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# Luxury brands must rethink how they measure customer satisfaction

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Any marketing manager would probably agree that a brand that does not measure its customer satisfaction is like a surgeon operating in the dark: they are taking a huge risk.

This is no less true for luxury brands than for their mass-market counterparts, but unfortunately luxury brands face several unique challenges that other brands do not.

Questionable

First, due to the comparatively low traffic in luxury boutiques, it is extremely difficult to engage with non-buyers.

Next, affluent consumers who patronize such boutiques are often unwilling to take surveys.

Finally, the most relevant approach store interviews is costly to implement and scale up.

As a result, many brands rely on a post-purchase questionnaire that they administer to clients after they buy an item.

However, this approach is deeply flawed.

Consider that a consumer who makes a purchase most likely had a good experience with the brand. This alone will skew the overall results towards the positive.

Then, consider that the sales associate always has the option of simply not giving a customer the survey if he or she expects a poor response, which will further distort the data.

And, finally, remember that the average conversion rate is only about 15 percent for luxury boutiques, meaning that this method completely ignores 85 percent of the store's customers.

Accounting for all of these factors, luxury brands must consider that any data they are getting from this methodology is very likely artificially high.

Setting store by

Yes, it is still possible to see some trends, but any kind of more advanced statistical analysis on such data will yield fundamentally unreliable results.

Moreover, they will be a particularly dangerous kind of unreliable results: inaccurate negative feedback at least motivates change. But inaccurate positive feedback can mask significant areas of consumer dissatisfaction and

lead to a comfortable complacency with ineffective processes.

Useful customer satisfaction data must measure the experiences of both buyers and non-buyers. But critically, this must be combined with a detailed analysis of what the customer perceives at every stage of her interaction with the brand.

Only store-performance evaluation programs offer such granularity, using trained evaluators whose profiles are similar to that of the brand's core clientele.

These consumers are able to measure and evaluate the experience they have with the brand throughout their journey, from the Web site to the store.

When the data from their evaluations is aggregated, correlation analysis makes it possible to uncover the moments that drive not just customer satisfaction, but emotional engagement and brand advocacy, giving the brand crucial guidance on where and how it should focus its training programs to achieve the most significant results.

BRANDS CAN and should combine these two complementary approaches surveys of both purchasing and non-purchasing consumers and customer experience evaluation by trained evaluators to gain the most accurate and actionable understanding of their customer's expectations.

Only with this kind of information can they hope to deliver extraordinary experiences that delight not only 15 percent of consumers, but 100 percent of them.

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