

How customer experience measurement could prove an imperative tool for the grocery retail sector

Collecting customer feedback is an important part of improving the overall experience. Indeed, there are a number of technology companies who already offer this service to brands, and it gives organisations an indication as to how well they are performing, and what their customer experience weaknesses are. However, this only goes so far. More effective means of [customer experience measurement](#) are essential if brands are to compete for customer loyalty.

This is certainly true in the grocery retail sector. Brands such as Waitrose and M&S Food have been successful in winning their customers' approval, despite having a slightly higher price tag on some of their products. However, other brands have been less prolific in the [2014 UK Customer Experience Excellence Centre rankings](#).

The impact of customer experience measurement

For lower-scoring brands, their positions could be markedly improved by taking a more diligent approach to customer experience measurement. The art lies in making sure that customer feedback isn't buried in an archive, for employees to sift in a painstaking manner. Rather, it is about utilising software that can ensure these comments are distributed to the right people within a short time frame. For grocery retail brands, this kind of feedback might relate to a lack of availability of freshly-baked croissants in the bread aisle, or a problem with queuing owing to a shortage of checkout staff. The right kind of software will be able to quickly identify this problem, and ensure that the specific feedback is relayed to the store manager. As a result, the staff member is then empowered to action this feedback, and quickly fill the gaps in the shoppers' experiences.

Grocery retail brands could also utilise measurement techniques that crystallise their understanding of the feedback they're receiving. At KPMG Nunwood, one such technique is [The Six Pillar System™](#), which analyses the overall customer experience using six universal facets. These facets comprise Personalisation, Time and Effort, Expectations, Integrity, Resolution and Empathy, and show companies how well they are performing in each of these areas. For example, the strongest grocery retail brand in the UK is currently Waitrose, whose highest result is in the pillar of Time and Effort at a very impressive 8.59.

Empathy is an important part of customer experience measurement. The collected feedback gives brands an insight into what its customers think and feel, and enables company managers to put themselves in their shoppers' shoes, and see matters from their perspective. Once armed with this information, the brand leaders are able to implement changes through the customers' eyes, and give them the retail experience that they are genuinely seeking.

Moreover, it has never been more important for brands to employ this kind of measurement. As companies such as M&S Food and Waitrose have demonstrated, customer satisfaction and loyalty are not necessarily driven by product prices. Shoppers who feel catered for and looked after, who can enjoy a fast, stress-free retail experience, who know that any issues they encounter will be quickly resolved, are more likely to return to, and promote, that particular brand. At a time when customers are faced with a plethora of supermarket choices, often within close proximity, it is crucial for grocery retailers to start championing the quality of the experience.