



# Metrics that matter: 11 reports that translate CX data to program investment

**[A best practice guide]**



[Introduction]

# It's a good time to be a customer experience (CX) professional

We're in the age of the customer, which means brands are investing more resources into their CX strategies than ever before. In fact, 84% of firms report their primary aspiration is to be a CX leader.

But that doesn't mean it's easy.

New technologies. New touchpoints. Increased investment in feedback channels. All of that leads to a whole lot of data. And while every metric matters (why else would you measure it?), you still need to boil down the everyday into the essentials when showcasing program value to the organization.

So which reports help you do that?



84%

of firms report their primary aspiration is to be a CX leader.



1900–1960

## Age of Manufacturing

Mass manufacturing makes industrial powerhouses successful.

1960–1990

## Age of Distribution

Global connections and transportation systems make distribution key.

1990–2010

## Age of Information

Connected PCs and supply chains mean those who can control information flow dominate.



You are here

2010+

## Age of The Customer

Empowered buyers demand a new level of customer obsession.



# What's inside

To help you bridge the gap between the nitty-gritty and the need-to-know, we've broken down 11 reports guaranteed to help you secure organizational buy-in by answering 3 key questions:

Where do we stack up against the competition?

1

Industry benchmarks

2

Competitive visit share

Is the program improving the business?

3

Location-level linkage

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Transaction-level linkage

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Company-level linkage

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Unit variance

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Employee engagement

How can we use the insights to build a data-driven, customer-centric strategy?

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Department-level behaviors

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New location attributes

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Omnichannel analysis

A blue-tinted photograph of two men in an office setting. One man is seated at a desk with a computer monitor, looking at the screen. The other man stands behind him, leaning over and pointing at the monitor. The background is slightly blurred, showing office furniture and plants.

Where do we  
stack up against  
the competition?



# 1

## Industry benchmarks



# Industry benchmarks

Put performance in perspective to get everyone on the same page

See what matters most to customers in your category—and more importantly, how you stack up to the competition.

Category Benchmarks							
Overall Satisfaction		Recommend		Friendliness		Pace of the Experience	
A	79%	A	80%	A	82%	A	75%
B	76%	B	76%	B	78%	C	57%
Your Brand	72%	Your Brand	69%	C	72%	E	57%
C	68%	C	69%	Your Brand	72%	D	57%
D	66%	G	69%	D	71%	Average	54%
Average	65%	Average	65%	G	71%	Your Brand	53%
E	64%	D	63%	Average	69%	F	52%
F	63%	I	63%	E	69%	J	49%
G	61%	F	60%	F	67%	B	47%
H	61%	E	60%	I	66%	H	46%
I	58%	H	56%	J	61%	G	46%
J	58%	J	54%	H	60%	I	41%
K	55%	K	47%	K	54%	K	34%

You're well above industry average on key loyalty metrics, but there's still room to improve.

Customers see you as below average on Pace of the Experience—one of your brand's key drivers. Major improvements here will likely have the biggest impact.

It's hard to celebrate improvements when no one understands the starting point. Reporting benchmarks allows you to:

- ▶ Level-set your organization + add context to CX scores
- ▶ Identify strengths + weaknesses relative to competitors
- ▶ Set goals, prioritize actions, + track progress

Looking at the example, it's clear your brand is doing well in a lot of key areas. But winning brands don't strive to do well—they're driven to keep getting better. Industry benchmarks give you an accurate read on where to focus that drive to inspire more customer loyalty.

So instead of coming to your next presentation with a problem ("We need to increase Overall Satisfaction"), you're ready to propose a solution ("Let's focus on impacting customer perception of Pace of the Experience").

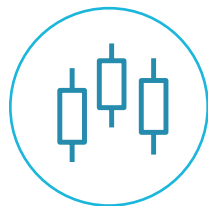
# Industry benchmarks

## Best practice recommendations



### Timing + cadence

- ▶ Year 1 of the program to establish performance baseline
- ▶ Ongoing to plan strategies + track progress



### Key measures

- QUANTITATIVE:
- ▶ Overall Satisfaction
  - ▶ Likelihood to Return/Recommend
  - ▶ Key Drivers
- QUALITATIVE:
- ▶ Topic/Category frequency
  - ▶ Sentiment of customer comments

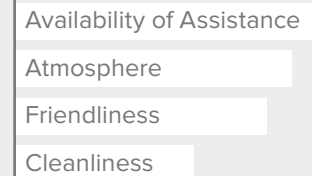


### Key takeaways

- ▶ Competitive standing
- ▶ Customer perception
- ▶ Improvement opportunities
- ▶ Differentiators

**Key driver analysis highlights which aspects of the customer experience matter most:**

#### Pace of the Experience



**How do you know which benchmarks to include?**

Identifying the key drivers of your brand's customer experience is the first step to knowing which needles to move to effect transformative change.

[Learn more](#)

### Why it matters

Customers don't experience your brand in a vacuum—they view it relative to other brand experiences. Industry benchmarks put CX data in context, so executives can clearly see where you are and where you need to go to lead your industry.



# 2

## Competitive visit share





# Competitive visit share

Compare consumer behaviors against specific competitors

The columns show how each brand's customers spread their visits across the competitive set over a given time period.

In the last 30 days, **46%** of the trips your brand's customers made were to Walmart, while Walmart's customers are only giving your brand **14%** of their trips.

Brand	Your brand	Walmart	Target	Costco	Sam's Club	% change
Your brand	36%	<b>14%</b>	14%	<b>8%</b>	<b>23%</b>	+2%
Walmart	<b>46%</b>	60%	60%	42%	54%	-1%
Target	12%	17%	17%	26%	10%	+1%
Costco	2%	4%	4%	19%	3%	-
Sam's Club	4%	5%	5%	5%	10%	-2%

Looking across the rows, you can see how each brand steals visits from others.

Your brand is successfully stealing **23%** of Sam's Club customers' visits, but is struggling to take visits away from Costco (**8%**).

The intersection of each brand's columns and rows represents the percentage of their customers' visits the brand is retaining.

By making this a regular report, you can measure fluctuations in customer retention, identify which brands you're chipping away at, and highlight the competitors that are gaining ground.

There are a lot of ways for customers to tell you what they think—whether it's taking your survey, posting reviews, or reaching out to your contact center. But ultimately, they let you know how they really feel with what they *do*.

Competitive visit share keeps everyone focused on the program by:

- ▶ Highlighting who's stealing the greatest share of your customers' visits
- ▶ Providing an accurate read on changing market dynamics
- ▶ Gauging the effectiveness of your customer loyalty initiatives

So let's say you've shared the industry benchmarks, and everyone is all-in on your improvement strategy. Exciting, right? But that can also be nerve-wracking if you don't know whether the plan is working. Reporting competitive visit share lets you prove strategies are effective by using behavioral data to show how things actually play out in the real world.

# Competitive visit share

## Best practice recommendations



### Timing + cadence

- ▶ Continuous tracking
- ▶ Increased emphasis around point-in-time initiatives



### What you need

- ▶ Behavioral data
- ▶ Near real-time customer feedback



### Key takeaways

- ▶ Branded competitive insights
- ▶ Where your customers go when they're not visiting you

### Why it matters

Every lever you pull should be geared toward winning more loyal customers. Competitive visit share shows how non-loyal customer visits are distributed across specific competitors—allowing you to build a more targeted strategy.



### How do you get an accurate read on competitive visit share?

Advancements in mapping technology and location analytics have turned every smartphone user into a potential source of insight. Watch the video to learn how visit-detected surveys give brands competitive insights they can't get anywhere else.

[Learn more](#) ▶





# Financial linkage— Secure + sustain buy-in by showing how better experiences lead to better sales

Companies don't just invest in CX programs because they want happy customers. That's an added benefit, but companies know better customer experiences are the most direct path to profitable growth. And while seeing improvement strategies bump up scores and chip away at competitors' visit share is great, at a certain point, that needs to show up on the bottom line.

5.1x

CX leaders experience 5.1x revenue growth over CX laggards [Forrester]

6.3%

Companies with a CX program see a 6.3% decrease YOY in customer care costs – compared to a 2% increase for companies without a program [iPerceptions]

5-7x

Cost to Acquire a Customer (CAC) is 5–7x more expensive than Cost to Serve a Customer (CSC) [Kapost]

So how do you prove that impact?  
We recommend breaking it down into  
3 different levels.



# 3

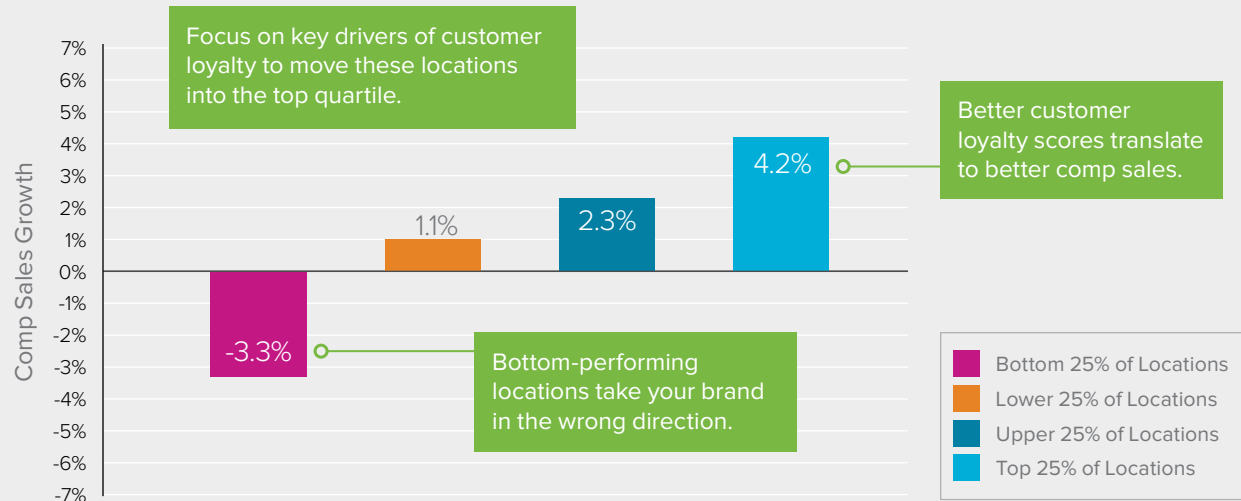
## Location-level linkage





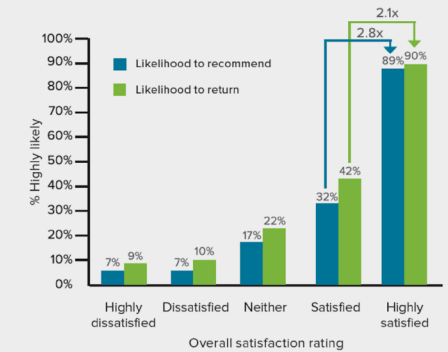
# Location-level linkage

Prove the program leads to location-level growth



## A focus on top box scores drives bottom-line impact

[Learn more](#)



Highly satisfied customers are 2–3 times more likely to say they're highly likely to return and recommend than satisfied customers

No matter how big your business grows, it lives and breathes at the location level—which is why it's important to understand how CX scores relate to (and impact) each location's sales.

One of the most common types of financial linkage techniques, correlation analysis ties measures like Overall Satisfaction, Likelihood to Return, and Likelihood to Recommend to location-level sales growth. That linkage helps prove the direction and strength of the relationship between survey responses and business results.

This report makes it clear: locations that deliver better experiences drive customer loyalty. And customers coming back more often and recommending your brand means higher comp sales.

To go a step further and build a more sophisticated linkage model, you can also supplement correlation analyses with multivariate regression

analyses, which factor in additional data on location characteristics. The multivariate regression model explains how much sales growth varies according to location-specific variables like:

- ▶ Age of the location/recent remodels
- ▶ Number of nearby competitors
- ▶ Regional unemployment rates



# 4

## Transaction-level linkage



# Transaction-level linkage

Prove the impact of great service on each purchase

The biggest opportunity for your brand is to move Satisfied customers (4s on a 5-point scale) to Highly Satisfied customers (5s on a 5-point scale).



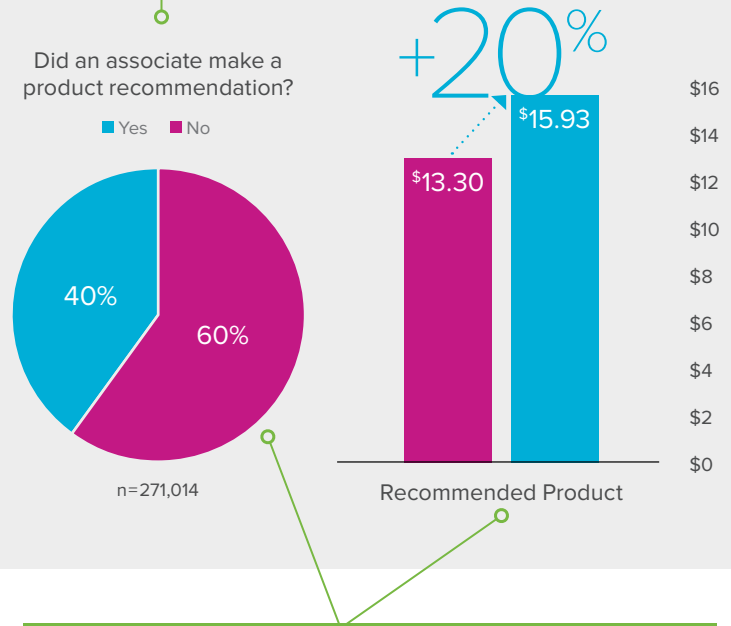
Each level of satisfaction is accompanied by incremental increases in spend.

The most direct way to quantify the financial impact of your CX program is to match individual survey results to the amount spent by the respondent.

Transaction-level analyses are the most detailed sources of financial linkage, because they cut straight to the chase: Does a better customer experience actually lead to better sales?

As you can see, better experiences do drive business results. But transaction analyses also go a step further by allowing you to investigate the financial impact of things like ongoing promotions, front-line service standards, and problem resolution processes. That's the difference between demonstrating the scores-sales linkage and putting processes in place to improve it.

There are specific service behaviors that help increase average spend.



When associates make a product recommendation, customers spend 20% more on average. Unfortunately, that key service standard is only being executed 40% of the time.



# 5

## Company-level linkage

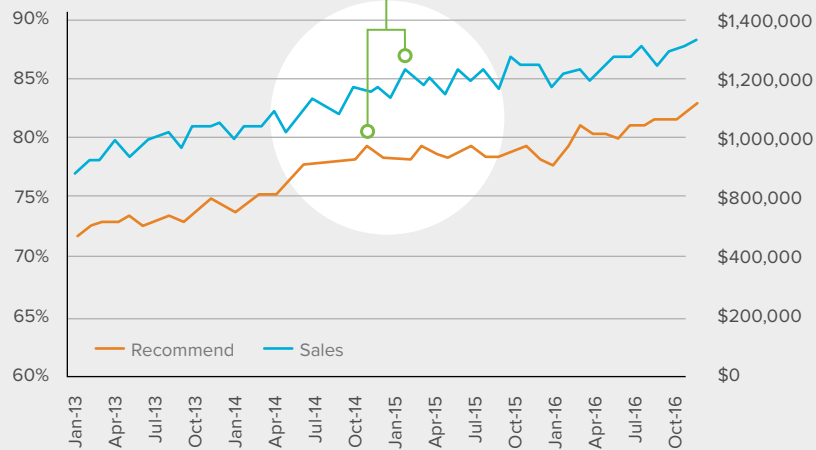




# Company-level linkage

Advocate for continued investment by demonstrating company-wide impact

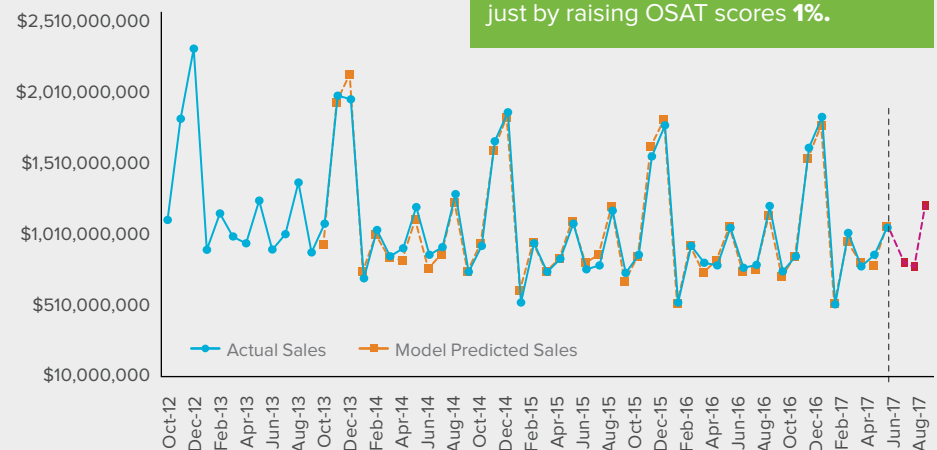
Brands generally see a 3-month lag\* between improvements in scores and a corresponding bump in sales.



\*Lag between improved service and improved sales varies depending on the brand's typical repurchase cycle. For example, improvements for automotive or furniture retailers may not be reflected in sales as quickly as for QSR brands.

Showing transaction-level financial linkage and location-level sales growth shows ROI, but if you want long-term buy-in across your company, you have to prove the program's impact on the entire organization.

A 1% change in OSAT scores changes sales by approximately 1.02%. This equates to approximately \$11.9M in sales at the national level just by raising OSAT scores 1%.



But that can take time. Customers need to have an improved customer experience and then change their behavior (e.g., visit more often, recommend more frequently) as a result before sales reflect that change.

A time series analysis reveals how customer satisfaction and loyalty scores correlate with financial

performance over time at the company level. Even better, establishing that long-term impact can help you predict the financial impact of future improvements to the customer experience—allowing you to make a stronger case for continued (and increased) investment in your CX program.

# Financial linkage levels

## Best practice recommendations

	Location-level	Transaction-level	Company-level
 <b>Methodology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Correlation analysis</li><li>▶ Multivariate regression analysis</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ 1:1 linkage of survey results + purchase data</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Time series analysis</li></ul>
 <b>Timing + cadence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ After Year 1/ongoing</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ In Year 1/ongoing</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ End of Year 3 for time series</li><li>▶ End of Year 4 for predictive time series</li></ul>
 <b>What you need</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ ≥1 year of CX data + ≥2 years of sales data/location</li><li>▶ Location attributes (for multivariate analyses)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Unique ID that ties responses to transactions</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ ≥30 months of CX data</li><li>▶ ≥42 months of financial data</li><li>▶ ≥48 months of CX data for predictive time series</li></ul>
 <b>Key takeaways</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Score/sales relationship</li><li>▶ How service impacts location-level growth</li><li>▶ Top-/bottom-performing locations</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ How key metrics correlate with spend</li><li>▶ Financial impact of service standards</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Long-term impact of CX improvements</li><li>▶ Potential financial gains from future improvements</li></ul>

### Why it matters

An effective program will make more customers happy—and likely boost sales in the process—but you have to be able to connect those dots to prove the true value of better customer experiences.



**Want to dive deeper into the how-to of financial linkage?**

Check out our white paper

[Learn more](#) 

# 6

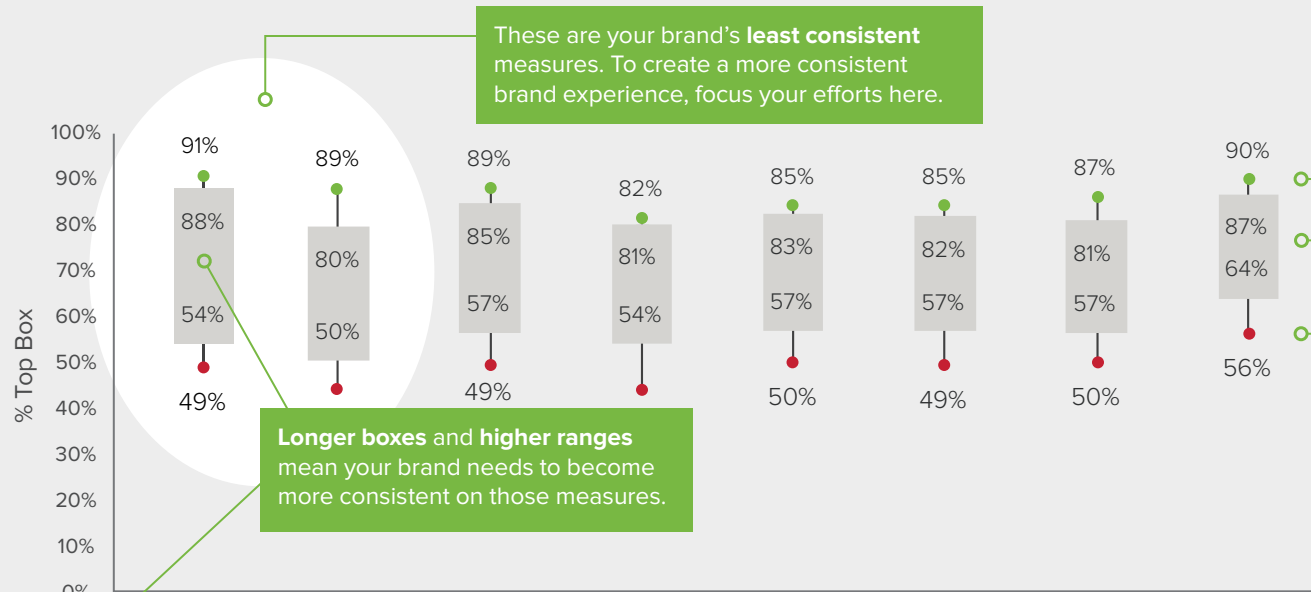
## Unit variance





# Unit variance

Make sure your customers get the best experience possible with each and every visit



These are your brand's **least consistent** measures. To create a more consistent brand experience, focus your efforts here.

**Longer boxes and higher ranges** mean your brand needs to become more consistent on those measures.

The dots represent your top- and bottom-performing locations, while the gray box represents the range in scores for 95% of your brand's locations.

	Staff's Menu Knowledge	Pace of Experience	Attentiveness of Server	Overall Atmosphere	Cleanliness of Restaurant	Taste of Food	Temperature of Food	Accuracy of Order
<b>95% Range:</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>23</b>
Range change:	-4	-1	1	-8	-4	-4	0	-10
Top change:	3	6	8	1	6	4	3	1
Bottom change:	7	7	7	9	10	8	3	11

Attentiveness of Server became less consistent since the last report—because top performers made greater improvements than the bottom performers.

Overall, your brand is closing the gap in consistency on almost every measure.

So what happens when scores stagnate and sales are flat? It happens (even to the best of us).

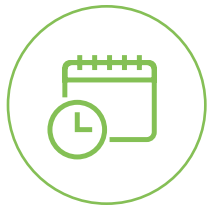
Fortunately, CX programs do more than just keep tabs on performance—they help you focus organizational efforts in the right areas. A unit variance report helps you:

- ▶ Identify which locations + metrics need the most work
- ▶ Diagnose potential system-wide issues + propose solutions
- ▶ Create a more consistent brand experience

It might look complicated, but this report is actually pretty simple. The ultimate goal is to shrink the gray boxes and move them up the chart, which means higher scores across your system and a more consistent brand experience. The wider the gap, the more important it is to coach up those low-performing locations.

# Unit variance

## Best practice recommendations



### Timing + cadence

- ▶ In Year 1 to identify consistency issues + low-performing locations
- ▶ Ongoing to ensure the gaps are closing



### Key learnings

- ▶ How widely consistency varies across your brand on key measures
- ▶ Which locations need the most coaching



### Why it matters

The success of any multi-unit organization hinges on consistency. If customers feel like they experience a different brand every time they visit a new location, they'll seek out a more dependable experience with one of your competitors.

# 7

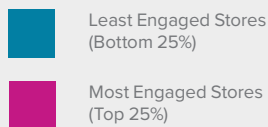
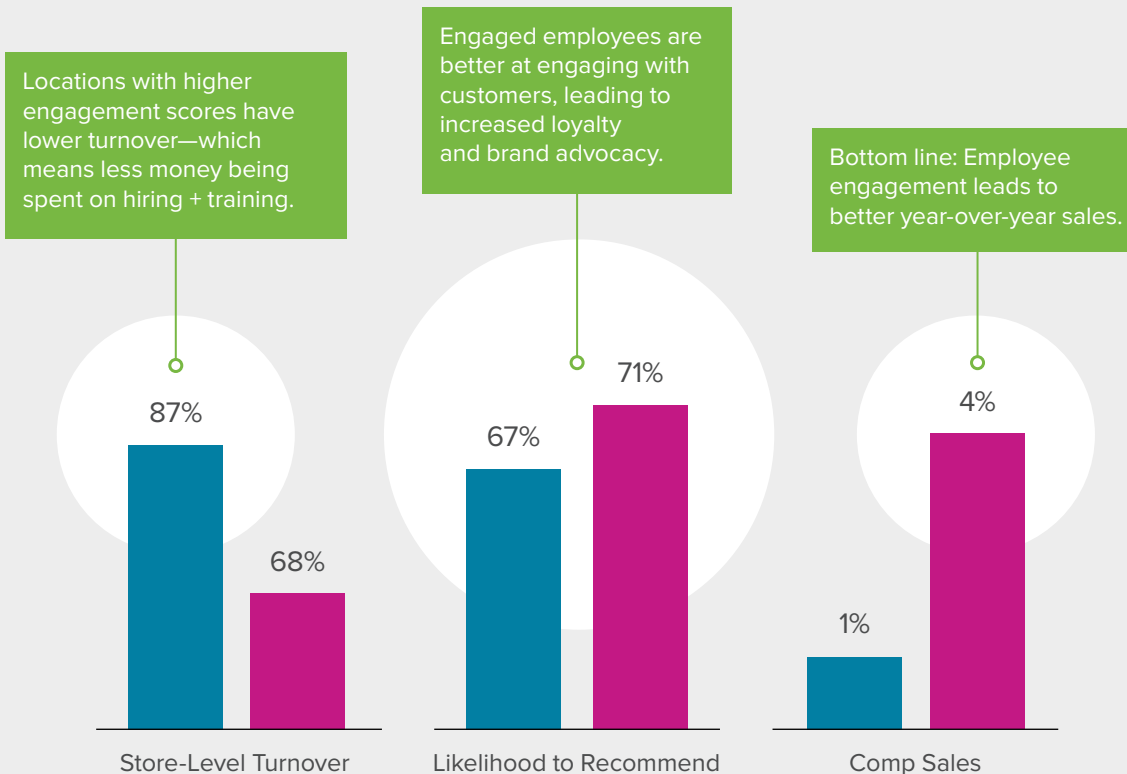
## Employee Engagement





# Employee engagement

Impact your entire service culture by analyzing both sides of the register



This report investigates the impact of employee engagement on other key metrics by comparing top- vs. bottom-performing locations.

If you do have major gaps in consistency, there's a chance some may be related to factors outside your employees' control. But more often than not, low-performing locations have issues with front-line engagement.

If that's the case, another powerful report is tying CX scores and sales data to employee measures.

If your organization has invested in an employee engagement program, tying CX scores to workplace factors provides a better vantage point for key stakeholders. And when you're able to link things like overall engagement and location-level turnover rates to customer loyalty and comp sales, it makes it that much easier to chart the right path for your brand.

“The guest experience will never exceed the employee experience.”

Mike Grams  
COO, Taco Bell



TACO BELL



# Employee engagement

## Best practice recommendations



### Timing + cadence

- ▶ Year 1 to prove relationship of the employee/customer experience
- ▶ 2x/year ongoing following employee survey collection periods



### Key learnings

- ▶ How the employee experience impacts the customer experience
- ▶ The impact each has on financial performance

### Why it matters

No one is closer to the customer experience than your front-line employees. If financial linkage drops off and gaps in consistency widen, pairing your CX data with employee engagement initiatives allows you to align strategies across both programs.



### Field engagement is critical to program success

If employees aren't engaged with their jobs, chances are they aren't engaged with the program. Our research shows top-performing locations use reporting tools twice as often and outperform their less engaged counterparts in comp sales, Overall Satisfaction, and key loyalty metrics. Be sure to monitor reporting tool usage regularly to keep tabs on your field engagement.

[Learn more](#)



How can we use  
customer insights to build  
a data-driven strategy?

# From buy-in to all in — Taking your program to the next level

In 7 reports, you've:

- ▶ Shown what matters most to customers (+ how that impacts purchase behaviors)
- ▶ Established scores-sales linkage at 3 different levels
- ▶ Learned how to pinpoint potential problem areas when linkage falls off

While that's a job well done, it's not complete. To showcase full program potential, you need to prove it's more than just a performance tracking device or problem diagnostics tool. A truly effective CX program should help you build a growth strategy that puts a data point behind every decision.

Here are some ideas to get you started.



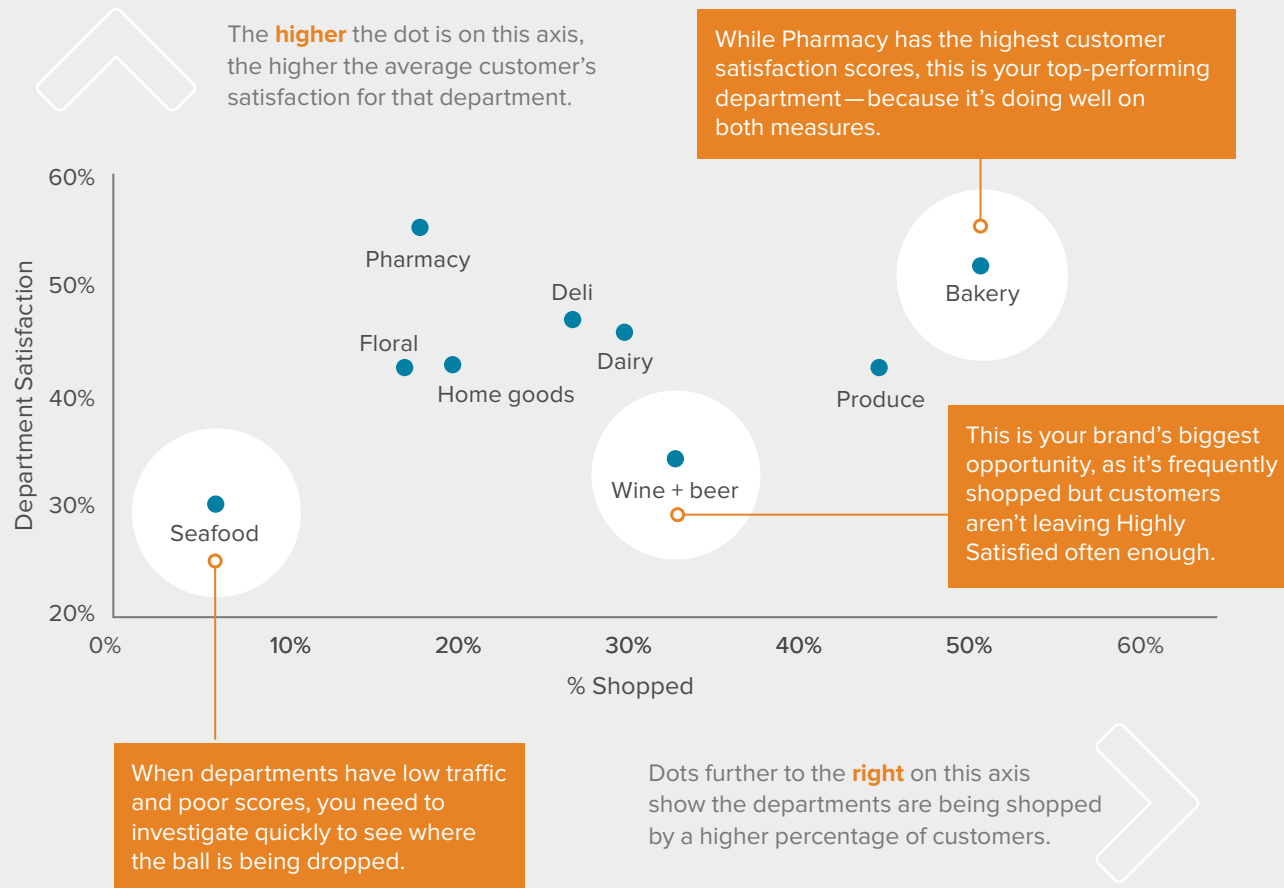
# 8

## Department-level behaviors



# Department-level behaviors

## Know where your customers visit most to bump up basket size



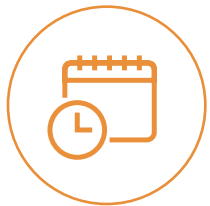
This report shows two things:

1. Which departments customers shop most
2. How they rate the experience for each

The goal is to get every department as close to the top-right corner as possible. Departments toward the bottom-left put you at risk of letting loyal customers become partial purchasers—shopping you for some needs and competitors for others.

# Department-level behaviors

## Best practice recommendations



### Timing + cadence

- ▶ Year 1
- ▶ Ongoing to ensure you're improving across departments



### What you need

- ▶ Transaction data showing which departments were shopped
- ▶ Department-specific questions



### Key learnings

- ▶ Shopping behaviors
- ▶ High- and low-performing departments

### Why it matters

With more options than ever, customers are increasingly willing to shop different brands for different products. To bump up share of basket and inspire customer loyalty, you need to make sure your brand is delivering on every shopper's needs.



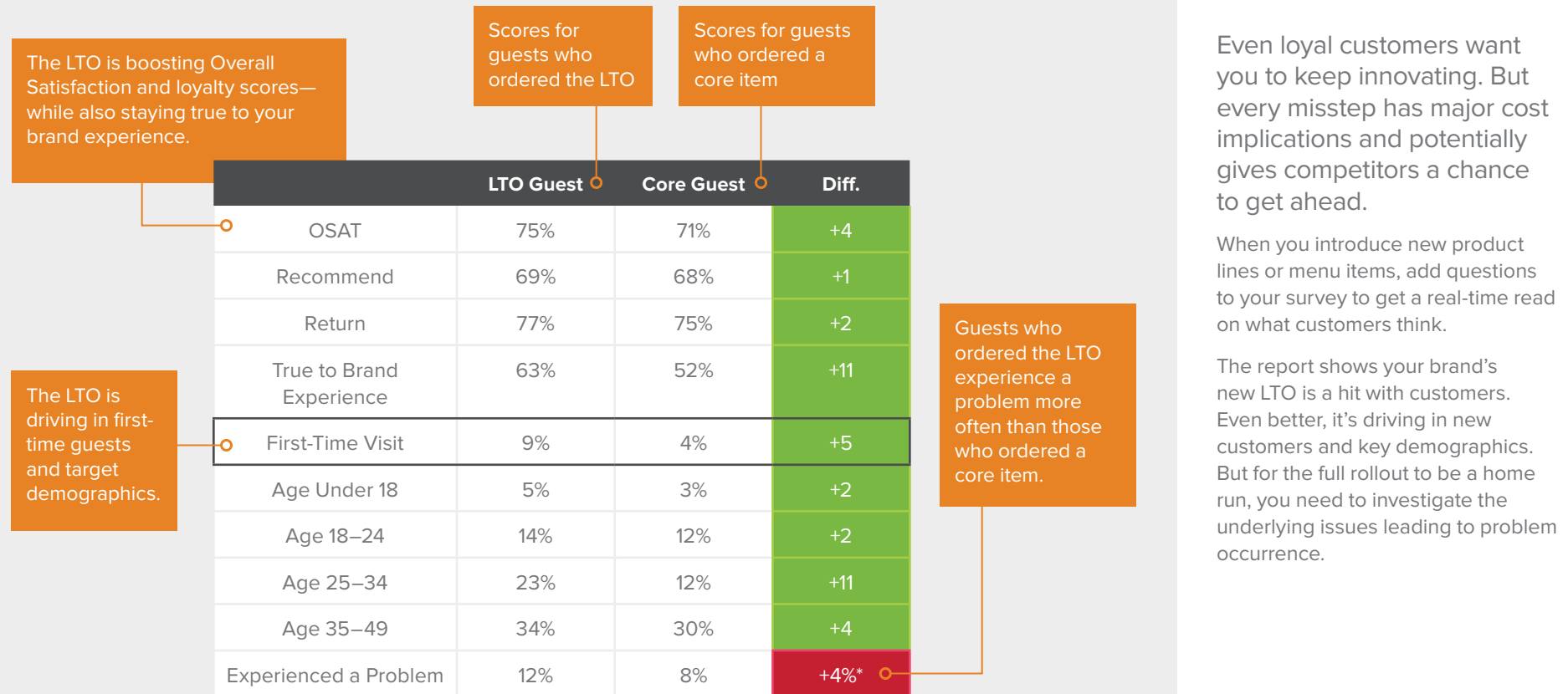
# 9

Promotions +  
limited-time offers



# Promotions + limited-time offers

Innovate with confidence



Even loyal customers want you to keep innovating. But every misstep has major cost implications and potentially gives competitors a chance to get ahead.

When you introduce new product lines or menu items, add questions to your survey to get a real-time read on what customers think.

The report shows your brand's new LTO is a hit with customers. Even better, it's driving in new customers and key demographics. But for the full rollout to be a home run, you need to investigate the underlying issues leading to problem occurrence.

# Promotions + limited-time offers

## Best practice recommendations



### Timing + cadence

- ▶ Following the release of new menu items or product lines



### What you need

- ▶ LTO-specific questions



### Key learnings

- ▶ How innovations resonate
- ▶ Potential issues leading up to full rollout

### Why it matters

If you're not evolving your product offerings, you risk letting your brand go stale in the eyes of the customer. CX programs let you innovate with confidence by providing a real-time read on customer perceptions.



# 10

New location  
attributes



# New location attributes

Bolster your brand's expansion strategy with customer insights



If you're asking the right questions and taking the right actions, customers will reward you by visiting more often, recommending you to others, and spending more. That puts you in the coveted position of having to open new locations to accommodate more customers. But breaking into new markets isn't always business as usual.

This report shows that your brand's key drivers shift at new locations. By breaking out stores by age, you can see which measures matter most and where you need to allocate resources for your next grand opening. And by grouping metrics according to different aspects of the customer experience, you can determine whether it's an issue with:

- ▶ Inexperienced staff
- ▶ New store layouts
- ▶ Unfamiliar customers



# New location attributes

## Best practice recommendations



### Timing + cadence

- ▶ Post-location launch to measure short-/long-term CX impact
- ▶ Leading up to future expansion strategies



### What you need

- ▶ Location attribute data



### Key learnings

- ▶ How the customer experience varies across new and old locations
- ▶ Where to focus efforts when growing into new markets



### Why it matters

An effective CX program needs to do more than help your brand grow—it needs to guide that growth according to market dynamics. Don't let the CX data from new locations get lost in the shuffle of everyday analysis.



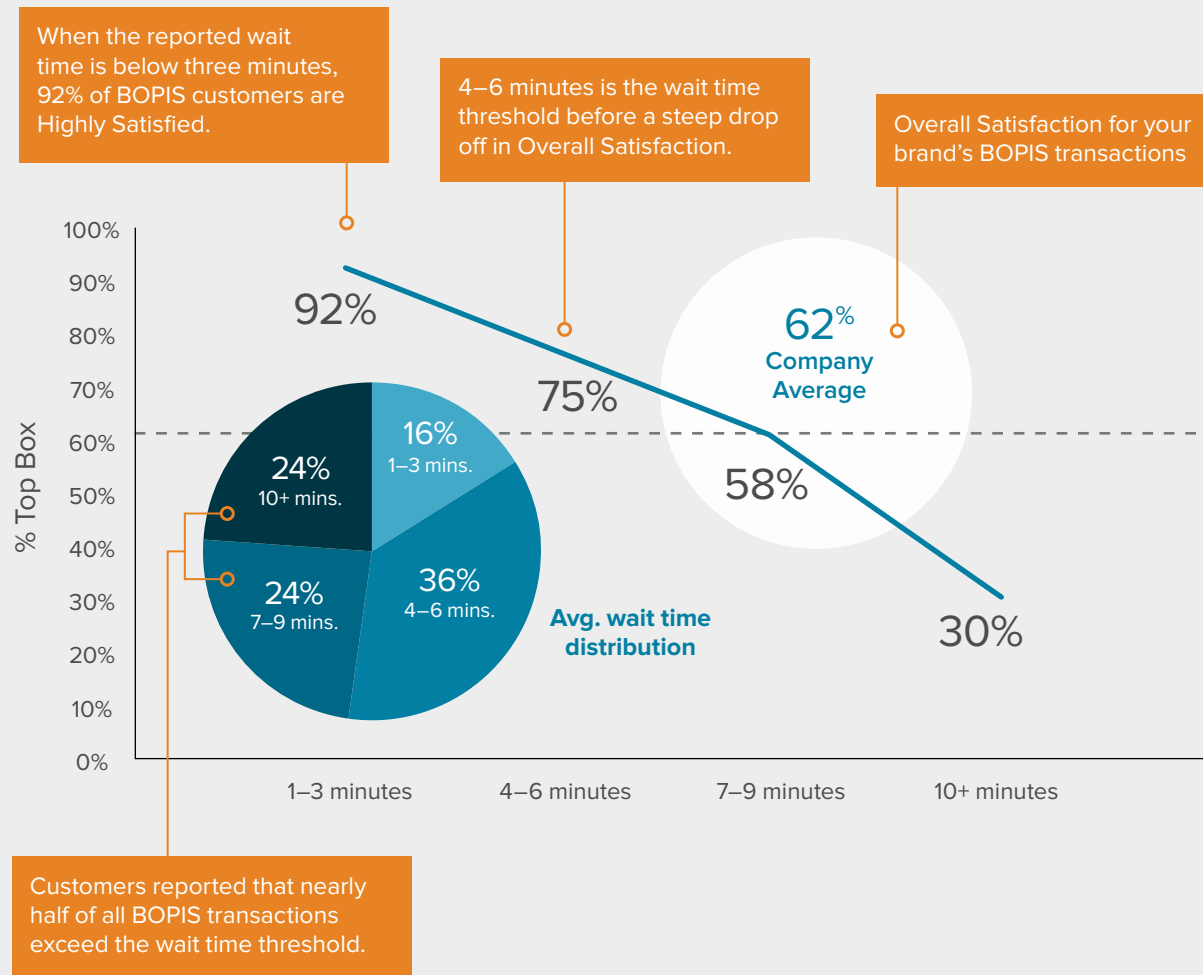
# 11

## Omnichannel analysis



# Omnichannel analysis

## Future-proof your brand experience



Companies have traditionally competed on convenience and market presence, which meant staking claim to as many shopping malls and intersections as possible. But the rising competitive threat of non-traditional retailers like Amazon and subscription services has changed the definition of convenience and pushed the market into digital territories.

As your brand competes across new channels, you need to be sure the customer experience holds up.

This report shows how your brand's buy online, pick-up in store (BOPIS) channel is resonating with customers. With wait time being the top driver of Overall Satisfaction, it's clear you need to find ways to streamline fulfillment processes, train staff, and establish clear goals to shorten wait times and deliver better experiences.

# Omnichannel analysis

## Best practice recommendations



### Timing + cadence

- ▶ Each time your brand rolls out a new customer touchpoint
- ▶ Ongoing to track performance trends



### What you need

- ▶ Touchpoint-specific survey questions



### Key learnings

- ▶ Key drivers of the customer experience across new channels
- ▶ Where to focus improvement efforts

### Why it matters

Your brand faces competition from multiple directions—whether it's the competitor across the street or the app on your customer's phone. Staying relevant in a world gone omni means your brand has to adapt to customers' evolving expectations across every touchpoint.



# Don't settle for a feedback program—build a customer insights program

They may sound similar, but they're worlds apart. A feedback program essentially amounts to a list of customer reviews. There may be some interesting tidbits here and there, but for the most part, it's something that just sits on your shelf collecting data.

A customer insights program, on the other hand, tells you what the data is actually saying—in ways that lead to meaningful actions and tangible results. When you can go beyond a platform provider and find a program partner that's passionate about the customer experience and dedicated to getting to know your business, it makes it that much easier to tailor the program to organizational initiatives—and vice versa.

When that happens, you'll notice there are fewer nice-to-know reports—and a lot more need-to-know.

“The difference between SMG and everyone else is that we found people as passionate about the guest experience and great service as we are. It's no surprise that the first year with the program has been our best year yet.”



**McKinley Greer** | *Operations Intelligence Specialist*

## About SMG

SMG (Service Management Group) partners with more than 500 brands around the globe to create better customer and employee experiences, which drive loyalty and performance. SMG uniquely combines technology and insights to help clients listen better, act faster, and outperform competitors. Strategic solutions include omniCX™, Brand Research, and Employee Engagement. SMG evaluates 250 million surveys annually, across 130 countries.

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For more ways to secure + sustain executive investment in your CX program, visit [smg.com/contactus](http://smg.com/contactus).