



ASKNICELY · WHITEPAPER

# The New NPS Best Practices



# A Playbook for Delivering Legendary Customer Experiences with a Mature Customer Feedback Program



“Companies with mature NPS Programs are more than twice as likely to achieve both 100%+ annual growth and net-negative churn.”



*2018 NPS Benchmark Study*

**You know your NPS Score.**

**Now you want to know, how can I make that score better?**

In order to unlock world-class NPS (top 10% of your industry), as well as the business results that go with it, there is a new set of core tenets. These tenets inform modern best practices required for mature NPS programs to be world-class in terms of both process and metrics.

The result? Legendary customer experiences and amplified business growth.

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# It's a Culture Shift

The best way to increase your NPS is to create an internal culture that shares one goal—to know what your customers think at the moments of truth in their customer journey and to act on that information.

The question is how do you do this?

## Executive Buy-in



Culture shift starts with the executives. You may not need the entire C-suite on board, but to make a cultural shift, you need one or more executives to spearhead the change. A 2018 NPS Benchmark study showed that companies with high-level support for NPS tend to experience both lower customer turnover and significantly higher revenue.

Without executive buy-in, your advanced NPS program will be significantly harder to create and action as things get lost in company silos. World-class NPS programs involved the C-suite in responding to customer feedback. This not only impresses customers but reinforces the internal commitment to customer obsession.

You can drive executive buy-in with more statistics from the 2018 NPS Benchmark Study. [Download it here.](#)



### Talk About It

Once you have executive buy-in, you need to spread the program across the entire company. The time of NPS as a metric only for the boardroom is over. Best practices tell us that you need to give every employee a seat at the table. Let everyone from accounting to the front line know about their role in the customer journey and how they can help drive their personal, departmental, and company NPS up.

To do this, you need to ensure role relevant feedback makes it to the right person, in the best format, immediately. Real-time interaction with customers gives everyone an experience to talk about. The best way to do this is to use dashboards with up-to-the-minute data to keep feedback top-of-mind within your organization. The best programs configure their dashboards for specific departments or regions and display them strategically. They keep the NPS program top-of-mind by showing trends in scores and gamifying results. Some even show individual NPS and offer fun incentives to increase those scores. Others reward employees for reaching NPS goals with anything from a high five from the CEO to lunch to monetary bonuses. Creating friendly competition and celebrating company wins drive involvement and culture change.

The goal is to get everyone talking about NPS every day. But you need to do more than provide talking points.





## Make It Right

You need to enable everyone from the front line to accounting to C-suite to solve problems and make it right. While some companies assign one person as Chief Officer of Putting Things Right, companies with the best NPS and highest customer advocacy do so by enabling all employees from the janitorial staff to the front lines to administration to make things right.

How? By actioning their customer feedback with more than a one-off, word-of-mouth campaign.

The Ritz Carlton is a classic example of enabling their employees. They are classically known for how every employee from the grounds workers to the maids to the managers are enabled to spend up to \$2000 an experience to make any single customer's experience right.

That is not an arbitrary number. Ritz Carlton knows the average lifetime value of a customer is \$250,000. In those terms, it's a no-brainer to allow an employee to spend \$2K in return for keeping or creating a lifetime customer.

Beyond a discretionary monetary value, employees are also continually trained in problem resolution. This type of training and forethought support employees in their goals to create the best customer experience.

How can your managers enable each member of their team to be the chief officer of putting things right? A consistent "make-it-right" mindset gives customers multiple stories to repeat.

# What's The Best Way to Get The Most Out of My Program?

## Figure Out Who Owns The Program

While you have executive buy-in and all the employees are prepped and ready to take action, you need someone to administer the program software. Ideally, this is a role that is deeply connected to customer success or product marketing. The task of administration should come from someone intimately involved in your customer list and voice of the customer.

No matter who administers your program, they should understand the deep insights an advanced NPS program can bring them and how to act on those insights.

### Administration



## Automate

Once you have your person selected to administer the program and your internal culture revved up, the next pillar to actioning your feedback is to automate your process by integrating it into core systems. Get the best NPS software specialized to action your NPS program. You can find a [Guide to NPS Software here](#). (link to blog)

### Automation



Use NPS software that can easily integrate with your CRM. The easier to integrate the more people will be on board. Once you have good software you can automate workflows that get the right message to the right person at the right time. A few examples of common workflows include: follow up after blank comments, follow-up for reviews and sending emails to team members when a bad comment comes in.

Some companies encourage customers to deepen the customer feedback conversation by setting up workflows that trigger an email if the customer doesn't leave a comment. These emails will be different for promoters, passives, and detractors. In each case, the email message reacts to the score – either thanks for the great score, or we're sorry to hear you aren't 100% happy, then asks the customer to tell them why they gave the score that they did.

Other companies act on a good score by asking the happy customer to leave a review and the email has a link to the best review site for the customer. Good NPS software will give a report on how many people in this workflow click through to give a review. This metric lets you see if asking for a review is working and how well. It allows you to A/B test different review sites and different ways of asking.

Finally, some companies will create workflows depending on their company's needs. Here is an example: a company understands from their NPS comments that their support group needs a lot of training. They set up a workflow that looks for the keywords "customer support" in the comments. Once these words are detected an email goes out to the customer asking for their support ticket number and letting the customer know immediately that the company is responding to their comment. Then an internal email is sent out to review the comment and action it.

Now you know why a best practice is to automate simple, high volume actions, and follow up, let's look at the next step to creating a world-class NPS program.



## Segment to Gather Insights

The best way to gather deep insights into your customer base is to segment your customer list. Segmenting allows you to survey your customers as many different ways as you need to uncover a wide variety of insights. Here are some examples:

Need to know about onboarding? Survey those who onboarded in the last week. Need to know if your product update is making customers happy? Survey those who have 180 days into your program and received the new update. Want to know who's getting ready to churn? Set up surveys to automatically reach people 20 days before renewal. Then set workflows to connect detractors with a customer success person. That way you can call and find out why they are unhappy before they churn.

If you use NPS specialized software, you can look at comment keywords. What are the top five words that keep coming up in customer comments? Cold food? Ease of use? A certain staff member's name? On-time delivery? Bad customer support?

Use these insights to drive product roadmaps, marketing campaigns, and employee training programs.

Thoughtful segmentation of role relevant NPS reporting can give you information that reflects the context of customer (segment, region etc.), event (purchase, plan etc.), and internal accountability (salesperson, CSM etc).

Enhance your insights by involving employees. How? Again, use monitors to setup role relevant, always on, glanceable views for different parts of the business.

### Insights



## ENGAGE INTERNAL TEAMS TO KEEP YOUR CULTURE ON TRACK

Changing a culture takes a lot of hard work. It's easy to fall back into old habits. To keep NPS top-of-mind, have managers set up regular (daily/weekly) huddles for front line and product teams to discuss feedback. Then have monthly executive-sponsored, all-hands sessions to talk about where your NPS is, where it's going and why it's important.

By asking your customers for feedback, you generate stories that celebrate customers and employees. Build your internal culture by sharing these stories of reported great customer experiences and people doing things right. Employees rally around a story that makes them look and feel good.



**Dave Grow**

President & COO at Lucidchart | Board Member | SaaS Startup Advisor  
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Recently, every employee at Lucidchart starting receiving a new weekly email on Monday mornings. Immediately after the first one went out, Slack began to blow up.

Engineers, marketers, and many others began sharing insights, ideas to improve the product, operational changes to consider, and more. What was in that email?

Our NPS (Net Promoter Score) dashboard, measuring our customers' satisfaction and likelihood to recommend Lucidchart to others. Along with week-by-week trends of the score itself, the email also included a few dozen raw, unfiltered responses from these customers - including those who scored Lucidchart highly and those who didn't.

While this dashboard had been available for some time, a limited set of folks had been viewing it. Now, our customers' feedback is spread to every single Lucidchart employee. And those early Slack conversations are exactly the type of result we're hoping for.

As a big fan of [Jason Lemkin](#), it resonated deeply with me when he said: "If you get to \$20 million ARR (revenue) & have an NPS of at least 50 - you're unstoppable at that point." Though Lucidchart is well above both those benchmarks, we realize the investment never stops.

I assume we've all got room to become a little more fanatical about customer experience!

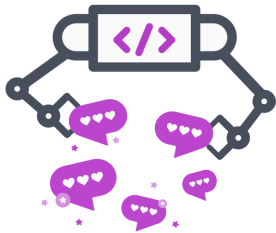
Employees rally around a story that makes them look and feel good.



### Drive External Awareness Through Reviews and Referrals

Don't just celebrate your good scores. Action them. Actioning promoters will surprise and delight them. After all, no one expects to be thanked for a good review, right? Use good scores as a chance to thank your customers and ask for a review or referral. 87% of happy customers are willing to leave a review or referral if you ask them. It's no secret that reviews and referrals are the bread and butter of all businesses — B2B and B2C. Besides reviews, you can collect case studies and testimonials through your NPS program.

Actioning happy customers leverages them for brand management and to grow your brand.



### Collect And Action Feedback Every Day

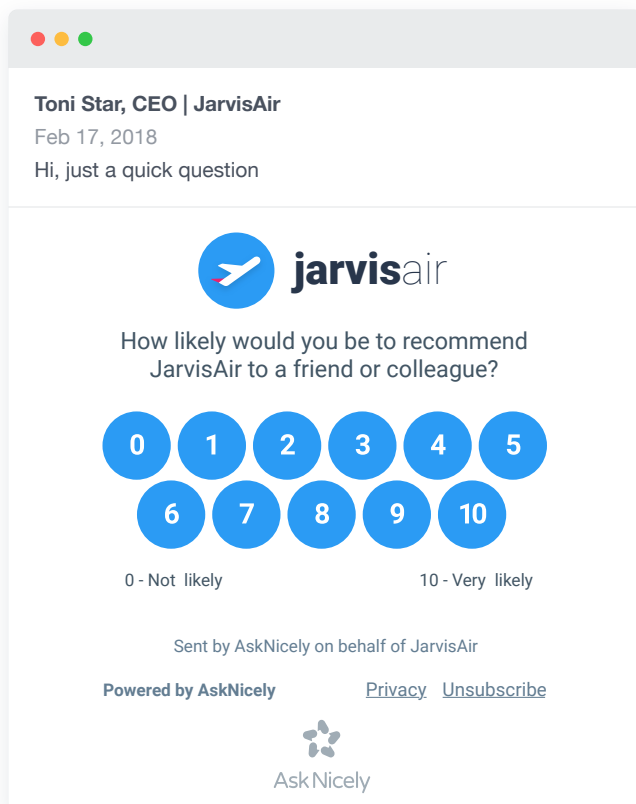
Culture is an everyday experience, so is your brand. You don't want to leave your NPS program to once a year or even once a quarter. Your customers are at different points in their journey every day. Create a regular conversation with every customers by "dripping" out your surveys triggered by moments that matter in the customer journey daily. Whether it's transactional or relational, these moments will give you an opportunity to begin a conversation with your customers where they are and in real time.

Take your culture to the next level by getting your CEO and senior management to visibly spend 5 minutes a day replying or commenting to customers. Conversations with the customers' needs in mind create better relationships, better products, and ultimately happier customers.



## How to Increase Response Rates

A common fear is that response rates will be too low to be significant. To increase response rates you need to think about how your customers will experience the beginning of a customer feedback conversation (which is the goal of an advanced NPS program). Start by understanding your customer and their journey. This allows you to reach out with surveys at the right time in the process. The right time is only part of the process; you need to make the initial reach very quick and convenient. Gone are the days of a 26 questions survey. Today's best practices say you should use the simple NPS format of one question plus an open-ended comment space. Now you have the right timing, the right survey, but you aren't done.



**Toni Star, CEO | JarvisAir**  
Feb 17, 2018  
Hi, just a quick question

 **jarvisair**


How likely would you be to recommend JarvisAir to a friend or colleague?

0 1 2 3 4 5  
6 7 8 9 10

0 - Not likely 10 - Very likely

Sent by AskNicely on behalf of JarvisAir

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Ask Nicely

The biggest key to getting responses is to personalize the surveys. Brand the survey to match your logo, fonts, colors, etc. Ensure it comes from your domain and, if sending via email, ensure the “from” field is filled in with the name of a recognizable team member such as the CEO or Customer Success Manager. Customers are more likely to engage with emails and texts when they can easily recognize that the survey is from you.



Figure - Personalized Survey Experience



### Close The Feedback Loop

You have the best plan, and you have the necessary internal buy-in from executives and managers. You segmented your lists, created scheduled drips at significant moments that matter, and have personalized your survey. Ready to hit send?

Not quite. You need to make sure the right information gets to the right person and that person acts quickly and in the right way. To do this you need to set up relevant escalation alerts and notifications for customers who need immediate attention. You can do this automatically with workflows as discussed above. But we also recommend a personal touch. If you are dripping your surveys then you can easily assign one person to action the responses.

Here at AskNicely, we have an internal program where a different team member gets assigned to react to the surveys daily. That person sends out a personal note to all who respond. Remember that the goal of your program is to start a customer feedback conversation. The person who is assigned that day not only answers with an appropriate email but also touches base with the team member who can best respond to the reply.

If your team is too small or your list too large, you can automate workflows with thank-you responses, requests for reviews and integrations with Slack or other team software.

This is where your team training comes into play. People need guidance to feel comfortable to action the feedback and interact with the customer. The best companies provide weekly trainings for departments and individual training as needed on a daily basis. The entire company needs to be trained to think customer first and trained in how to take the next best action



# How Will I Know It's Working?



Successful programs see their NPS scores rise. They can see an increase in retention, reviews, and referrals.

But actioning customer feedback is not a one and done deal. It's not a "diet" for customer satisfaction that you can follow for a few weeks or months. An advanced NPS program is worked into the fabric of your business. It can affect your product roadmap, your business growth, and the happiness of your employees.

Want to know how your program stacks up?

Check out the 2018 NPS Benchmark study [here](#).

# Legendary Customer Experiences

Today's customers expect only the best experiences. Businesses need to think like the old-time mom and pop shops. They need to know their customers, care for their experiences, and put the customer first. Customer feedback is the best way to connect with customers in real time. The best way to collect customer feedback is through the NPS one question survey.

Advanced NPS programs enhance customer advocacy and help knock down internal silos. They give you a way to measure an internal and external culture of customer obsession. You can use this new set of core tenets to integrate the new best practices required for mature NPS programs to be world-class.

**The Result? [Legendary Customer Experiences.](#)**

