

# Voice of the Customer (VOC)

## What is it?

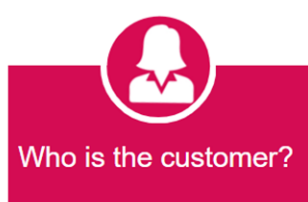
In the university context, customers can be members of staff (internal or external to your department); students; college staff; members of the public – anyone who is receiving a service or information from you.

*It is important to identify all **customers**, internal and external, involved in the end-to-end process and not just the end customer. Use the **SIPOC** tool (Suppliers-Inputs-Process-Outputs-Customers) to help you to do this. It can be beneficial for all those involved in the process to see how they fit into the bigger picture and identify their role in delivering to the customer.*

### Benefits at a glance....

- helps understand the real customer experience throughout a process
- to discover, through their own words, what your customer values
- use it as a baseline for improvement

**VOC** is a market research tool that helps you to understand what your customers' needs are and what they value. Customer 'experience' is in the mind of your end customer and VOC helps you to capture this.



As a...  
(customer type)



I want to...  
(describe need)



So that...  
(describe value)

The measurements of what the customer feels are collected at this stage. They are important in order to assess whether or not the need has been met. This is also useful information to develop measures for benefit realisation when changes are made.

## When to use it?

Use **VOC** when you want to:

- find out what your customers value and how your service measures up
- decide what services to offer
- decide where to focus improvement efforts
- get a baseline measure of customer satisfaction in order to measure improvement.



## How to use it?

**VOC** data can be collected through a variety of qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods through workshops, interviews, observations and surveys. Look at the VOC template and use it or a spreadsheet to record the information you collect.

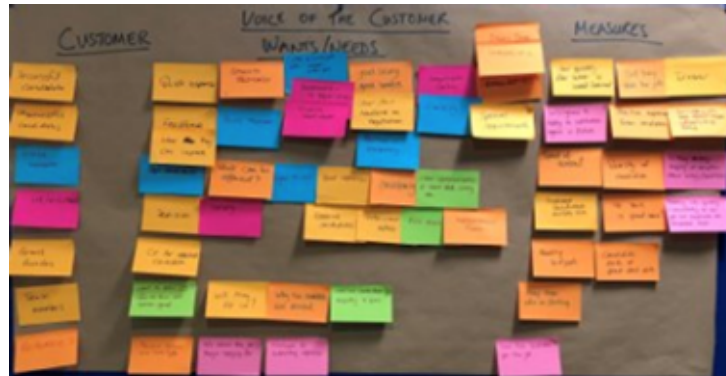


Figure 1: VOC workshop outputs

You can establish drivers and measures by asking searching questions to uncover what it would mean to them if aspects of your product or service were absent or present.

**Case study: University Finance Division Process Improvements Team** wanted to review the advance payments process. They engaged with and collected VOC information through workshops and meetings with department finance teams, Finance Division staff and the process ownership group. They also sent a survey to 100 members of staff who are closely involved with the process.

Figure 2: What their customers said and what the Finance Team did in response to VOC feedback

'I find account coding confusing and unclear and don't know which codes I am supposed to use' *Department Finance Team*

*In response, The Finance Team pre-populated sections of the form with default codes*



'How can we change the process to increase compliance and reconciliation levels? *Process ownership group*

*In response, the Finance Team is consulting with different teams in the Finance Division to explore new options*

'The application forms are not user friendly' *End User*

*In response, the Finance Team re-ordered the form's content and made it clearer who should complete each section*

'The application forms are really out of date and need updating'  
Finance Division team

*In response, the Finance Team removed references to previous card provider and old Finance Division postal addresses*

Using the initial **VOC** information collected, next you can generate a 'needs statements' to understand what the customer sees as 'value'.

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**Warning:** You may need to gather further data, for example, using a survey, or undertake a competitive analysis to ensure that each of these 'needs statements' are quantifiable.

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*'Your most unhappy customers are your greatest source of learning.'*

*Bill Gates*