userwell

Innovation through customer-centricity.

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE

On User Feedback


userwell
Innovation through customer-centricity.

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01 Introduction

As a company, we often believe that we know our product best. However, we sometimes neglect that it is not us who have to use the product but above all our customers.

We lose sight of the essentials and develop our product the way we would like it to be, instead of paying attention to the needs of your customers.

It is therefore not surprising that one in five products does not meet the needs of its users.

So, what can we do to combat our own biases in product development? The answer is as simple as it is comprehensive: feedback.

1 Challenges in Product Management Survey, 280 Group, 2015

The fact that you are reading this shows that you care about your product and your customers.

You understand that being a customer-centric organization is increasingly important in nowadays overcrowded marketplaces.

Maybe you have already tried collecting feedback and have faced one of two problems: struggling with not receiving any helpful feedback to improve your product or drowning in feedback but not knowing how to align it with people, processes, and technology.

Whether you are already collecting feedback or are just starting to, this guide aims to show the benefits of customer feedback, how you can create or optimize your feedback process, which helpful tools you can use, and what you should generally look out for.

MAIN PROBLEMS WITH PRODUCT FEEDBACK:

- Lack of helpful user feedback to improve your product.
- Too much feedback but lack of process, people and tech alignment.

02
Benefits of Product Feedback

Collecting product feedback can at first be challenging. Therefore, the question emerges: Is it worth the time and resources?

In short: Yes! There are tons of benefits to hearing your customers' ideas and feedback. You can use it to tailor the product to the customer's needs, not the other way around. But that's just one of the many benefits of collecting, evaluating, and processing feedback. In addition, product feedback has the following advantages:

BUILDING A SUCCESSFUL PRODUCT

A product can only be successful if people pay for it. So what better way to know what customers are willing to pay for than to ask them about it? After all, using a product that fulfills the customers' needs benefits them the most.

IMPROVED USER EXPERIENCE

It is important to know how your customers are using your products. That is where actively asking for feedback comes in. Only if you understand what is easy and intuitive to use and what is rather difficult you will improve your product.

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT IS NO GUESSING GAME

"Guess your way to success" should not be a strategy when it comes to product development. Instead, collect data on what your customers really want. It will help you develop a clear development strategy.

MORE REFERRALS

Creating a customer-centric, almost personal atmosphere can make a big difference in your customers' happiness. And happy customers tell their friends about great products. Referrals are a great way to get new leads. They are four times more likely[2] to purchase than other customers because they already have trust in your company.

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2 15 Referral Marketing Statistics You Need To Know, EXTOLE, 2017

CLEAR PRIORITIZATION OF THE PRODUCT ROADMAP

It can be frustrating to plan out a product roadmap with your team, only to hear that some stakeholders are not happy with the features or updates you prioritized. However, if you have viable data that shows that your customers want and need those updates, you can underline the importance of your roadmap without breaking a sweat.

GETTING NEW IDEAS

Sometimes we are too focused on what is inside our bubble that we lose track of everything that is actually possible. Actively asking for product feedback can provide you with insights and ideas that you might not have thought of right away. Take a step back and let your customers inspire you.

IMPROVED CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND LOYALTY

Keeping existing customers happy is 5 to 25% more cost-efficient than acquiring new ones[3]. By continuously asking for feedback and acting on it, you show your customers that you value their opinion. This again will increase customer satisfaction and can have an impact on customer loyalty.

ADVANTAGES IN THE MARKETPLACE

Asking customers what they like and dislike about your product gives you an advantage in the marketplace. Your customers' expectations and the market needs will change over time. By asking for feedback regularly you can adapt your product to the current needs.

3 The Value of Keeping the Right Customers, Amy Gallo, 2014

ELIMINATE UNNECESSARY WASTE OF RESOURCES

Feedback data doesn't only come in useful when stating your case. It is a great source to base fast and difficult decisions on. It will help you save time and money, as you know exactly where to put in resources and where they are not needed.

OTHER DEPARTMENTS CAN USE THE DATA

Even if it first seems like only the product and development team profits from product feedback, other departments will also need it. Marketing, for example, can base case studies and customer testimonials on feedback. Customer care will be happy to see that you put in the effort to show your customers that you care. Also, leadership needs data-driven insights to support the company's decision-making process.

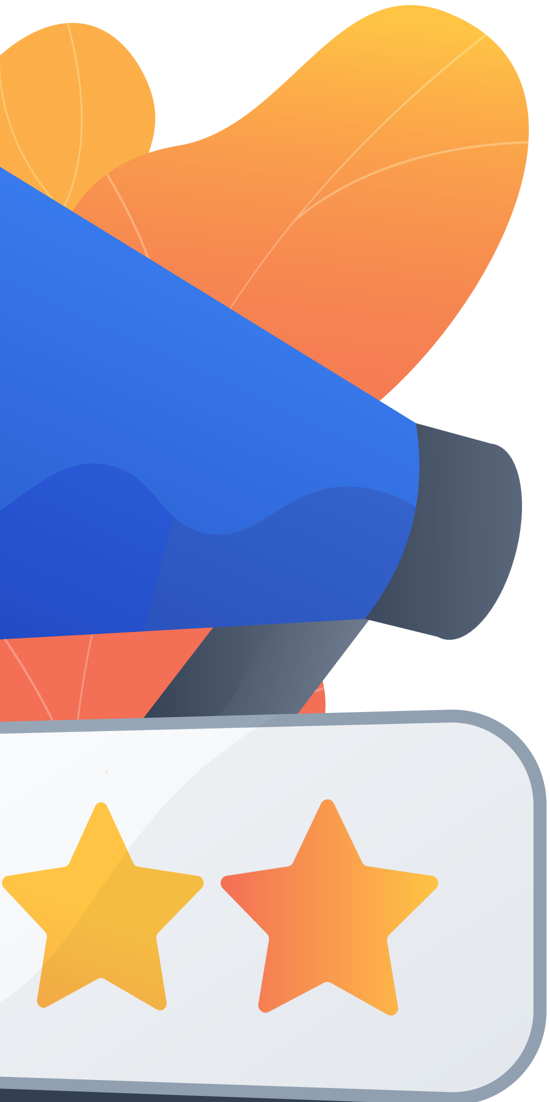
03
Types of Product Feedback

Whether you already have a feedback process implemented or not, it is essential to know what types of feedback are out there. Only that way you can make sure, that you are using the right channel and method to collect feedback for your company.

Generally, there are two types of feedback. The feedback you actively seek out and insights that came your way without asking for it. In product management, both are very important, and like most things in life, every type has its pros and cons.

TWO TYPES OF PRODUCT FEEDBACK:

- Solicited Product Feedback
- Unsolicited Product Feedback



Solicited Product Feedback

The feedback you actively request is called solicited feedback. It can come in two forms, quantitative (in numbers, such as scores) and qualitative (in text, such as interviews).

Sometimes customers are not aware that companies actually listen to their feedback. That might be because they had bad experiences with other companies in the past. For many users feedback is equal to reviews, and it serves more purpose to other buyers than themselves. This is where solicited feedback comes in.

Actively asking for feedback shows your customers that you care about their opinion and that you want to improve your product to their liking. In the end, both sides, you and your customers, profit from the insights you collected. That is why solicited feedback is so important and why we focus on it in the guide on hand.

Here are some of the most relevant methods for solicited product feedback and why they might (or might not) be right for you:

Customer Surveys

Customer surveys are a great way to help you get feedback quickly on a specific part of your product.

It can be implemented as a continuous process and runs alongside your constant product improvements.

Once in place, it is a powerful source of information as it offers an overview due to scores and structured questions. However, the insights only relate to specific aspects and can only be utilized for such. If you are looking for deeper insights customer interviews will be a necessary second step.

The most well-known customer surveys are the Net Promoter Score (NPS) and Customer Satisfaction surveys (CSAT).

While the NPS measures customer loyalty, the CSAT focuses on customer satisfaction. The CSAT typically asks: “How would you rate your overall satisfaction with (product)?” and uses a scale of 1-5.

However, those scores are not very useful for product feedback, as they focus on a survey level. We will discuss later how they can still help your product.

The *NPS* measures customer experience and can also predict business growth. Customers are asked to rate how likely they would recommend the product to a friend on a scale of 0-10.

Customer Interviews

If you are looking for deeper and broader insights, customer interviews are a helpful way to get those. Since you are talking to your customers directly, either in person or on the phone, you have the opportunity to dig deep and reassure you get all the information you need.

Those interviews can either be held in a one-on-one setting or as a focus group. They often focus on a small target group, as it is very time-consuming to carry out and analyze them. It is, therefore, advisable to only talk to the customers who are of great importance.

Feedback Pages

Feedback pages are a type of forum that you offer your customers as a place to leave feedback, vote on other people's feedback, and feature suggestions, and can interact with your users. They are easy to set up and offer your customers a central place to voice their opinion.

Some providers of feedback pages offer reporting tools that help you keep an overview of the collected feedback. A good feedback software will also provide prioritization tools that show you information about your customers, like the revenue they bring to the company, or visualize insights for you.

Pros and Cons of Solicited Feedback

At the end of the day, your business can only thrive if you have happy customers. Asking them about their experience is a great way to show your users that you are a customer-centric company that cares about their insights. With solicited feedback, you can always make sure that your insights come from real customers. Most are easy to set up and offer general to deep information about your product that you might not have thought of yet. All in all, it’s a great way for both you and your customers to benefit.

CUSTOMER SURVEYS	CUSTOMER INTERVIEWS	FEEDBACK PAGES
Quick and easy setup	Time-consuming to run and setup	Quick to setup
Scalable	Not scalable	Scalable
Cost-effective	Expensive to run and set up	Cost-effective
Broad insights	Deep insights into specific issue	Deep insights
Focus only on a specific aspect	Insights on new product features	Insights on specific aspects and new features
Needs other measures to deliver deeper insights	Difficult to analyze results	Analyzing results automatically
Low response rates	Discovering unknown unknowns	

Unsolicited Product Feedback

The second type of feedback is unrequested or unsolicited feedback. Just like the name suggests, it is the feedback that you did not actively and directly ask for. It can either be written or spoken. This type of feedback requires a higher effort to collect and analyze, as it can show up on various channels and has a wide range in quality.

Let’s have a look at the most common forms of unrequested feedback.

Communities and Forums

Next to feedback pages, which are also a type of forum, there are communities and platforms out there that provide feedback unsolicited.

Reddit or Quora are examples of forums that frequently contain feedback regarding products. If you are want to use this feedback for your product, you should start where your customers frequent.

Support Department

Another way that feedback comes in is via your support or customer care team. If people need help, they often go right to the source by calling or emailing your company directly.

It is a great way to find out what your customers truly care about and what isn’t working for them.

Reviews

Reviews can in some cases be solicited, but most times customers voluntarily share their experience with other potential buyers.

Countless platforms and websites capture reviews. However, simply focus on the ones most relevant to your business.

If you are a software company, you should look at comparison platforms like Capterra and G2, while in other businesses the go-to reviews can be Google, Amazon, or Trustpilot. Try to put yourself in the shoes of your customers and ask yourself where they hang out.

INFORMATION BOX

If you want to collect reviews from many different sides, find a solution that helps you gather those insights in one place and lets you analyze them quickly.

Pros and Cons of Unsolicited Feedback

While unsolicited product feedback offers the massive advantage that they mostly are unbiased and often scalable, it can be quite time-consuming to set up and analyze.

Depending on the channel you chose to gather your feedback, the quality of the feedback can vary in the depth of insights and helpfulness to improve your product.

COMMUNITIES AND FORUMS	SUPPORT DEPARTMENT	REVIEWS
Time-consuming	Time-consuming	Time-consuming
Cost-effective	Inhouse	Other tools needed to keep the effort low
Difficult process setup and analysis	Difficult to analyze	Scored feedback easy, text feedback difficult to analyze
Deep insights	Verbal feedback difficult to access	Lack of deeper information
Not scalable	Scalable	Scalable
Unknown identity or customer	Real customer information	Unknown identity or customer
Unbiased, truthful	Unbiased, truthful	Emotional, fake, biased
Directed at other buyers, not product team	Not just product feedback	Directed at other buyers, not product team

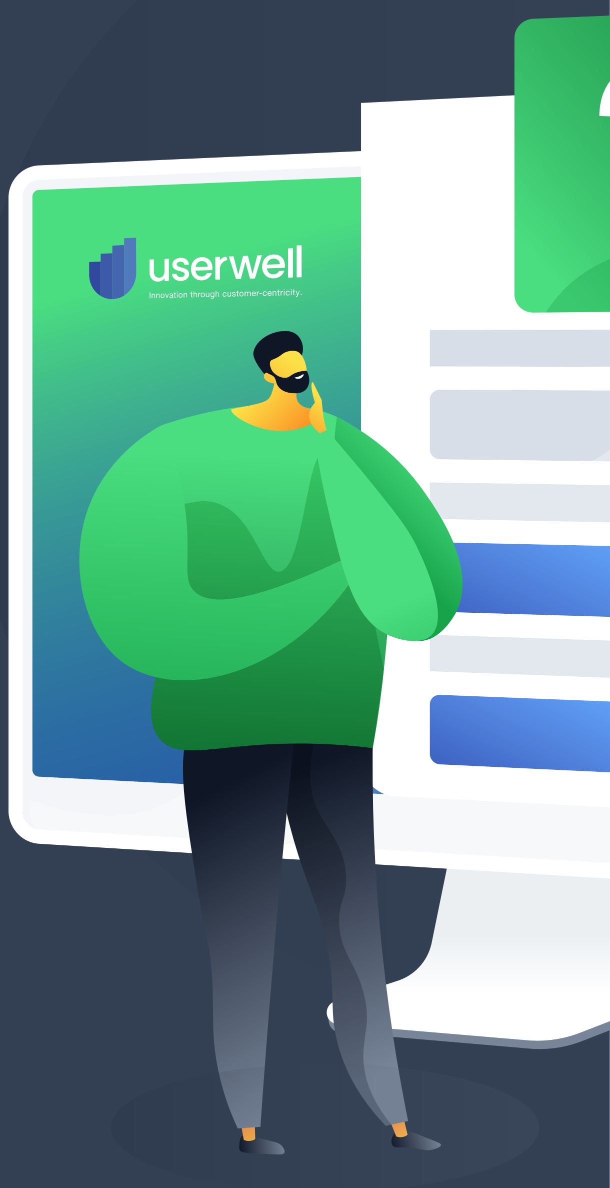
04
How to Ask for Product Feedback

Now that the many benefits of product feedback are clear, the next step is to implement an effective feedback process. It may seem overwhelming at first, but there is a light at the end of the tunnel.

Before you can start collecting solicited product feedback, you need to determine what results or insights you hope to achieve. A clearly stated intent is necessary for useful feedback and will help in the long run.

To do this, address the question of what you would like to improve. Therefore, try to be as detailed as possible about what exactly you want to optimize. Is it a new feature, the design, an update, or do you want to make large-scale changes? Together with your team, ask yourself what aspects of the product would benefit most from feedback.

Once you've established your goal, you can move forward in the process and ask the next row of questions: Who do I ask for solicited feedback? When is the perfect timing? Where can I collect it? And lastly: How do I collect feedback?



Who?

Not all feedback is equally valuable. The quality of it depends on many factors. One of them is the target audience of the survey. What comes to mind first is probably to either survey all customers or pick out the customers who represent the typical users on average.

The approach is not wrong in theory and may result in you getting a lot of feedback. However, a lot of feedback does not automatically mean valuable feedback. It can also mean that too much valuable time goes into filtering valuable and less insightful data.

It can be advantageous to draw on other customer segments. From a business perspective, for example, it also makes sense to target the big players and major customers. Even if they do not represent the average customer, they are an important source of revenue for your company.

Especially in B2B companies, this can have the positive side effect that by improving the product for one big company, it is very likely to make it more attractive to other big companies as well.

The golden rule in selecting a feedback group, in short, is that the users providing feedback understand the pain points that your product is trying to solve.

When?

After you and your team have thought about who you want to contact, you should now pay attention to the right timing. If you ring up your customers and randomly ask them for feedback on your product, you will most likely get the answer: “I am busy right now.”

The right timing is crucial, as it has a massive impact on the value of the insights you gain. If users you ask for feedback are busy, you may not get an honest answer, or in the worst case, no answer at all.

To not waste time trying to get feedback from your users, here are a few helpful things to keep in mind:

FIND THE NATURAL MIDPOINT.

Give new customers time to get to know the product. But don’t miss the boat and wait too long to ask for feedback. Otherwise, you may be faced with dissatisfied users who want to turn away from the company. Find the middle, where your customers want to continue using the products, so they can benefit directly from improvements.

MEET THEM HALFWAY.

The easiest way to meet your customers halfway is by asking them to give you feedback when it is convenient for them. That way, they can decide for themselves if and when they want to share their insights with you.

KEEP IN MIND

An easy method to meet your customers halfway is by offering them to give you feedback when it best suits them. Simply send them the link to your feedback page or survey. They can then decide when they want to share their insights with you.

Where?

Several factors have an impact on the quality of feedback. So does the channel through which you collect your feedback. After all, different channels are suited for different feedback types and serve unique target groups. Therefore, it is advisable to always consider the context of the feedback.

Typically, if you want to build a feedback process, you will find that often one single channel will not be sufficient to collect the specific insights you need. It is common to use more than one channel to gather insights.

Let’s take a look at some channels suitable for soliciting product feedback.

E-Mail

If you are looking for ad hoc feedback, e-mails might be right for you. This channel has the advantage of precisely selecting your target audience before sending a feedback request.

For this channel, it is most common to conduct a product feedback survey. With online survey tools or self-build solutions, you can quickly and easily send out questionnaires or feedback forms.

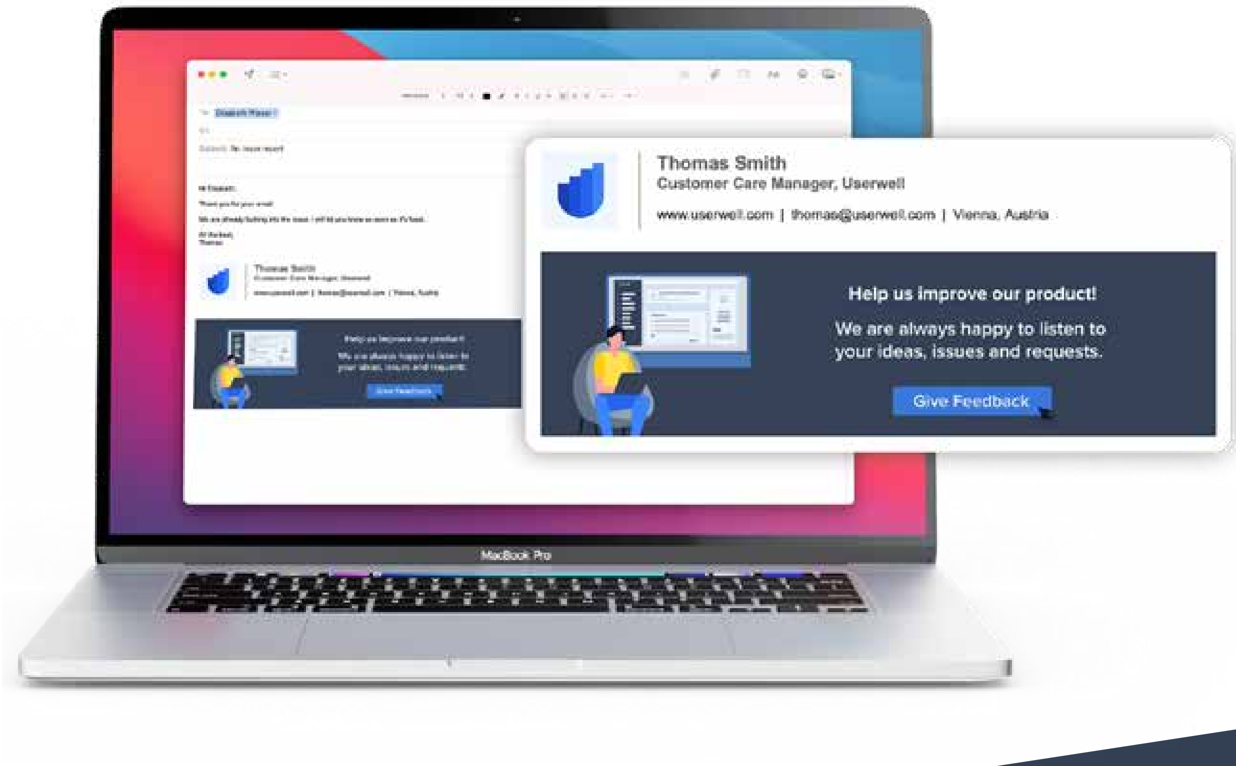
The downside of this channel is that you may reach your customers when they are not currently using your product. Therefore, the quality of the content may vary. Also, the response rate to e-mail feedback requests is typically not very high.

KEEP IN MIND

If you chose e-mail for your feedback channel, make sure you ask clear questions with a specific goal in mind.

You don't want your customers to think long and hard about a question and risk them losing interest from the start of the survey.

Multiple choice questions are easy for users to fill out and typically have a higher response rate, while open-ended questions will give you a more detailed answer.



E-MAIL BEST PRACTICE

Simply integrate a link into your e-mail signature. This way, every time you communicate with your customers, they are reminded to give you feedback.

Even if they don’t give feedback right away, they can always go back and find the link to your feedback form or feedback page right away.

Another efficient way to use e-mail is by creating an inbound mail address for the feedback. Your users can simply send their requests to this address, and you have them all in one place.

In-App

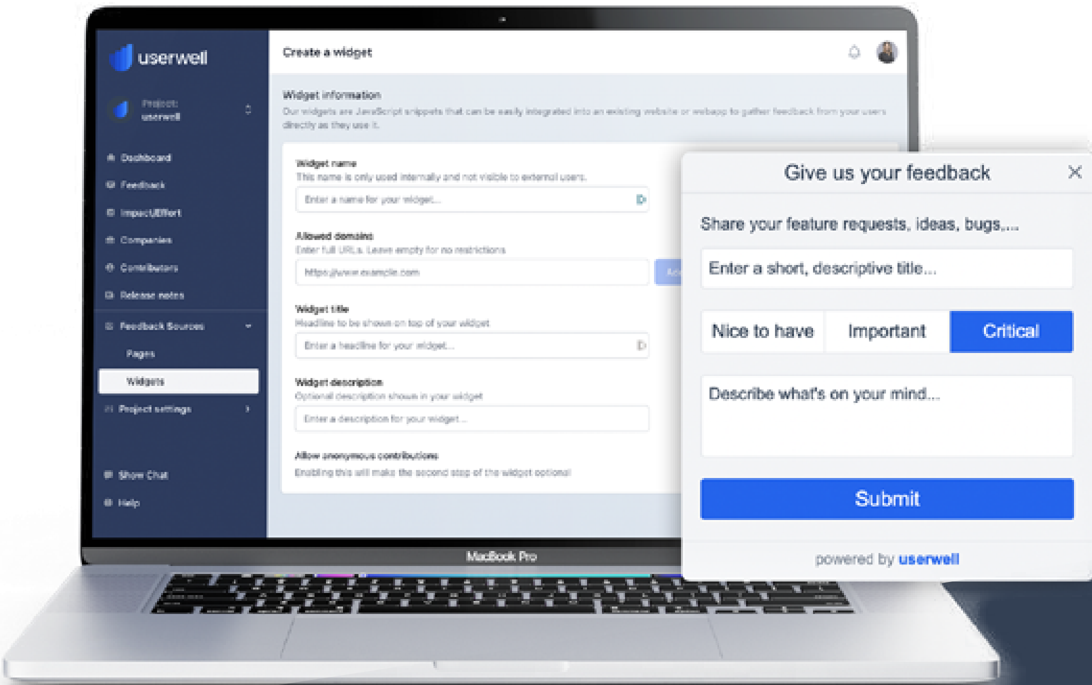
This channel is especially important because you can reach your customers directly. It is where they come to use your product, perhaps even daily.

While your customers are using your product, they may notice something they should provide feedback on, such as a missing feature or a bug in the product. If you offer your users to give feedback here directly, you can expect a high value of quality insights.

KEEP IN MIND

While you are reaching your customers using your product, you should still make sure to keep the feedback form short.

This channel is suitable for a maximum of two questions.



IN-APP BEST PRACTICE

Many feedback tools enable you to integrate a feedback widget into your website, online shop, or SaaS tool – basically everywhere online. Widgets can easily be integrated by copying the generated link into your application.

Phone or In-Person Interviews

The main advantage of interviews, whether by phone or in person, is that they provide deeper insights into certain topics. There is an opportunity to follow up if there is any ambiguity. However, they are often difficult to scale and expensive to execute.

KEEP IN MIND

While this is still common practice in some fields, it is a very time-consuming channel that we only recommend in specific situations.

For example, if you need detailed information on one precise topic or if the topic only concerns a small target group.

Social Media

When you turn to social media channels to gather feedback, you benefit from mostly unfiltered and thus often truthful comments. However, this type of feedback is often impulsive and unstructured, and it's time-consuming to wade through the jungle of feedback.

KEEP IN MIND

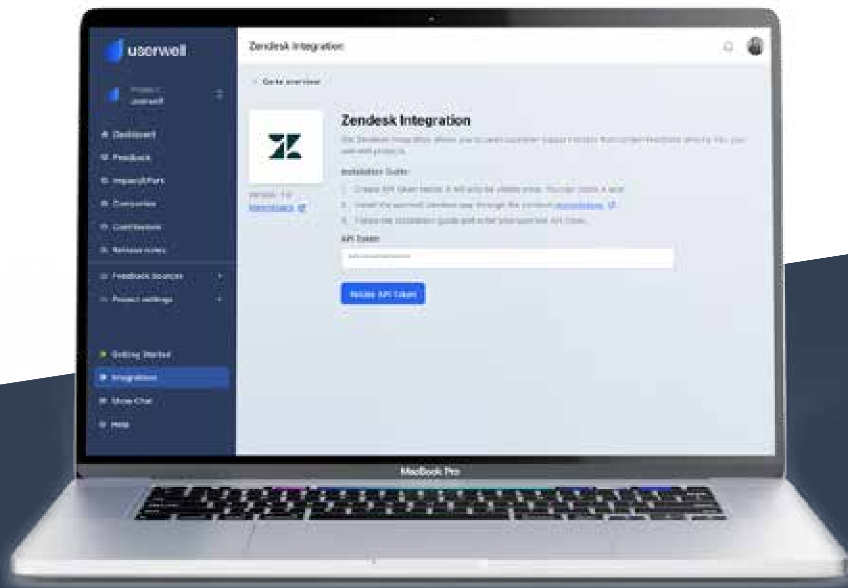
There are countless social media platforms, and each has its strengths and weaknesses. Depending on your product, some platforms might be more useful to you than others.

For example, some companies will find Instagram polls very helpful, while others will have a larger audience on Twitter and could therefore start a threat there.

Other Departments

A typical channel to collect feedback is through your support or customer care department. In some companies, there is already some sort of system in place to deal with general customer feedback. These departments often use tools like Jira or Zendesk for support tickets, or feedback comes in through calls or emails.

If you want to use this channel for feedback, it is important to set up a process, so everything lands in one central place that all involved team members have access to.



OTHER DEPARTMENTS BEST PRACTICE

To make sure that all your feedback is collected in one place, connect your tools via API integrations. These allow different tools to communicate with each other and share relevant information. Just create an API token in one system and integrate it into another.

With userwell, for example, you can integrate Zendesk into your feedback process and allow other departments to push customer support tickets that contain product feedback directly into your userwell projects.

Product Feedback Tools

Another way for your customers to give you feedback is by using product feedback tools. Like Userwell, these tools offer your customers a platform to post their insights and ideas regarding the improvement of your product.

The benefit of feedback tools is that you can make sure that you don't get the same feedback more than once but rather have a clear overview of what was requested by many without the hassle of going through thousands of messages.

KEEP IN MIND

If you want to use this channel for feedback, it is important to set up a process. Everything should be in one central place so all team members have access.

How?

The last question to answer now is how to collect feedback.

What questions, metrics, and methods can you use to get the information you are looking for? To answer this we have to take a look at two types of feedback, closed and open-ended questions. Once you have decided on one or more methods we can start collecting product feedback.

Closed Questions

There are several different rating systems to choose from.
Let's dive in and see what they have to offer:

5-Star Rating

This is probably the most common rating scale. You simply ask your customers to rate a feature, service, or experience on a scale of 1 (worst) to 5 (best). It offers a quick and simple overview but doesn't give any deeper insights.

Symmetric Scale

A symmetric scale, as its name suggests, consists of an even number of options to rate a feature, service, or experience. Removing the middle option has the benefit of getting a clear tendency in your feedback. It is best to describe each number on the scale for this system to make it clearer to the feedbacker.

NPS

As mentioned before, NPS is commonly used to measure customer loyalty. However, the scale itself can also be useful for for product feedback. On a scale from 0-10 customers are asked how likely they would recommend the product to a friend or colleague. A score above nine would categorize a user as a "promoter". A score from 7 or 8 classifies them as “passives”, and a score of or below 6 means they are “detractors”. According to their loyalty level, you can then follow up with different segments of users.

Binary Rating

This system is commonly used, due to the high response rate. Giving your customers a simple choice between good and bad, or thumps up and thumps down is, therefore, a great way to collect data and get a general overview quickly and easily. However, it does not provide any detailed information about the customer’s choice.

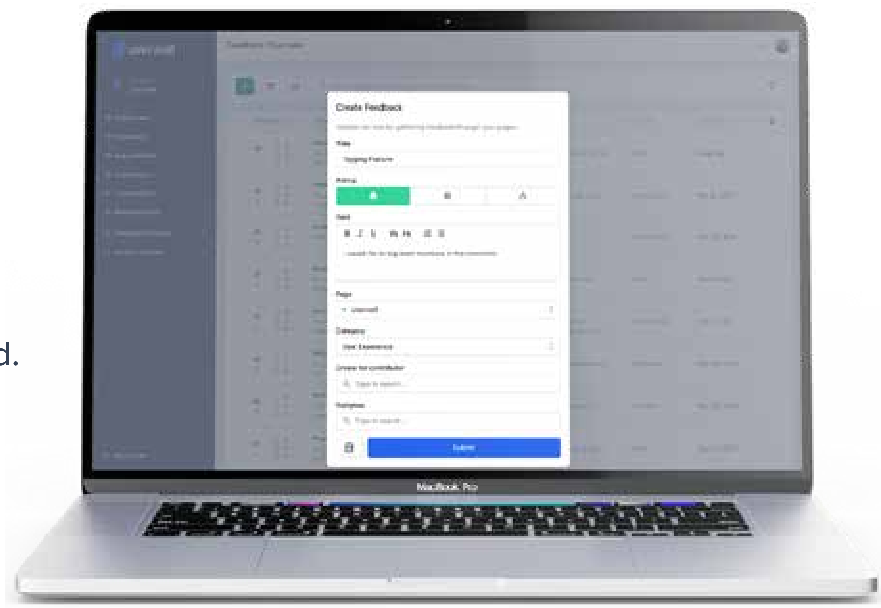
Checklist

Offering a set of adjectives to describe your product is a great way to collect feedback. It is a bit more descriptive while still having the benefits of a quantitative survey. However, the preset adjectives might not display your customers’ true feelings about your product and can therefore be misleading.

Open-ended Questions

While rating systems rely on numeric scales, open text feedback focuses on verbal insights.

Even though open-ended questions can be a pain to analyze, you will generate the most insights from this method. In practice, an open-ended question is often paired with other numeric methods.



Feedback Forms

Feedback forms typically have a set of predefined questions combining numeric ratings and text questions. They are quick and easy to set up but typically have a lower response rate.

Feedback Pages

While preset questions, whether open-ended or closed, focus on specific aspects, feedback pages allow your users to share what they think is worth mentioning. Analyzing the feedback you receive via those pages can be very time-consuming or time-saving, depending on if you are using a product feedback tool that offers an analysis feature and duplicate check.

05
How To Analyze Feedback

Now that you know how to gather feedback that adds value and can help you improve your product, it is time to find out how to categorize and analyze it. After all, the feedback you get is only as good as the actionable insights you gain from them.

So, what do we do with all the gathered insights? When it comes to categorizing and analyzing product feedback, there are a few challenges to face.

It can take a long time to categorize feedback. The creation of categories itself can be time-consuming, not to mention the time it takes to manage and maintain the list of created categories.

Furthermore, visualizing the data and insights you collected can be tricky.

So, how can you successfully face those challenges? Here is a step-by-step guide on how you manage to categorize and analyze feedback efficiently.

STEP 1 Get it All in One Place

Even though it seems so obvious, the problem with feedback management often starts right here. And who is really to blame? There are so many different channels from which feedback can reach you. If you don't have a process set up, mistakes are bound to happen when transferring feedback.

> *To save time and make sure you don't miss any source of feedback, set up an automated or manual process beforehand.*

To save time in the long run and make sure you don't miss any source of feedback, set up an automated or manual process beforehand. If you chose to gather it automatically, you can do this by using a self-build solution that saves all the data in one file or program or by using a tool designed to help with this exact problem.

Setting up a manual process may also be an option for you, if you are not looking to invest resources into building or buying a solution. In this case, make sure to outline the manual process and inform your team about it. This way you make sure that everyone understands the process and can follow it, to not misplace any information.

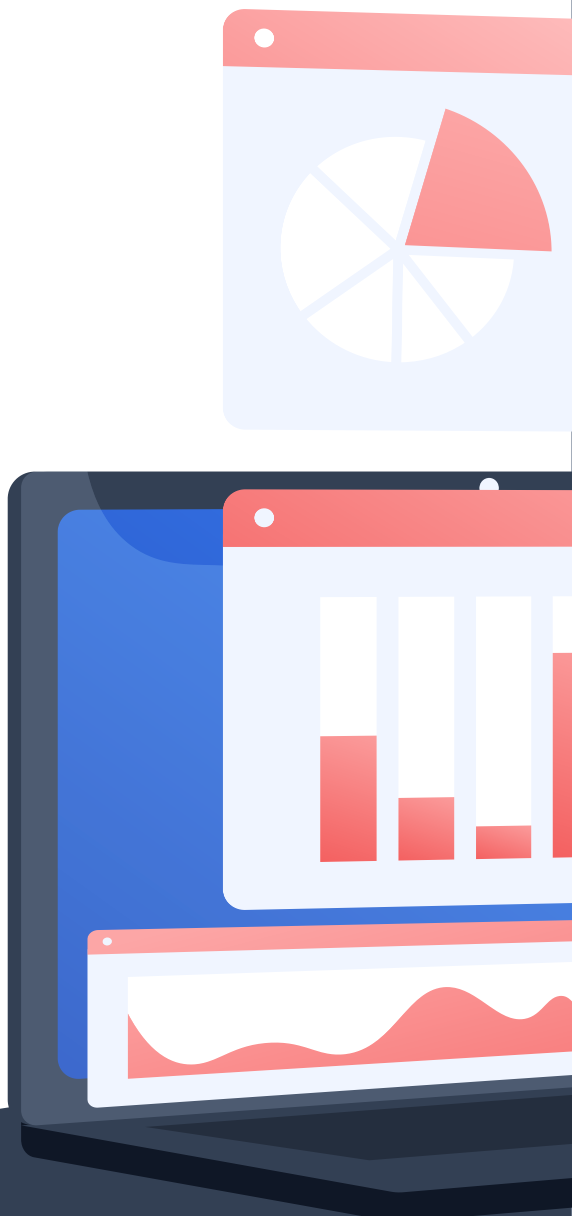
The next big question that arises is:
Where do you transfer your collected feedback to?

The answer seems so obvious - a spreadsheet!

Whether it is via Google Sheets or Excel, they still exist. Often with details about the customers, numbers, and mail addresses, as well as complicated processes that were built around them, just to make this tool work for collecting feedback. Maintaining this tool takes time and, therefore, money - and let's not even get started on the privacy and security issues that go along with this method.

Of course, spreadsheets can be used helpfully. It helps to collect all the anonymized feedback you accumulated via multiple channels.

For analyzing data, however, a spreadsheet will have its challenges. While you can, of course, use this document type, it needs a long setup process and demands constant maintenance. Most likely, you will need the help of other tools to make sense of all this data. If you are looking for complex dashboards, you can feed the collected data into analytics platforms like Tableau.



STEP 2 Turn Qualitative Insights into Quantitative Data

Once you have located all the data in one place, it is time to organize the insights. It is important to know what your customers are saying, not always how they say it. Always focus on the bigger picture.

If you are going through your feedback manually, this will take some time.
If doing this manually seems like a source of error to you, using a feedback management tool can help you categorize your insights more efficiently. Whichever way you choose, we have some helpful tips for both.

Manual Data Analysis

If your company can spear the time and resources, here are a few helpful tips to go through feedback manually that make categorizing your feedback easier:

CREATE CATEGORIES FIRST

It is helpful to create a few categories before going through the feedback, especially if you chose a manual process. Think on a general level – what will your customers be interested in?

UX and Design, Bug report, or Integrations might be some of those categories. It is easier to start with more generic categories at first. If your categories are too specific, they can get confusing easily. This, of course, will change over time. Once you have a working feedback process set up, your categories will change, refine, and improve.

CREATE UNAMBIGUOUS CATEGORIES

Make sure your categories are clear and unambiguous. If one category is called "Billing" while another category is "Pricing", you might know the difference in the moment of creation, but keep in mind that this might change or someone else might be confused by this.

You could, of course, insert a comment to every category and differentiate them clearly. But some of your colleagues might not see the comment and assign the first category that seems right to them. That is why unambiguity is critical. It helps you not make a mess of the feedback process you worked so hard on setting up.

DUPLICATE CATEGORY CHECK

Make sure that you are not using different variations for the same category. "Improve UX" can otherwise easily turn into more than one category, like "UX improvement" or "UX bug". This can quickly happen when working on the data with a team. Our tip here is: clearly define guidelines for naming categories beforehand and have someone check for duplicate categories.

BIASES

If you are analyzing your feedback manually, you will face personal tendencies. Be aware that you are on some level, whether it is conscious or not, biased. If you have a roadmap or prioritization of tasks in your mind, it is easy to look for feedback that matches your vision. To get rid of personal biases, make sure that several people are involved in the feedback process.

WORD SPOTTING

While word spotting is far from a scientific approach, it can be helpful if you don't have an overwhelming amount of feedback. The idea behind it is, that if a word appears in a comment, you assume that this text is about this specific topic. For example, for the word "billing" you will assume that the feedback is about the billing feature.

Using a formula or the search feature in a spreadsheet can sometimes simplify this process. However, we do not recommend relying on this method alone, as it is faulty. A comment that for example says "invoice feature bug" would slip through as the word "billing" is not included. It can be useful as a first run through your data. But count in the time you will need to go over the results again.

Automated Data Analysis

If you are using a tool to help you categorize your feedback, this is how you will most likely proceed. Keep in mind, every tool is different, so this can't be seen as a general approach but rather a push in the right direction.

Product Feedback Tools

If you opt to automate your feedback analysis process, it is advisable to look into tools specifically designed to collect, analyze, and prioritize feedback. Here is what you should look for in such a tool and how they support your workflow.

ONBOARDING

Good feedback software is built in a very intuitive way. Ideally, you won't need a handbook on using the tool, but most of them have a step-by-step onboarding process set up. After following these guides on creating a page for your feedback and customizing it to your company's likes, you can get started on collecting feedback.

SUBMITTING FEEDBACK

Your users can submit feedback directly on the page. They can also go through other submitted insights and vote on the ideas of others. If you receive feedback from channels other than your feedback page, you can either submit it in the name of the customer manually or use countless integrations to link it to other products.

DUPLICATE CHECK

A good product feedback tool will also make it possible for your customers to see if the feedback they wanted to submit has been posted before by someone else. This feature saves you time in going through the insights.

CATEGORIZING

As with categorizing feedback manually, it is advisable to create categories in product feedback tools early on too. This way, you won't fall into the trap of creating multiple categories that only differ in their name.

PRIORITIZATION

Different tools offer different versions of prioritization. One thing most have in common is the prioritization by votes. The more votes a feedback post has, the more relevant it is viewed as.

However, this often isn't enough. If feedback is upvoted by a lot of people, but they are nonpaying customers, implementing it will not get you far.

Therefore, good product feedback tools also offer integrations to sales software so you can connect the user's MRR to their feedback. Furthermore, some tools offer a visual representation of the effort needed to complete the feedback in comparison to its impact.

ANALYZING

Many tools offer a dashboard that shows you a clear overview of your most important reports, like the number of submitted feedback, source of your feedback, and status.

Moreover, they show you all the insights in a structured list that you can filter by various variables. Next to the duplication check, this feature makes reviewing feedback much more efficient. Prioritization features like an impact/effort matrix also help you with the analysis process.

Integrations to other analytic tools make it possible to visualize all your data further.

Analytics Tools

If analyzing data by categorizing and prioritizing isn't enough for you, you can go one step further and integrate an analytics tool. These take your insights and give you various visual presentations of it.

METRIC ANALYTICS

If you are collecting feedback with surveys, like the NPS or CSAT or any other rating-based survey, an analytics tool can be of great help in calculating and interpreting the results.

TEXT ANALYTICS

Text analysis is time-consuming, especially if you have a significant amount of data coming in at once. Some analytics tools, therefore, work with AI. The AI is trained to group similar phrases into themes and, therefore, help save time in managing big text datasets.

UNCOVERING UNKNOWNS

Sometimes you are not quite sure what you are looking for, or correlations are unnoticeable to the untrained eye. However, analytic tools can help find insights and trends you might have missed otherwise.

VISUALIZING DATA

Getting all this new information can be overwhelming. To always be on top of things, visualizing the data is a big help. A good analytics tool will offer a variety of charts, graphs, and visual patterns. This makes it easy to share the data with other stakeholders and make data-driven decisions.

STEP 3 Link Product Feedback to Customer Data

The usage of your product might differ from customer to customer. Of course, this also becomes evident when you are analyzing the feedback.

There are two main things to consider when it comes to the person behind the feedback: the feedbacker’s job and if they are a paying customer.

If your target audience, for example, is marketing managers, the feedback of an accountant may not reflect your typical user base.

It is also of note to differentiate between free and paying users. The reason behind this is evident – building something for non-paying customers will not earn any revenue. Additionally, paying users are often more focused on improving the product itself while free customers prefer a wide range of features.

After looking at the person behind the feedback, it is time to separate the wheat from the chaff. As a product manager, you will know firsthand what path your product wants to follow. However, it might happen that the feedback you get does not fit in your product vision.

If you are building software for SEO Marketing, for example, you will probably not have any intentions to expand it to the field of e-commerce. We advise you to stay on the yellow brick road. However, looking around and seeing what is out there doesn't hurt from time to time.

If you get feedback from a single individual about a new feature, don't base your entire roadmap on just that. Instead, if you think the observation is a good idea, ask others specifically if they would like to see this feature in the future too. Maybe some of them have just found a workaround to solve the problem, or the problem still exists for them too.

This step will clearly show you that not all feedback is equal. If you want your product feedback process to be effective, it is indispensable to link your insights to as much information about your customers as possible.

Here is a quick guide to linking customer data to feedback, so you can later derive accurate decisions:

- Long-time or short-time user?
- Paying customer?
- Existing or churned?
- Who is the account manager?
- Have they given any ratings (i.e., NPS, Google reviews, etc.)? If so, what are they?
- What is their MRR/ARR?
- How is their company structured? (i.e., one-person operation with one account or international corporation with multiple subsidiary companies and multiple accounts, etc.)

STEP 4 Visualize Data Effectively

If we break it down, feedback comes in two forms: text or scores. While scores are typically fairly easy to visualize, text can be vtrickier.

The major advantage of scored feedback is, that you can calculate averages, frequencies, impact, and more very easily. Here are a few ways to visualize scored feedback quickly and usefully.

Bar and cake charts

There is probably no need to mention these, as they are the very standard form of visualization. However, for the sake of completeness, we will quickly go through them here too.

If you are working with averages alone, it doesn't tell you much about the distribution of the feedback. If you take the CSAT score, for example, it will tell you the average satisfaction of your customers. This could either mean that the majority of answers were scattered around the average or that some of your customers tended towards the extremes.

This could make a difference in your decision process. Bar charts are a great way to visualize the distribution of the answers.

If you have conducted a survey with closed questions, like “What did you think of the new feature?” and already have provided the possible answers “helpful, confusing, useless, intuitive, other” you can assign each possible answer a number and treat this text feedback like a numeric one.

Keep in mind that you cannot calculate an average with these numbers. However, they are useful for determining the frequency. Bar and cake charts are great for this purpose.

If your customers rated multiple features on the same scale, and you want to compare them directly, a stacked bar chart will help you do that.

Profile Plot

Those visualizations, of course, have their limitations, especially when it comes to text feedback. Here is where the profile plot comes in.

If you have categorized your text feedback, these are a great way to show how frequently each category came up while taking another variable into account.

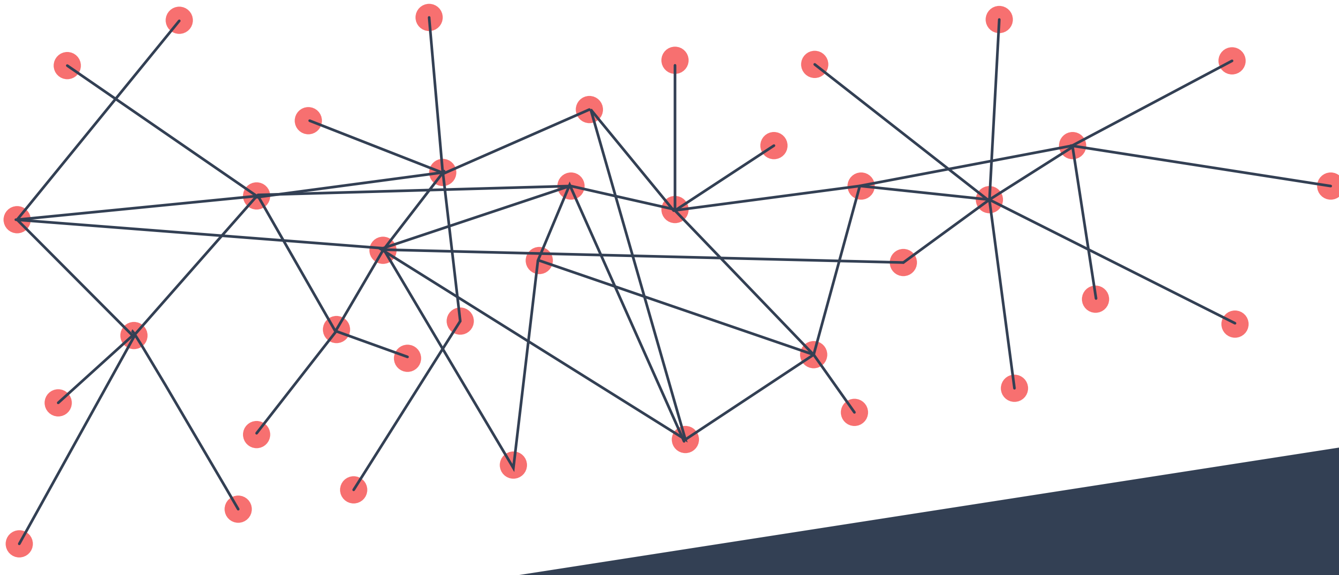
This way you could, for example, directly compare what features or improvements have been suggested by your highest paying versus your free customers.

Word Cloud

If you are not (yet) working with categories, you might want to think about creating a word cloud. Word clouds are one of the most common ways of bringing word frequencies into a visual form. It is popular because it is easy to use, and it gives a good overview of frequently used phrases. However, it needs a little bit of groundwork to be an effective tool. The feedback has to be prepared so that only content words and stings of two or more words are present in the cloud.

Content Correlations

If a word cloud doesn't provide enough information for you, you might want to look into content correlations. You can do so by measuring how often words co-occur within the feedback. Even though it provides a lot of helpful information, correlations are not easy to do yourself, so we recommend using a tool for this.



Impact & Effort Matrix

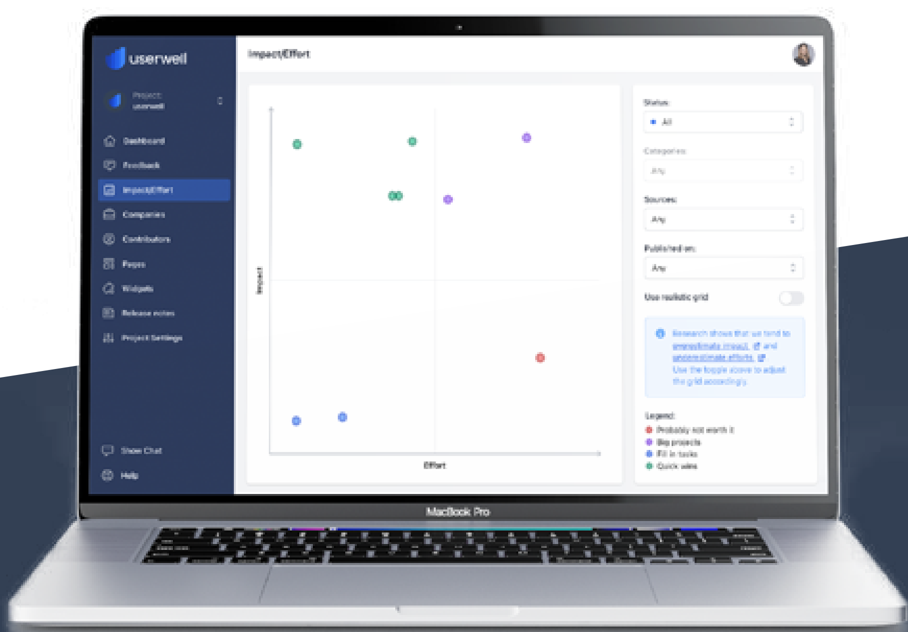
If you don't want to go down the rabbit hole with your visualizations, we recommend a simple impact/effort matrix. It is a great method for prioritizing feedback and communicating which feedback will pay off if realized. And it is super easy to do! If you are doing this with your team, all you need is a big piece of paper or a whiteboard. Alternatively, you could use an online template, create your matrix, or maybe you already have this feature in your feedback tool. Either way, it can be advantageous to do this with your team. Have a group discussion about how much effort the realization of feedback will take as well as how big of an impact this change will have. Then place each feedback topic into one of four quadrants:

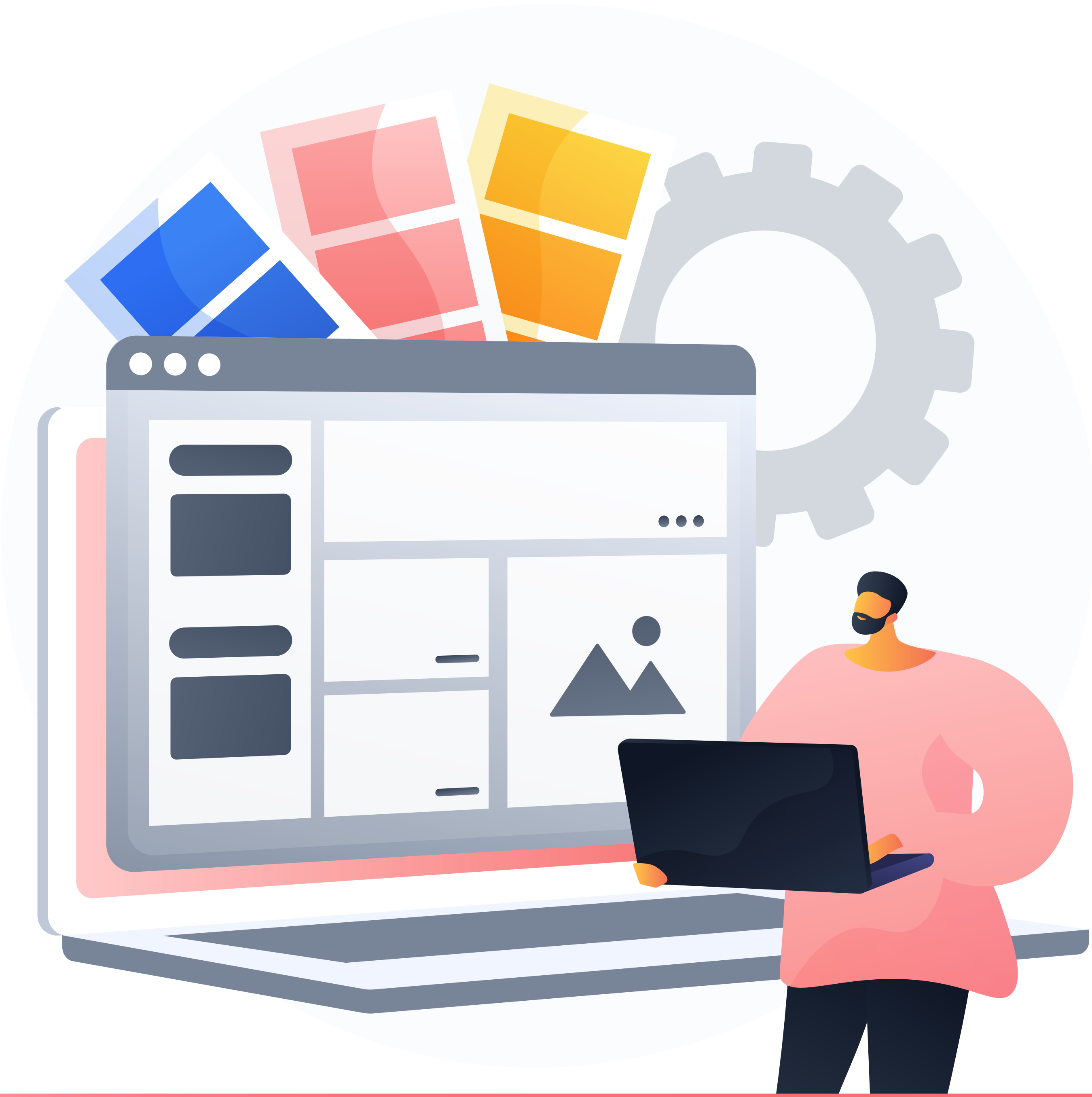
Quick wins top priority tasks, cost little work but offer great value

Major Projects great value, but also a lot of work

Fill-ins low impact but very easy to complete

Thankless tasks high effort tasks that have a low impact





DON'T OVERTHINK YOUR VISUALIZATIONS

When in doubt, a bar chart is always a safe way to go. And always keep in mind that the most effective visualizations are the ones that answer specific questions.

STEP 5 Be Thorough and Consistent Over Time

Many companies don't see feedback management as an ongoing process but dependent on the point in time. Often it is driven by deadlines or an urgent executive decision.

This, of course, leads to incompletely and incorrectly analyzed feedback.

Oftentimes, only the newest feedback or feedback from only one channel gets analyzed, leaving countless possibly valuable insights uncovered.

Accordingly, this leaves you with distorted results that you base your decisions on, or worse, forget about them as soon as the deadline or task is over.

Not only does this way of feedback "management" waste valuable resources, but the data also can't be used in the future, as it is just a momentary snapshot.

Aggregating feedback over time is crucial. Even if the feedback is time-sensitive, keeping it longer will help you generate trends and improve your processes over time. If you keep receiving comments on improving your usability, the bigger issue will not be clear immediately but develop over time.

The real payoff for a consistent product feedback process is that you can derive deeper and more farsighted insights. Important insights won't get lost, and you can use your time more efficiently.

06
How To Act on Feedback

If you have made it this far in the process, congratulations! You have gathered tons of valuable insights, categorized, and analyzed them. Now it is time to act on them! After all, feedback is only as good as the actions you derive from it.

Share the Feedback

Regardless of how many people were involved in the process so far, it is now time to share it with all the relevant parties. Of course, this includes the whole product team. But also for the Customer Support team and Marketing and Sales departments, this information will be relevant.

Sharing it can be done either via email, Slack, or any other official way of communication in your company.

You can share feedback in real-time. However, we recommend sending it out summarized in set intervals, such as daily, weekly, or monthly, depending on the amount of feedback.

Derive actionable Tasks

When your customers give you feedback on your product, they expect you to do something with it. Especially if you actively asked for it.

Take the categorized and analyzed feedback to your team. Regularly scheduled meetings are a suitable form for that. The meetings can either focus solely on feedback management, or the topic can be integrated into other regular meetings.

Discuss the feedback with your team. Show what your customers have to say about your product, discuss what you can do to improve it, and add it to your product roadmap. Whether it is a new feature, a bug report, or a feature update or improvement, you now have the data to back up your decisions and prioritizations and, therefore, can build a product that your customers will love to use.

Communicate the Roadmap

The feedback you receive will unlikely always require the same expenditure of time or work. Sometimes you will have a solution for your customers right away. While other times it will take some time to integrate it into your product plans.

Either way, it is important to let your customers know that you have received their feedback and are looking into it. When you decide to act on feedback let the feedbackers know you do. Also, give them an approximate time frame and update them on your progress status.

The most transparent way to do this is by creating a roadmap. This doesn't have to be a super fancy, well-designed document. It, of course, can be, but in most cases, a simple table that is divided into "planned", "in progress", and "done" is sufficient for your customers to know where they stand.

If you are using a product feedback tool, you will already have a roadmap integrated into it that automatically includes feedback in the roadmap according to the status you set. The tool covers your entire communication regarding feedback with your customers.

If you are not using feedback software, you can provide the roadmap to your customers on your website, changelog, or any other platform that is easy to access for them.

07 Concluding Remarks

Rome wasn't built in a day. Take your time when choosing the right feedback method, make sure the timing is right, and talk to other departments like support and development so that the feedback you've painstakingly collected doesn't get left behind somewhere. When collecting feedback, it is important that all data is stored and analyzed in a central location.

It is the only way to ensure that you don't miss valuable feedback. That way, you can make sure that you and your team are developing a product that meets your customers' needs and that they not only use but love.

Even though it can seem overwhelming at first, collecting customer feedback is an important part of your product improvement process. By asking for feedback proactively or supplying your customers with a feedback page, your business will grow and increase your customer satisfaction.

Besides preventing churn and engaging customers, it helps you to prioritize internally. Remember that product feedback requires a continuous process to improve your product in the long run.

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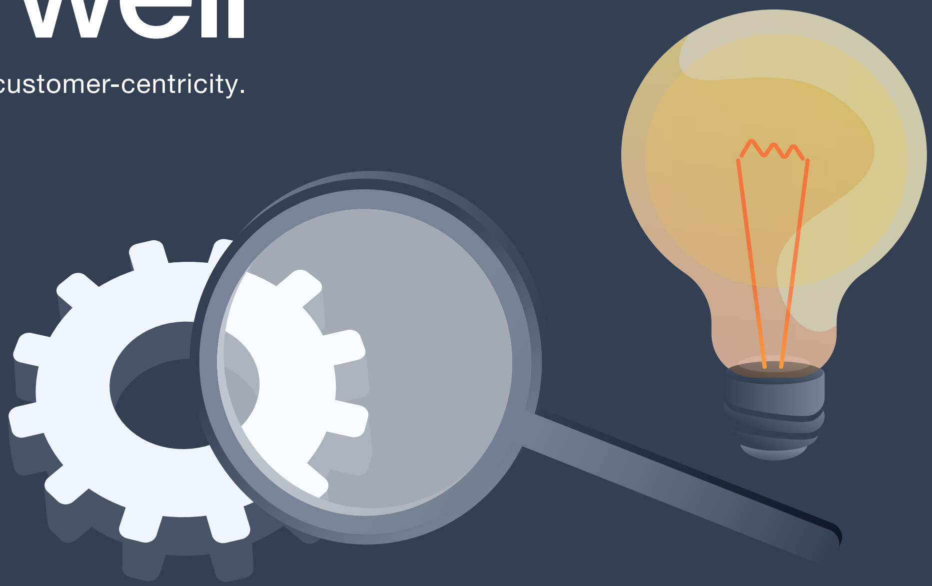

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