



VOICE OF OUR BRAND

INDUSTRY SECTOR: **FIXED LINE TELECOMMUNICATIONS (6530)**

CLIENT COMPANY: **VIRGIN MEDIA**

DESIGN CONSULTANCY: **ENGINE SERVICE DESIGN**

SUBMISSION DATE: **26/06/2015**

FOR PUBLICATION

02/ EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

296 WORDS

The delivery of a great customer experience relies largely on people. Good customer service and helpful staff elicit the highest levels of praise in retail: 63% of all positive feedback relating to staff, versus 8.4% to products¹. That said the people factor is often the hardest to get right, manage and maintain.

This submission is all about the design of a solution to support people in consistently delivering an excellent branded experience with remarkable results.

Engine have been working with Virgin Media to help them innovate beyond their products. The aim of this project was to deliver an improved multi-channel experience, increasing satisfaction for customers and value for the business, raising Net Promoter Scores and building brand affinity and differentiation.

The programme Engine designed is called Voice of Our Brand. It consists of behavioural frameworks and coaching materials designed to deliver a consistent, excellent and distinctly Virgin Media experience through call centres, retail stores and engineers.

The frameworks set down values and guidelines for delivering 'perfect' customer interactions, in terms of activities and language, which staff can adapt to any situation and increase the likelihood of delivering the ideal customer experience.

Voice of Our Brand drives increases in Net Promoter Scores by enabling agents to demonstrate the right positive behaviours every time.



CONFIDENTIAL RESULTS

03/ PROJECT OVERVIEW

534 WORDS

OUTLINE OF PROJECT BRIEF

Through analysing over 3 million records of customer feedback, Virgin Media had discovered that issue and problem resolution only went so far towards creating positive engagements with customers.

The data suggested that whether issues were fixed or not...

... delivering a consistently positive emotional experience resonated more with customers than just the rational and functional aspect of being able to connect to their service again.

So in 2009, Virgin Media's Customer Experience team asked Engine to deliver a programme of insight and innovation to support staff in delivering perfect and distinctly Virgin customer interactions, every time.

There is no script for a perfect call, store visit or home installation, but it is possible to create a guideline framework of behaviours, organised under a high-level structure, to guide actions and tone.



OUR OBJECTIVES WERE TO:

- Understand the drivers of noticeable positive behaviour and to use Virgin's pedigree and people to execute them consistently
- Define what customers value and business benefit of delivering against it
- Improve customer experience and its consistency across channels
- Increase customer satisfaction
- Increase Net Promoter Scores
- Develop Virgin Media's key offer and competitive edge being human, fun and personal.



DESCRIPTION

Virgin Media have led technological innovation in television services and high-speed broadband since the company was formed in 2006.

Engine is a leading Service Design consultancy and, since 2000, we've been using engaging and actionable design methodologies to develop high-performing, multichannel services and customer experiences for top-flight, global brands.



OVERVIEW OF THE MARKET

With competitors hot on their heels, Virgin Media had to look beyond products for competitive advantage. The Virgin 'parent' brand raises consumers' expectations, but also puts Virgin Media in a good position to leverage that by excelling in customer handling. For Virgin Media the challenges were two-fold:



MARKET CONTEXT:

- Comparison sites and ease of switching makes customer retention ever more crucial
- More media is being consumed on mobile devices and less on set top boxes or PCs, meaning fewer new customers
- Sky, BT and others are also deploying fibre-optic platforms
- New communications giants are forming through acquisition
- New smaller competitors are emerging in the connectivity market.

OPERATIONAL CONTEXT:

- Their products were becoming more complex to sell and support, so how best to enable staff to do that both effectively and efficiently
- They are striving for revenue from all channels, which creates challenges for colleagues in customer care roles, who can't be seen to sell
- Collections and Credit Services are important commercially but challenging channels through which to demonstrate Virgin values
- They needed to deliver the best possible customer experience without increasing headcount.

PROJECT LAUNCH DATE

Our work Virgin Media has spanned some four years as we have worked across the different areas of the business, creating frameworks and supporting tools for the various channels.

- Call Centres (Care) - launched 2011
- Call Centres - (Growth) - launched 2012
- Installation Engineers (Access) - launched 2013
- Stores (Retail) - launched 2013

SIZE OF DESIGN BUDGET AND PRODUCTION COSTS

Depending on the complexity, the four-stage design and development process cost between £60k - £90k per channel.

The variables were the amount and type of research required and the number of framework variables required. The total investment was circa £305k.

ENGAGING with the CUSTOMER & their STORY

It's important to show each and every customer that we appreciate what they need and how they feel. We know our products are important to their lives, so it's up to us to do everything we can to keep our customers absolutely delighted with what they have with us. Most of all, it's our job to leave customers feeling valued and delighted that they're spoken to us.

WHOLE CALL BEHAVIOUR

Behaviours	Reassure	Take control	Be patient and clear	Appreciate	Be enthusiastic about Virgin Media	
Behaviours	It's important to show that you really understand what the customer is saying. Don't be afraid to ask questions to clarify things from the customer.	Take control of the conversation. It's your job to lead the customer through the process. Don't be afraid to ask questions to clarify things from the customer.	Always remain patient and clear. Take your time to explain things to the customer. Don't be afraid to ask questions to clarify things from the customer.	Always remain patient and clear. Take your time to explain things to the customer. Don't be afraid to ask questions to clarify things from the customer.	Always remain patient and clear. Take your time to explain things to the customer. Don't be afraid to ask questions to clarify things from the customer.	Always remain patient and clear. Take your time to explain things to the customer. Don't be afraid to ask questions to clarify things from the customer.
The results	The customer feels reassured and confident. They are happy to talk to you and they are happy to follow your advice.	The customer feels in control and confident. They are happy to talk to you and they are happy to follow your advice.	The customer feels patient and clear. They are happy to talk to you and they are happy to follow your advice.	The customer feels appreciated and valued. They are happy to talk to you and they are happy to follow your advice.	The customer feels enthusiastic about Virgin Media. They are happy to talk to you and they are happy to follow your advice.	
Behaviours	It's important to show that you really understand what the customer is saying. Don't be afraid to ask questions to clarify things from the customer.	Take control of the conversation. It's your job to lead the customer through the process. Don't be afraid to ask questions to clarify things from the customer.	Always remain patient and clear. Take your time to explain things to the customer. Don't be afraid to ask questions to clarify things from the customer.	Always remain patient and clear. Take your time to explain things to the customer. Don't be afraid to ask questions to clarify things from the customer.	Always remain patient and clear. Take your time to explain things to the customer. Don't be afraid to ask questions to clarify things from the customer.	

Call phases

Call phases	RECOGNISE	RESOLVE	DELIGHT	AROUND THE CALL
Activities	Open, Listen, Acknowledge	Explain, Act, Summarise	Suggest, Delight, Sign off	DPA & security, Transfer, After the call
The results	The customer feels recognised and valued. They are happy to talk to you and they are happy to follow your advice.	The customer feels resolved and confident. They are happy to talk to you and they are happy to follow your advice.	The customer feels delighted and satisfied. They are happy to talk to you and they are happy to follow your advice.	The customer feels secure and confident. They are happy to talk to you and they are happy to follow your advice.
Behaviours	It's important to show that you really understand what the customer is saying. Don't be afraid to ask questions to clarify things from the customer.	Take control of the conversation. It's your job to lead the customer through the process. Don't be afraid to ask questions to clarify things from the customer.	Always remain patient and clear. Take your time to explain things to the customer. Don't be afraid to ask questions to clarify things from the customer.	Always remain patient and clear. Take your time to explain things to the customer. Don't be afraid to ask questions to clarify things from the customer.

Key stages of the interaction

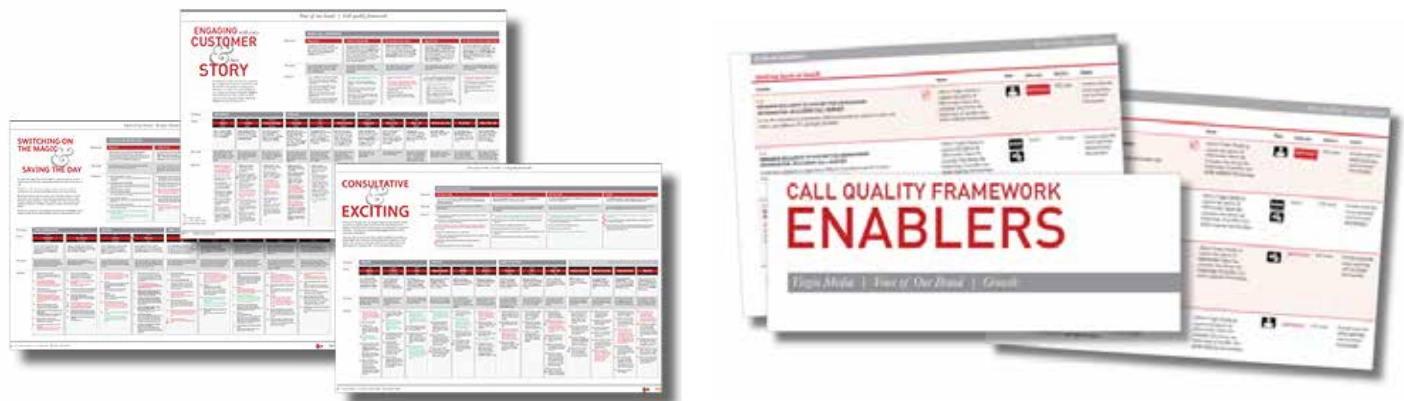
Guidance on behaviours to demonstrate at this stage in the interaction

Red denotes critical to quality

Green denotes 'super critical' to quality

A particularly Virgin experience or behaviour

A reminder of how the customer will feel at any given phase of the interaction



04/ OUTLINE OF DESIGN SOLUTION

458 WORDS

Using a Service Design approach Engine created behavioural frameworks for each Virgin Media channel.

Whilst initially focused on Virgin Media call centres for customer support (Care), the programme's success saw it soon being rolled out across acquisition and sales (Growth), installation and technician visits (Access), and Virgin Media's concept store (Retail).

For each channel, we explored what the 'perfect experience' for customers was, the desired outcomes and how they could be measured. We looked at the implications for current systems and processes and implementation plans to roll out the new approach.



OUR PHASED APPROACH INCLUDED:

- Stakeholder engagement and immersion in the business context
- Research with customers and front-line staff. Including interviews, home visits, technician shadowing, call listening and a competitor audit
- Co-creation of draft customer journey maps and behavioural frameworks with stakeholders, customers and front-line staff
- Development of experience design principles
- Framework iteration through three key workshops: Perfect Interaction, Quality Metrics and Implementation Planning
- Final framework design and copywriting, in liaison with Virgin Media's brand team
- Identification of the key elements for training.



The process was highly collaborative, involving staff, customers and members of the relevant business teams in a series of carefully developed workshops to co-create, evaluate and refine the outputs.



This approach ensured we met our objective of simultaneously understanding customer and business value. Having key stakeholders involved ultimately lead to operational success.

We delivered the frameworks as engaging posters to share with managers and training teams and across the organisation. We also detailed the full list of enablers, including all feedback, feasibility rankings and potential owners of each initiative.

The content of the frameworks provided the guidance and language for front-line staff to adapt to any situation and increase the likelihood for giving a 'perfect' customer experience.

A framework would not necessarily be given as a raw tool to front-line teams, but was used to inform training and quality measurement and to guide the design of new systems and processes to support its implementations.

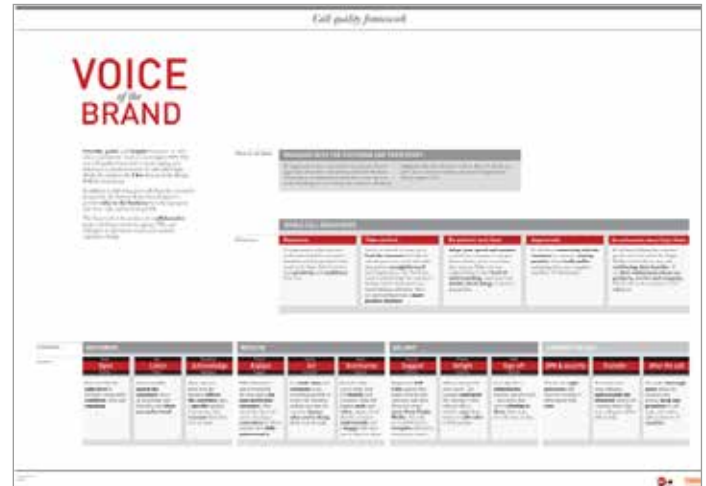
The final outputs were developed into branded coaching, communication and engagement tools by Purple Media.



THE PROJECT WAS SUCCESSFUL BECAUSE:

- It engaged stakeholders, frontline staff and customers
- It understood and incorporated actions and behaviours critical to both quality and revenue, plus identified particularly Virgin elements
- It focused on increasing efficiency, effectiveness, loyalty and advocacy
- It was channel specific, understanding the different customer, staff and business needs
- It brought consistency across the channels because of cross-department involvement and taking inspiration and using similar language across frameworks.

Acknowledging that Virgin Media cannot afford to stand still and that processes and technology are evolving within the business, Engine are now in discussions about refreshing the programme to reflect Virgin Media's evolving brand values and moving the training and coaching tools to a digital platform.



TRAINING MATERIALS AS DESIGNED BY PURPLE MEDIA



05/ SUMMARY OF RESULTS


10,000



Customer-facing staff have been trained and equipped with our 'Voice of the Brand' toolkits

POSITIVE COMMENTS
DOUBLED

X TO X

CONFIDENTIAL RESULTS

NEGATIVE COMMENTS
HALVED

X TO X

CONFIDENTIAL RESULTS

"Friendly"
"Polite" **"Professional"**
"Helpful" **"Courteous"**
"Considerate"

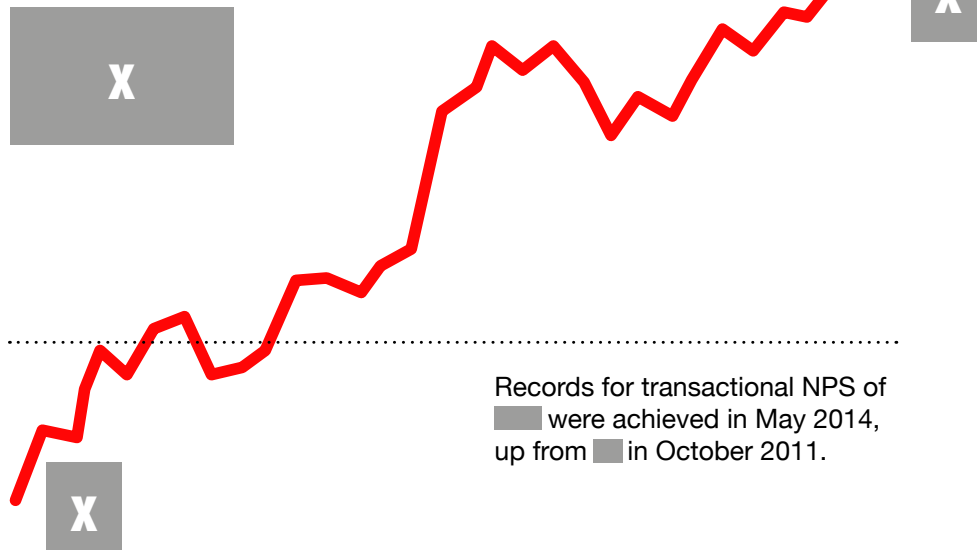
CONFIDENTIAL RESULTS

An annual financial benefit from reduction in churn equal to [REDACTED] was attributable to changes in frontline colleague behaviour.

CONFIDENTIAL RESULTS

Improvements in behaviour have provided a Return on Investment of [REDACTED]

NPS INCREASE OF



VIRGIN MEDIA CAN NOW DIRECTLY LINK COLLEAGUE BEHAVIOURS TO NPS.

Improvements in behaviours were responsible for [REDACTED] of the improvement in Operational NPS.

Positive responses to the statement, “Virgin Media provides good customer service” was **triple** that of any other Virgin Media Brand metrics.

CLIENT TESTIMONIALS

“The collaborative and flexible approach enabled any issues to be overcome promptly. Another great piece of work delivered through a solid collaborative approach.”

- Head of Customer Experience Design, Virgin Media

“I do forget sometimes that the Engine team are not part of Virgin Media as it feels very much like one team when working on the project. Getting sign off of the frameworks from the senior stakeholder, with acknowledgement of the quality of the work, is evidence of the great work Engine produce.”

- Customer Experience Manager, Virgin Media

“I really enjoyed working on this project, it has been detailed, well-planned and thought through and we have ended up with two great frameworks that I know will be a great success.”

- Head of Retail Experience, Virgin Media

IN THE MEDIA

In the June 2015 edition of Marketing Week, Karen Ingham, customer service director at Virgin Media, commented on the financial benefits the programme had brought.

[... Virgin Media uncovered a correlation between a 1 per cent improvement in its net promoter score and an improvement in revenue across a variety of measures depending on the tenure of the customer, which she says ranged from £750,000 to £1.5m a year.

She explained that initially the tone of voice project was focused on how brand personality was being conveyed at Virgin Media call centres, but it proved so successful that it has been implemented company-wide. “We changed everything and went through our entire training catalogue for our frontline teams. We now use a new brand language everywhere,” she added...]



06/ OTHER INFLUENCING FACTORS

Virgin Media have always had a concerted customer focus and we acknowledge other work streams that were in progress during the development and launch of 'Voice Of Our Brand.'

- Investment in IT and the systems agents use
- Leadership development in the Care business area
- The introduction of Voice Of Our Customer, providing the ability to instantly review call performance

We've have also noted that our outputs informed the development of staff training engagement materials that were designed by Purple Media.

That said, the results we have stated are all compiled by Virgin Media's Customer Insights and Quality teams and are attributed to success of the 'Voice Of Our Brand' programme.



07/ RESEARCH RESOURCES

[1] The UK Institute of Customer Service, 2008

[2] All figures from Virgin Media Customer Insights and Quality teams – from 2011 – 2014 inclusive