

When You Have Five Minutes with a Customer...

Customers are everywhere. You're away from work, out in the world, and you hear your company name, its products, or even your industry. Maybe someone mentions a competitor.

Do this:

Use the next 5 minutes to learn what they think about your company and its products, why they choose you (or not) and what they would like to see from you in the future.

Follow the script

Introduce yourself:

Tell them your name and who you work for. This transparency helps present you and your company as caring about customer feedback.

Ask:

"I heard you mentioning my company's name or products. What do you know about us?"

Follow-up with:
"How did you learn about us?"

Ask:

"Why do you choose us and our products?"

Follow-up with:
"What companies do consider our competitors? Why did you choose us over them?"

Ask:

"If you had a magic wand and could change anything about my company and its products, what would you change and why?"

Follow-up with: "What would need to be true for you to move forward (even more fully) with my company and its products?"



We originally developed this exercise for a client in the beverage industry, reminding them that every time any employee walked into a bar, they were surrounded by customers.



Ask only open-ended questions

None of the suggested questions above can be answered “yes” or “no.” Rely on open-ended questions because they keep people talking.

Dig deeper

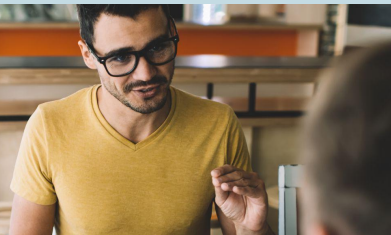
Rely on the interviewer’s fallback response: “tell me more about that.”

Listen actively

Relying on the handful of prepared questions will allow you to listen without thinking of what you want to say next.

Pay attention to their emotions

Focus not just on what they say, but also how they say it and the emotions they are expressing. Are they excited, frustrated, angry, or something else?



Avoid offering solutions

You know so much more than you’re saying, but this is not the place for that conversation. You’re there to listen and learn - not to offer solutions.



What did you learn?

Use your phone, a piece of paper, a napkin, or even a business card if you still have one.

- Write down where you were, their name, and anything you remember about them (age, clothing, what they were eating, drinking, or wearing, etc.).
- Write down what they said when answering your questions and also how they said it. What products did they mention? Were they excited? Or angry?
- Don’t forget to consider - and write down - what YOU were thinking and the messaging/product solutions that you know your company does, or could, offer. NOW is the time for solutioning.



Share and build on your insights

- Take your insights from this interaction and share them with others from your company who have been engaged in similar inquiries.
- Use this knowledge to build a more complete understanding of your customer and engage them more successfully.
- Don’t know what to do with your new insights? Need to validate them through a more rigorous customer study? Let us know, and we’ll help you identify the next steps.