LINKEDIN LIVE - FULLVIEW -

Elyse Mankin

Director of Product Support

Help Scout

VOICE OF THE CUSTOMER

HOW TO TURN CUSTOMER INSIGHTS INTO ACTION

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THE POWER OF CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

Elyse Mankin, Director of product Support at Help Scout, recently joined Fullview CEO Daniel Bakh to discuss customer feedback, proactive support and VoC programs.

At Fullview, we help companies close the gap between customer support and product teams so that every bit of relevant customer feedback is turned into actionable steps and measurable improvements.

In this presentation, we'll summarize the most pertinent points from the webinar.

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> We think of our product support team as scaffolding for our larger support function. And we own the customer feedback loop. Our product support analysts form the bridge between our support, product, design and engineering teams to further develop our product. They're in the best position to advocate for both our customers and our support team.

Elyse Mankin

Director of Product Support

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WHO SHOULD OWN VOC PROGRAMS?

Daniel Bakh
CEO, Fullview

Elyse, I'm sure you'd agree that customer support teams really are at the frontlines of any business — they see the most issues, they hear the most feedback. And it's really important to be able to feed that into product development. Could you talk us through how you define voice of customer (VoC) programs and who should own those?

My opinion is that it depends on the context and I think it can be shared.

WHO SHOULD OWN VOC PROGRAMS?

Interesting. Could you elaborate on that?

So your product team is hyper-focused on solving customer problems at the right time and in the right way. So they're often going to own VoC through your product development stages. But when you're trying to figure out which problems to consider solving, you support cue can be an invaluable source of insight and data because they understand the customer perspective and their relationship to your product. Tapping into that and making sure product and support teams are working together can help you separate signal from noise.

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HOW CUSTOMER FEEDBACK AND PRODUCT DATA SHOULD WORK TOGETHER

Support cues are often a goldmine of customer insights, but with support volumes being as large as they are for many companies, it can be hard to make sure customer feedback and product data are working in sync to lead to actionable next steps. How should organizations tackle that?

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HOW CUSTOMER FEEDBACK AND PRODUCT DATA SHOULD WORK TOGETHER

Often, customer support teams report on ticket volume alone. If that's how you decide on which features to prioritize, you're not examining business impact. I see that as a great opportunity to partner with your PMs and make sure everyone knows what the product strategy is so you can see support data through the lens of what your product team is thinking about.

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It's crucial to make sure your customer support data is cross functional so it can work together with your product and customer metrics. If your organization uses a business intelligence tool, your data should be there. Helpdesk reporting is great for understanding how your team is working through the queue, but it's not great at providing the depth of information you need on the product side.

CUSTOMER SUPPORT DATA SHOULD BE CROSS FUNCTIONAL.

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CLOSING THE INFORMATION LOOP

What can product teams do to help bolster support teams?

It's important to complete the loop. So not only is it crucial for data and information to flow from your customer support queue to your product folks, it's also important for product teams to communicate significant product updates, feature prioritizations, iterations and product strategy to customer support teams. If that doesn't happen, it's easy for support teams to get lost in the queue, so to speak, and lose sight of some big-picture product evolutions.

TURNING FEEDBACK INTO ACTIONABLE INSIGHTS

Once all these data and customer feedback has been collected, how do you turn it into actionable insights?

I'd urge everyone to take a step back and really start with understanding your audience. Who are your product decision makers, what are their motivations, what strategies are they looking to implement, how do they like to receive information, etc. Once you start tracking feedback, the data you gather from can be aligned with what you know about your customers so you make the right decisions.

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We use the RUF Framework* from Atlassian to understand the customer feedback request types that are coming in. We also have a secondary field for feature so we're able to see what types of questions are coming in for different features and vice versa. We also train our customer support team to go one step deeper: how will this feature request help the customer solve their challenge?

HOW HELP SCOUT TURNS FEEDBACK INTO ACTIONABLE INSIGHTS

*RUF stands for reliability, usability and functionality. It involves asking 'Is something broken, is something confusing or is a feature missing to decide next steps.

We also focus on measuring and reporting. It's important to deeply understand what buckets of conversation does your support team run into the most and why? Does the feedback indicate that there is a product solution or is it a question of process improvements or education? We also examine things like which feature requests come up most and for which customer groups. Tracking the evolution of these trends and the impact is also important.

HOW HELP SCOUT TURNS FEEDBACK INTO ACTIONABLE INSIGHTS

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HOW TO MEASURE THE IMPACT OF VOC

How can you measure the qualitative and quantitative impact of Voice of Customer programs?

That partially depends on the goals and desired outcomes. Benchmarking is important to do. For example, if you're advocating for an internal process change, you can measure time saved. If you team manages support escalations, measuring escalations to tier 2 or 3 could be important to track. Drawing a line between changes and metrics like NPS, CSAT and even retention can be impactful. On the qualitative side, surveys are great.

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PROACTIVE SUPPORT AT HELPSCOUT

How do you engage in proactive support at Help Scout?

So we have both frontline support agents whose only job is dealing with incoming support requests. Our product support analysts, on the other hand, spend 1/4 of their time in the support queue and the rest of their time proactively collecting and analyzing customer feedback data so we can connect it back to our product. Proactive support is a trend that I see growing every time I'm at a support conference or talking to others in the community.

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If you're pitching the idea to a support manager, framing VoC as an investment in the customer experience that can have direct impacts on bottom-line business metrics and decisions about scaling your support team is most impactful. When it comes to product managers, asking them to be better partners to you and also helping them discern what is useful feedback and what is noise is a good place to start.

GETTING BUY-IN FOR VOC PROGRAMS

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I think the best VoC programs are holistic. The product is only one part of the picture. The experience customers are having with your support team is important, pricing is important, etc. And you often see these issues come through the support cue too, so there are signals you can pick up on there.

SHOULD VOC FOCUS ON THINGS BESIDES PRODUCT FEEDBACK?

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WANT MORE INFORMATION ABOUT VOC PROGRAMS AND HOW TO BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN SUPPORT AND PRODUCT TEAMS?

WE'VE LEFT RESOURCES IN THE NEXT SLIDE.

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Close the gap between product and support teams

Read the blog

RUF Framework

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