NetReflector™
Gain an edge. Know your customer.

SUCCESS STORY

How F5 Networks used customer feedback to measurably improve its support experience

THE COMPANY

F5 Networks at a glance
• Leader in Application Delivery Networking solutions • Founded in 1996 • Global headquarters in Seattle, WA • Public company (NASDAQ: FFIV) • $653.1 million in revenue (prior FY) • 1,640+ employees worldwide • Offices in 28 countries • Five contact center locations (USA, JP, SG, UK, CHN) • Customer support in more than 20 languages

F5 Networks, Inc. is an award-winning global provider of Application Delivery Networking (ADN) solutions that ensure the secure, reliable, and fast delivery of applications. Global organizations such as large enterprises, service and cloud providers, as well as Web 2.0 content providers trust F5 to keep their business moving forward. F5 has deep, strategic partnerships with large application and technology vendors such as Microsoft, Oracle, VMware, and SAP.

"*We pride ourselves on the longevity of our customer relationships,*" explains Ron Runyon, Director of Customer Support, North America for F5. "*Customer support is a key contributing factor of our success. We are always looking for areas of continuous improvement to keep the finger on the pulse of what our customers think worldwide, in real time, and across multiple functional areas.*" F5's multi-tier support is distributed across five contact centers around the world. The company's engineers handle support inquiries via phone, email and online.

THE CHALLENGE

Prior to working with NetReflector, F5's global contact centers were using a self-administered, third-party online survey software package to measure customer satisfaction. Support cases would be randomly hand-picked to be surveyed, resulting in a fragmented, labor-intensive process. The software the company was using also had its limitations – F5 couldn't reach a large enough sample size to determine if the customer research it was conducting was statistically valid, and the lack of controls made measuring success extremely difficult.

F5 Networks started to look for a more scalable and sophisticated customer feedback solution that would help support three main business objectives:

- Provide customers around the world with a channel through which they could provide feedback about support.
- Identify possible areas of improvement from direct customer feedback.
- Measure the company's ability to deliver support that would delight its customer base.

THE SOLUTION

The team at F5 went through a comprehensive vendor evaluation process to select the right solution for its customer satisfaction measurement needs. Key criteria for selection included:

Technology

- Advanced online survey and reporting features
- Scalability and flexibility to evolve as needed
- Full system automation
- Multilingual survey capabilities
- Implementation across multiple touch-points
- Ease-of-use and easy maintenance

Business partnership

- Deep subject-matter expertise
- Experts in survey design and reporting
- High level of service and responsiveness
- Similar size business
- Easy to conduct business with
- Cost-effectiveness / business value

"*Most of the larger vendors we talked to at the time were looking for us to be involved at a more corporate level when our needs really only pertained to our support organization*," continues Runyon. "This was one of the key reasons why we selected NetReflector. Being a high-growth organization, we wanted to work with a partner our size that had the scalable technology and the services to grow with us as we expanded our program. We were immediately impressed with NetReflector's high level of service, professionalism and responsiveness."

NetReflector automated F5's customer feedback loop on its online survey platform VantagePoint. The VantagePoint platform was integrated with F5's own CRM system output to allow for event-triggered, automated distributions of surveys based on pre-defined business rules. The VantagePoint system also provides F5 with triggered email alerts that notify its global contact center managers about any survey that receives a negative satisfaction rating, which enables the company to take immediate action with the customer in question. The result is a completely hands-off survey process for the F5 team, enabling them to focus on other important tasks.

F5 uses a custom-designed online report portal to slice and dice its customer satisfaction data at the click of a mouse, and generate reports by a variety of variables, including support engineer, contact center team, geography, customer location, or product to name just a few. Some 150 members of staff at F5 now have access to real-time online reports, from executives and managers all the way to support agents.

Call center managers can pull up their own team reports at any time to see how their performance stacks up against other F5 contact centers around the globe. In addition to measuring, tracking, and diagnosing satisfaction across the support organization, NetReflector's solution is used as a coaching tool for individual engineers. F5 also uses the results as part of an incentive program for each level-one and level-two engineer based on the support satisfaction scores they each receive from customers.

"*What we learned from the process of working with NetReflector is that – although we know our business inside and out – we didn't have all the right answers when it came to survey design and reporting*," adds Runyon. "*There is a real skill in asking the right questions the right way to get the actionable customer intelligence required to inform successful change strategies. NetReflector has been instrumental at helping us standardize on survey design best practices, so we remain consistent across the board, and can measure success effectively*."

THE BUSINESS RESULTS

F5 Networks started reaping the benefits of its new customer feedback solution six months after it went live. After implementing a series of critical policies and processes based on NetReflector's expert input, the company saw positive changes in trending related to both initial survey response rates and the quality of customer feedback submitted.

As a result over the past four years, the company has been able to successfully measure, track, and improve a series of key performance indicators:

- Overall satisfaction with F5's support organization has increased by 30%.
- Agent performance scores have risen by 25%.
- F5's internal Customer Satisfaction Index* scores have increased by 2.2 points.
- Survey response rates went up by 60%.
- 92% of F5 customers would recommend F5 to colleagues based on their support experience.
- 97.6% of support cases get a response within 20 minutes of submission.
- Support engineer training time has been reduced by a week.

F5's internal CSI score is a calculated variable based on the results from key satisfaction and loyalty questions.

"*NetReflector offers a unique combination of sophisticated in-house online survey technology, subject-matter expertise, and research design services,*" *concludes Runyon. "They were the right match for us, and this remains true to this day. Our focus on customer satisfaction helps us deliver a more consistent service experience around the globe. Just like our customers trust F5 to keep their business moving forward, we rely on NetReflector to quickly and accurately inform the key metrics we need to track to implement winning change strategies that will resonate with our customers.*"

For more information on NetReflector's enterprise feedback solutions:

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NetReflector Success Story: F5 Networks, Inc.

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