Be the Employer of Choice:

How Feedback Fosters Agent Purpose

Experience Investigators

NICE · CXone

Contents

About this eBook

Customer experience isn't just about customers—it's about employees, too.

Superior customer journeys are delivered by employees who are committed, not just to your customers, but also to their own sense of purpose.

Your contact center agents are the face of your brand in the moments they serve your customers. Their sense of purpose helps them feel engaged, as well as how they feel about their role, their customers, and their daily efforts.

Do you supply your contact center agents with the tools they need to help them deliver superior customer experiences? Empowered and engaged agents not only help an organization succeed, they feel aligned with a purpose to do so. They know their important role in the greater customer journey, and feel their employee journey is one of proactive and positive experiences.

How you treat your agents is how they'll treat your customers. Create an experience and environment for agents that inspires them, so they can in turn inspire customers.

And here's the secret: your agents need feedback in ways big and small. Providing and receiving feedback creates avenues of communication that fuel their sense of purpose. Your employees' sense of purpose (or lack thereof) impacts their engagement, happiness in their role, how they treat their customers, and their productivity.

Do your agents feel heard?

Are you listening to each agent in a way that helps them recognize the important role they fill?

This eBook identifies:

- What every agent should know about your customer experience mission
- Why closing the feedback loop with agents is just as important as it is with customers
- How modeling your CX priorities provides a better experience for everyone inside and outside of your organization

It's All About the Mission

Contact centers are mission-critical to an organization's success. But how can that be if your employees don't know the overall mission?

It's not just about communicating your organization's mission, but your Customer Experience Mission Statement.

Your customer experience mission helps everyone in your organization understand how to show up for customers no matter what. This becomes your "North Star" and guides decisions. Your contact center agents are asked to make judgment calls every day. With a CX Mission Statement, they can align their daily decisions with the mission.

Create Your Mission:

At _____ our customers expect _____ in order to _____. We deliver that experience consistently by _____ _____ so our customers feel _____ _____ along every step of their journey.

Source: Experience Investigators Mission Statement Workbook

Want to develop your own CX Mission Statement?

A CX Mission Statement should be succinct and focused on what the customers can expect, and how to deliver it consistently.

- Start with your organizational vision, mission and values statements, as well as your Brand Promise. Consider what is most customer-focused.

- Reflect on what's in it for the customer. For example, Ikea, the furniture brand, states "to create a better everyday life for the many people." It's not about products or services, it's about how those products and services impact customer lives.

- Consider what experience can be consistently delivered. (It may not work to say "always the fastest" if that's not possible.)

- Finally, consider how you want your customers to feel.

Experience Investigators   NICE · CXone

Every Agent Needs to Know:

- **What the mission means to you—and your customers!** Keep the CX Mission Statement visible and meaningful. When agents have a particularly meaningful interaction with a customer, provide feedback that reinforces the way they lived up to the mission.

- **Their very important role as an ambassador.** They are representing the company every day. Train agents to use the CX Mission Statement as a guide. If they need to make a tough choice, the question to use is, "Will this live up to the mission?"

- **Their customer moments are recognized and shared throughout the organization.** Reinforce those great moments with regular recognition. Starting meetings with recognition around "Mission Moments" will reinforce the right behaviors. It's also a positive way to help every agent connect to their purpose.

What's a Mission Moment?

Your agents have incredible customer stories to share. These stories help everyone in the organization connect with the emotional impact when agents live up to the mission. These experiences can also help leaders buy in to the concept of customer experience, tracking the right measurements, and the important role of agents. Ask your agents to share a mission moment, and highlight those you heard via customer feedback!

Listen Up & Close the Loop

What if feedback is gathered, but nothing happens?

The importance of "closing the loop" by letting customers know what happened to their feedback is well understood and prioritized in Voice of the Customer programs.

This is just as important with your employees, particularly your agents, as it is with your customers.

Your agents deserve to grow based on feedback from customers, and they deserve to share feedback that will improve their experience, too.

Your agents are inspired when they know their voice matters.

Ask for their feedback and show that you are listening by customizing coaching, performance evaluations, and team interactions. Work actively to close the technology gaps and eliminate the shortcomings they face, based on their feedback.

Agents are empowered when they feel they are in the know.

Let them see the bigger picture of what customers are saying and experiencing by giving them access to customer feedback of all kinds. Further, empower them to weigh in and give feedback on what they are experiencing with customers – let them comment and add their perspective.

Model the customer experience! Agents want to be heard and to be understood.

Close the loop with agents as you would with customers. They will be delighted when you listen and provide personalized follow up! And closing the loop with them shows them actively how you're listening.

Ways to Gather Agent Feedback

Disruptions in the labor market have shed light on how important it is to consistently gather feedback from all employees. Your agent's feedback is especially enlightening and taking it to heart can help retain agents who are already trained, dedicated, and delivering great service to customers.

To gain the best results, think of feedback as offering two layers of outcomes:

1

Feedback from agents to improve the customer experience

2

Feedback from agents about their experience as employees

Ways to Gather Agent Feedback

Direct Feedback

Ask your agents about their experience.

Your agents interact directly with customers regularly. What are they observing or experiencing about the service journey?

Their feedback can offer insights into how to improve the customer experience, as well as making their roles more effective and efficient.

But, don't forget to listen.

Do you have a Voice of the Agent program?

Let agents weigh in directly on what they are experiencing with customers. Include agent feedback around specific cases, like:

- **Customer closed loop processes** – What can the agent add to provide context to the situation?

- **Case management** — What would the agent add to the customer's actual feedback?

- **Agent tools** — What were the obstacles or challenges the agent encountered? This might include things like "I needed more training to answer this question" or "the system directed me to the wrong information." That feedback can lead directly to workflow and process improvements that create better experiences for the agent and the customer.
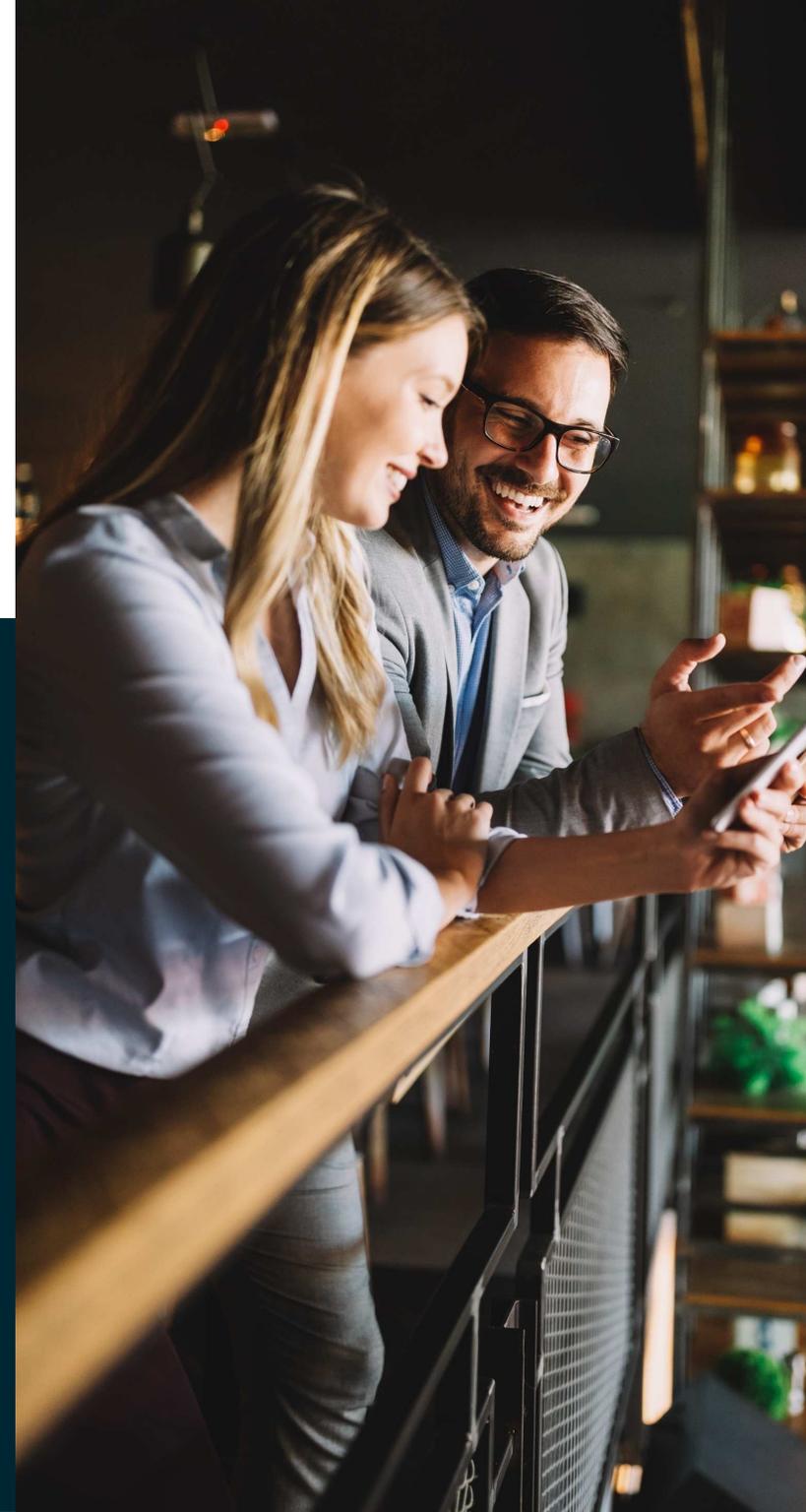
Give your agents an opportunity to provide their side of the story on survey responses.

In this example, the customer says the agent was nice but could not answer basic questions. His feedback includes the lowest rating of 1.

The agent is able to provide his own feedback, indicating that because of call abandonment targets, he was forced to take a call that he wasn't trained to take. **The agent was given a voice and now his supervisor can better understand what is driving negative comments and low ratings, and take action to help improve the agent experience.**

This is a chance to take action not only on the agent experience, but also on improving internal processes that will positively impact the customer experience.

CUSTOMER FEEDBACK
"John was a nice guy and it seemed like he was trying to help but he couldn't even answer basic questions about my claim."

AGENT FEEDBACK
"Call abandon targets force agents to take calls not trained for"

Let your agents listen to call recordings associated with customer feedback.

The illustration below shows a call recording embedded into a survey response. We encourage you to give agents this sort of visibility into the customer experience.

Hearing the actual voice of the customer enhances learning & can support personalized training sessions while encouraging empathy.

Do You Send Consistent Employee Surveys?

Gathering feedback via consistent employee engagement surveys can help identify trends in the long-term and issues in the short-term.

It's a good way to collect feedback about the overall employee experience, including:

- Overall feedback on their experiences as an employee. What would help them feel more connected and engaged? Do they feel they are aligned with the mission and purpose of the organization? Would they recommend employment at your company to a friend?

- Specific feedback for where they are on their employee journey. Did they feel supported throughout the hiring process? Did onboarding serve their needs? Requesting feedback at key milestones like work anniversaries shows a commitment to listening to them throughout their journey. (This is a great way to model how important it is to listen to customers along their journey, too.)

- Real-time feedback - Instead of waiting for a specific survey time, ask agents to provide daily feedback on how things are going.

Don't let myths get in the way of moments.

Agents and others are sometimes wary to provide feedback. They may believe it's used to punish or call out those agents who have negative feedback. Be sure to communicate often how the feedback is used and the WHY for asking.

It's all about improving the experience for both employees and customers! Ensure that is communicated whenever feedback is requested and reinforce that honest feedback is appreciated. Further, close the loop on agent feedback – show the results and how you are addressing team input.

Indirect Feedback

Understand your customer's sentiment by using real-time tools to not just measure sentiment, but manage it proactively.

Can your agents get real-time feedback? Can they compare a customer's live sentiment to CSAT and other metrics?
Real-time interaction guidance that reveals customer sentiment in the moment leads to a better understanding of customer needs during the interaction, so agents can reply accordingly. Improving empathy and emotions in real-time is a great way for an agent to feel connected to their purpose and mission.

Making the Agent's Job Easier with Real-Time Interaction Guidance

One telecommunications provider was able to empower agents in real-time to help customers who had questions on a promotional offer listed on its website.

When a customer called in, it wasn't just the agent listening to the call – Real-Time Interaction Guidance was listening, too. When the phrase "internet upgrade promotion" was detected along with frustration over the customer's current rate, it presented the relevant information about the promotion to the agent as well as guidance on how to own the issue.

The automated task saved the agent time while making it easier to engage and stay focused on the customer. The result? Improved customer satisfaction, reduced handle time, and agents who felt confident in their ability to proactively improve their conversations in the moment.

"Pivotal to improving the customer-agent journey is to capture all interaction data in a centralized repository and use it to understand not only the pain points but also the moments of delight and where we can do a better job for customer experience and process efficiency."

- Director of Contact Center Operations

Help agents get better results

Real-time interaction guidance helps agents get better results. But that's only if they know coaching and feedback is for the greater good—not when it's used as purely an evaluation tool.

Don't forget to coach your agents to recognize when they are doing things well.

Catch them doing a great job.

- Recognize when an agent turns around a particularly tough customer situation.

- Listen for when they apply previous feedback.

- Encourage agents to share with one another about times they felt they lived up to the mission!

Look for signals of when they're NOT engaging.

- Do agents celebrate everyday successes, like when a customer praises them for a job well done? If not, they may be disconnected from their why.

- How are your absence and adherence rates? These engagement indicators suggest your agents might be picturing their 'why' outside of your company.

- Are agents responding to consistent feedback positively? If behaviors don't change they might be disengaging from the purpose of their important role.

Use and share direct and indirect feedback—they are more powerful together.

Share analytics and compare sentiment vs. survey responses – they might not match. Give agents the ability to see the power in what happens when all types of data are used to paint the big picture. Customers, agents, and the organization win.

Think of an interaction that sounds positive. Interaction analytics will report positive scores on the indirect feedback. But, what if that customer thought the product or process was not satisfying? Direct customer feedback reveals nuances that enhance agent confidence that you understand why a customer might give a low customer satisfaction score in a post-interaction survey, even when the service the agent provided was outstanding.

What looks like a positive interaction in the contact center …..

Agent helps answer customer question about a product. Interaction scores with a low AHT, script compliance, and positive sentiment.

Negative customer experience.
Risk to brand loyalty.
Customer and employee churn.

In the post call survey, customer scored the interaction low because the product is hard to use.

Signals to Watch For

Look out for what customer feedback data is saying and make it available to agents. Give them context they crave to better understand what customers need.

- **Angry or unhappy customer feedback** – Understanding the customer journey and root cause for moments of friction can help you isolate and make improvements to reduce burnout, anxiety and stress, and keep agents happy.

- **Satisfied customer feedback and positive sentiment** – Don't forget to give feedback on the good performance, too! Reward and recognize your agents' positive performance.

- **Low average handle time and low satisfaction** – If you measure your agents on outcome-based metrics like customer satisfaction or sentiment instead of productivity/efficiency metrics like length of call, agents will focus more on improving the outcome than on getting off the call.

- **Low first-contact resolution or high number of escalations** – Agents want to help customers – making sure they have easy access to answers and customer information will keep agents empowered. Bring insights to agents on these sorts of calls, get their feedback on what's working and what's not. Then use that feedback to improve the agent experience.

A Case in Point...

A great case in point is one of the U.K.'s leading consumer credit companies. Using NICE VoC, they started capturing all types of feedback across the complete customer journey, and now use feedback insights to personalize agent training.

Agents are trained on the big picture to see what leads customers to call; they review customer comments in surveys, themes, sentiment analytics, and reasons for contact.

This helps them to know what actions to take to resolve issues quickly and how and when to direct customers to self-service options – reducing future call backs.

Not only has providing this context of the "why" to agents boosted their satisfaction, complaints coming into the contact center have been reduced by 33%. The contact center has seen a cost savings of over 50% in the past 18 months.

Signals to Watch For (continued)

- **Most common activities and interaction topics** – Agents want fulfilling and meaningful interactions. Remove the repetitive tasks plaguing their workloads. Analyze operational data and indirect feedback to isolate the most common activities and topics to understand what might be better solved by digital self-service or Robotic Process Automation (RPA) to take the load of routine interactions off agents' plates, enabling them to focus on more important, complex, and fulfilling work.

    Further, by leveraging feedback to train agents on how to guide customers to digital-self-service, you're empowering them to improve the customer's journey while also improving the agent experience in the long run, and also reducing wait times that lead to frustrated callers.

- **Unified tools and systems** – Just like your customers, your employees want tools to effectively solve problems. Agents don't enjoy repeating themselves and transferring channels any more than customers do! The right tools enable seamless experiences for agents, too.

- **Lack of onboarding or time from onboarding to productivity** – First impressions aren't just for customers, streamline onboarding to build a great relationship with agents from the very beginning.
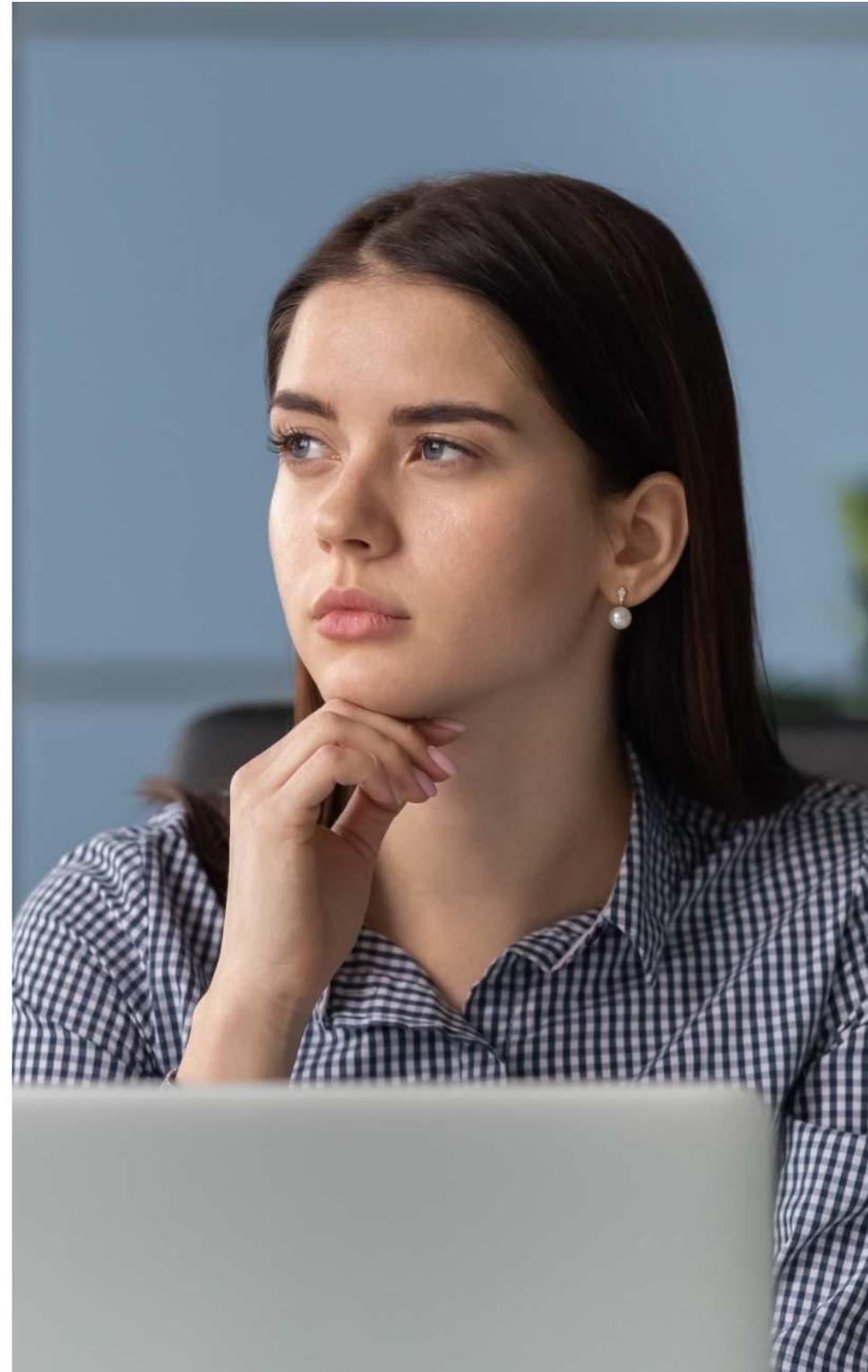
Bottom Line
Your Agents Deserve Real-Time Feedback.

Agents care that they are both giving and getting helpful feedback consistently so they can improve and grow. Foster their sense of purpose by acting on their feedback. Give them clear goals and show them exactly how their performance impacts the customer and company in real-time.

And don't forget to celebrate success along the way to reinforce and model great experiences.

The importance of closing the feedback loop

Don't forget -- how you treat your agents is how they'll treat your customers. Model the behavior and reap the rewards of improved retention and engagement.

Contact center agents play an incredibly important role. They are ambassadors for your company, and actively deliver on your customer experience every day.

Positively impact the employee experience and the customer experience by providing real-time and ongoing feedback in ways that empower and educate. **Agents want to feel connected to their purpose and provide great service. And they have great ideas that need to be heard.** The right environment and tools give them spaces to both provide and receive winning feedback.

Let's lead by example with our contact center agents!

Help your agents be the champions they are by:

✓ Modeling the experience you want customers to have.

✓ Providing a clear mission and goals.

✓ Coaching with real-time feedback.

✓ Engaging with them for THEIR feedback to improve the customer experience.

Dig Deeper

Experience Investigators

Experience Investigators is a global Customer Experience consulting firm helping companies improve loyalty and retention, employee engagement, and overall customer experience through workshops, consulting, coaching, and more. Hundreds of companies across three continents have trusted Experience Investigators, from SMBs to Fortune 500s.

The company's founder and CEO, Jeannie Walters, is a Certified Customer Experience Professional (CCXP), charter member of the Customer Experience Professionals Association (CXPA,) President of the National Speakers Association Illinois Chapter (NSA-IL), TEDx speaker, and LinkedIn Learning instructor, where her top-rated online courses have been taken by more than 360,000 learners.

Browse our Resource Library

Contact Us
Email | jeannie@experienceinvestigators.com

NICE · CXone

With NICE, it's never been easier for organizations of all sizes around the globe to create extraordinary customer experiences while meeting key business metrics. Featuring the world's #1 cloud native customer experience platform, CXone, NICE is a worldwide leader in AI-powered self-service and agent-assisted CX software for the contact center – and beyond. Over 25,000 organizations in more than 150 countries, including over 85 of the Fortune 100 companies, partner with NICE to transform—and elevate—every customer interaction.

See how **NICE CXone** can help you understand and transform the full customer journey to build relationships that last.

Watch a Demo

Contact Us
Tele | +1 866.965.7227
Intl | +44 (0) 207.002.3000
Email | info@niceincontact.com