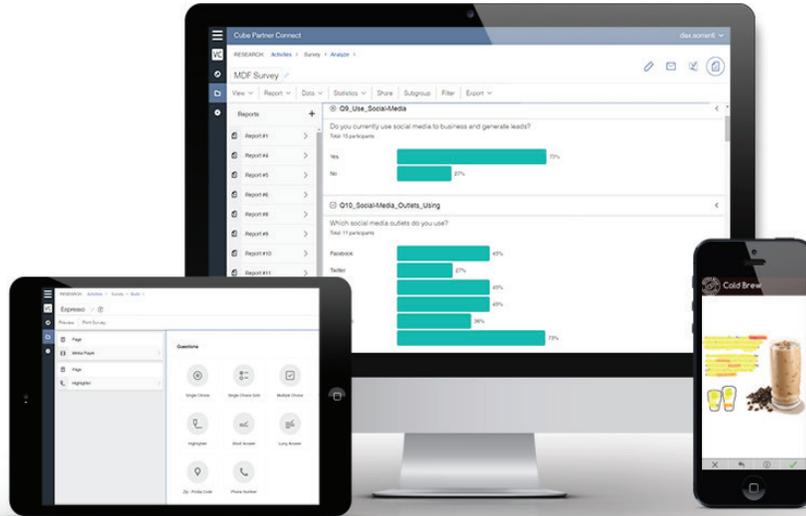
Vision Critical's software gives you valuable feedback from a trusted community of customers, helping you make data-backed decisions when you need them most: **throughout the product-customer lifecycle.**

BETTER END-TO-END EXPERIENCE

- **Drive business results**
- **Make CX scores actionable**
- **Optimize the customer journey**

BETTER PRODUCTS

- **Drive smart product building**
- **Generate winning ideas**
- **Build customer-informed market knowledge**

BETTER CAMPAIGNS

- **Build impactful messaging**
- **De-risk go-to-market strategies**
- **Optimize campaigns with customer feedback**

WATCH THE DEMO visioncritical.com/demo