

# How to measure and monitor customer experience

 **B2B Marketing**  
Insight · Development · Training · Events

In association with  **Confirmit**





# Introduction

An experience is taking place between your brand and your customers, whether you intend it or not.

You just need to decide what type of customer experience you want your clients and prospects to have.

B2B Marketing research, conducted in June, found two-thirds of marketers intend to place more emphasis on CX in the next 12 months compared to the past year, and more than a quarter say it will be their highest priority in the year ahead.

But our survey also exposed the lack of understanding and focus on CX that exists in many B2B organisations, with most reporting it as siloed, or even non-existent. And while some have set objectives related to CX, these have not yet been implemented or are not joined up with the rest of the business.

B2B marketers are left with a stark choice. You can either attempt to deliver a great customer experience – or you can just let the experience happen to your customers.

**We've collated advice from the CX experts and leaders to tell you:**

- › How to understand the current CX efforts in your organisation.
- › Who should take responsibility for CX.
- › The best ways to drive a CX strategy.
- › How to bring together customer data and feedback.
- › The different measurement methods for tracking CX, and which metrics can be used to drive performance.



# Our experts

We asked our experts for their advice on the first step a B2B company should take when looking to establish a CX programme where one doesn't currently exist.



*"At a very simple level, saying thank you is the best way to build CX. Every time a customer does business they have choice, and I think an awful lot of customers are taken for granted in the B2B market. The point about a genuine thank you is if you really do say, and appreciate, it from the heart, you'll excel at CX because it is genuinely important to you."*

**Paul Hague, author, B2B Customer Experience: A practical guide to delivering exceptional CX**



*"Invest in employees. If you invest in training, knowledge and tools – everything to support a customer – you give staff the autonomy to do the best job they can possibly do. If you have a team of people who love their jobs, and will do everything they can to help customers feel that. Invest in your people and your team, give them autonomy and resources, and trust them to do good things for your customers."*

**Ali Rayl, VP customer experience, Slack**



*"Capture the information about the customer needs and voice of the customer. In every company there a tonne of information available, either through the people servicing the customers or the data collected. Understand what information you have available about your customers, what your customers are actually telling you and document that. This will show you how good a job you are doing servicing them, and from there you can build it out."*

**Nicole Zimmermann, head of customer and marketing global payments, Western Union**



*"Companies embarking on a customer experience transformation may not know where to even start. Arguably the best place is with your customers. Ask them what is really happening, find out what their journey with you looks like. Run a series of focus groups with them and really understand which areas to address first."*

**Chris Adlard, experienced CX and marketing leader**



*"Without board attention every CX programme will fail. It has to come from the top. Base it on data you accumulate to show what a bad customer experience will influence, and how revenue and pipelines are shrinking because you're not delivering that experience."*

**Martin Häring, CMO, Finastra**

## Section 1

# Establishing an organisation-wide view of CX

### Why is there a focus on CX in B2B now?

There are two primary drivers behind CX's rise to prominence in B2B.

First is growing customer expectations. B2B clients now expect an equivalent level of service in their professional lives as they receive in their personal transactions.

The other big motivator according to CX expert and marketing leader Chris Adlard, is changing B2B commercial models, especially in tech.

"The way software is sold and consumed has completely changed in the past five to 10 years. In fact, this whole software-as-a-service-based (SaaS) commercial model where you renew [a product] every year is starting to seep into other B2B industries," he says.

This now means you can't just sell a product or licence for 10 years and expect it to automatically renew. With annual renewals: "You're only as good as the success or outcome of that installation."

### Customer experience, success or satisfaction?

The terminology around this space is varied and can be confusing. Is there

really a difference between customer experience, customer success and customer satisfaction? Some argue one is a subset of another, and vice-versa. Some say the word 'success' puts too much focus on the post-sales support, ignoring vital pre-sale interactions. Others that the word 'experience' makes marketers believe it's simply about improving digital campaign flow.

When we refer to customer experience we mean the relationship between an organisation and customer throughout the full lifecycle, from attraction to renewal or termination.

### Where does the catalyst for CX come from in B2B?

Many B2B companies fail at CX because they don't realise its importance, says Paul Hague, author of *B2B Customer Experience*. "If you look at pure B2B companies there are very few that are better than OK – most are just mediocre, and that's partly because they don't get it. They know CX is important, but don't put the priority at the top [of the organisation]."

By and large the bosses of B2B companies are process driven. They've possibly come up from production or finance rather than marketing or sales. And as a result, they don't get it."

*Commitment – which is the most important thing for CX – has to come from the top. This is the main reason why B2B companies are not very good at customer experience*

And if you haven't got that senior commitment, you'll fail warns Finastra CMO Martin Häring. It can't be born from a function, it needs to originate from the top. But they might need a push in the right direction. To raise awareness Häring took data to the board to make the case.

"What we showed the board at the beginning was because of missing customer references, bad customer situations, mistreatment of customers in the pre-sales cycle, etc, the company had missed out on a three-million-digit pipeline in the past three years. The board was shocked, and said they were just not aware. This was the moment where we decided we needed to put a programme in place."

## The price of customer experience

Customer experience is built into the foundation of collaboration software firm Slack – so much so it even influenced its pricing model.

“When you make a new product you need to decide how much to charge for it. We asked ‘what do we need to be able to support the business?’ And one of the things we needed to support it was an excellent customer experience, because we are making a product that demands a lot of trust from our customers,” says Ali Rayl, VP customer experience.

“When you look at any of this, it’s an investment and we actually rolled the price of doing great customer experience into the price of the product. So it has all been built into the strategy of growing the business and growing our products since the very early days.”

## Which function should ‘own’ responsibility for CX?

In short, everyone in the company needs to take responsibility for CX. You can’t implement an effective customer experience across all touchpoints in the customer journey without a customer-centric culture and buy-in from the CEO to the rep on the helpdesk.

According to Nicole Zimmermann, head of customer and marketing global payments at Western Union, this needs a shift in cultural mindset to ensure the CX improvements you’re designing and developing are genuinely sustainable and scalable.

The common denominator of leaders in CX is they have a dedicated function or leader that facilitates driving the strategy internally.

“That’s the way it’s heading, but in many companies, because it’s new and different, it ends up in a temporary home, and whichever the change agent in the organisation can take that role. That’s where marketing has a role,” says Adlard. Marketing was always about happy customers, but that was lost in the way product was sold, and now it’s important again.

In a blended business that serves both the company and consumers, such as Western Union, there is shared responsibility. On the consumer side there is a chief customer experience officer, and in the B2B part of the business Nicole leads on both CX and marketing in her role which incorporates responsibility for both customer and marketing. “We have these two functional leads that own customer experience, and they coordinate and collaborate with all other functions” she says. “CX is everyone’s responsibility across the company but both roles are taking the ownership of consolidating the data and collaborating the efforts to address the top customer pain-points.”

## *How can you make commitments and promises to customers if you haven't got the internal commitments and promises between people?*

### Could CX change business structures?

The concept of a career is built on functional silos, but a focus on CX might totally change this, according to Adlard.

"The whole point of [CX] is you are going from a reactive silo-based 'fix it' culture, to a proactive inverted business model. If you listen to someone like Robert Smith, chairman of Vista Equity Partners, which owns companies such as Finastra and Marketo, he is saying business models will turn on their heads for that reason and the entire structure will be based on the journey of the client.

"That makes complete sense because what we're finding with CX is when you have those functional conversations people naturally go to their comfort zone, which is what their career is built upon. It's a delicate topic because that's what they get paid in, that's what they believe in. But imagine a conversation where people are not in the role they loved and studied – that could happen in the future."

### What's the best way to drive a CX strategy in B2B?

"Change is not in the hands of the CX practitioner, or even the organisation's leaders (unfortunately) – change is in the hands of everyone in the organisation," said Claire Sporton, SVP customer experience innovation at Confrimit, at the firm's recent B2B Summit.

Unfortunately, in the often siloed, diversified B2B organisation, this is easier said than done. "Each is a fiefdom, that has often forgotten about the customer. Breaking down the silos between departments is really important," says Paul.

Transparency and information availability are also crucial to driving this organisation-wide approach, says Ali Rayl, VP customer experience at collaboration tech business Slack.

"So much of breaking down the silos between people in organisations is about increasing trust between people. And it's easy for people to trust one another when they're predictable. If I know I'm working on something marketing is also working on, and I can predict they'll make similar decisions to me, there's a lot of trust. We can do stuff without the need for meetings, oversight

or governance. So that is key to how we get visibility – we make it a cornerstone of how work gets done, done better, and how we better enjoy our jobs," she says.

Also speaking at the Summit, Rachel Buckley, VP customer experience at Envigo, said: "I don't believe you can build strong relationships with customers unless you've got strong relationships with the internal departments.

Buckley advocates sharing the customer journey map with employees to allow them to take ownership, add value and highlight barriers. "It's hugely insightful because it makes them feel like they have a place on the journey," she adds.

Finastra's approach was to match functions to the customer journey. Each function nominated an owner, who was made responsible for both co-ordination with marketing (which oversees CX), and the three specific KPIs set out at that stage of the journey.

Ultimately, says Adlard, if your company is serious about CX, at some point people will need to be remunerated based upon the KPIs that are aligned with the customer journey. But for the majority of B2B firms, this is a distant dream.

## What CX challenges will you face?

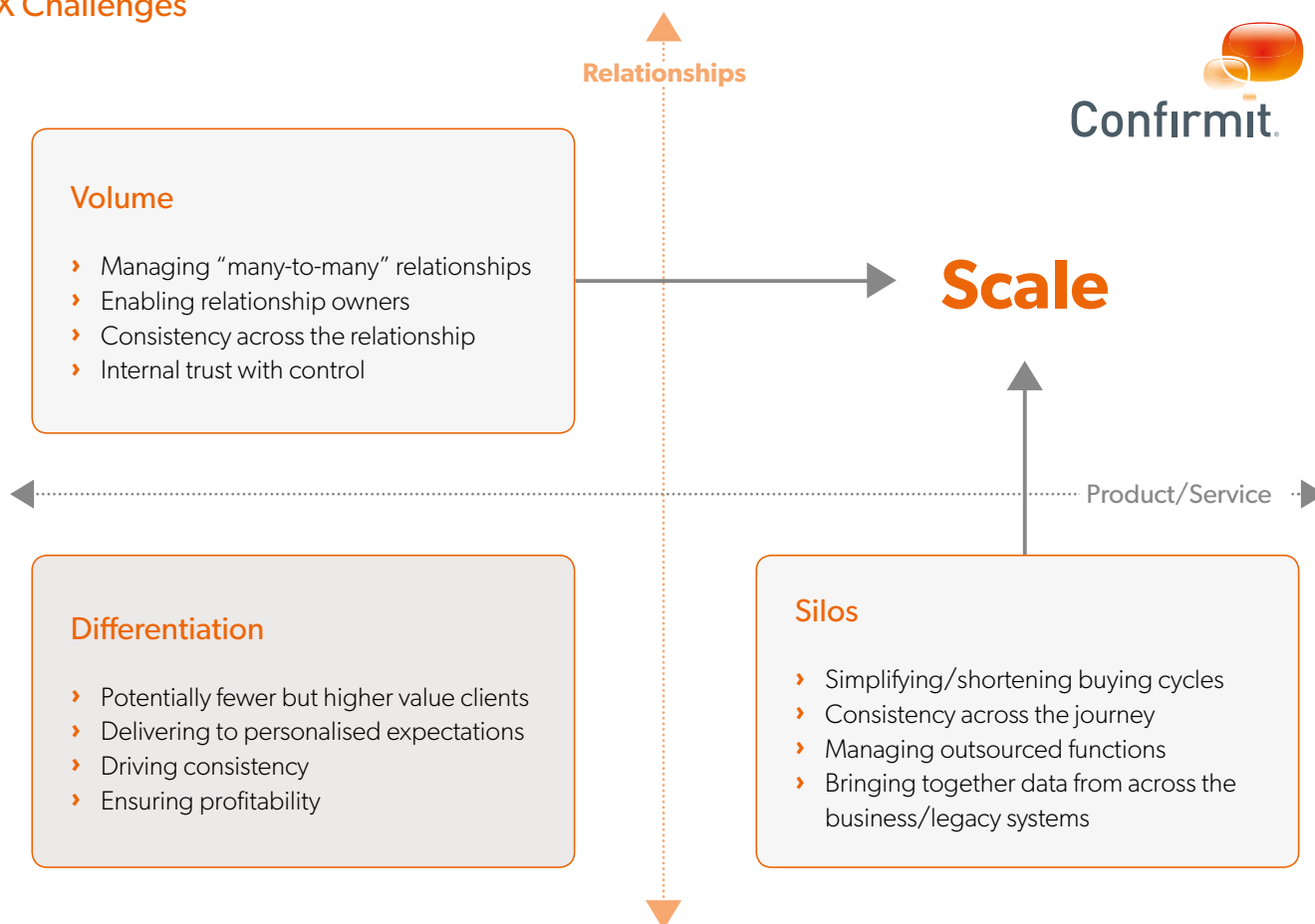
Confirmit has developed a simple and straightforward model that allows B2B firms to prioritise and develop their CX programmes.

The horizontal axis from left to right represents the complexity of your products and services (such as the number of steps on

the customer journey). The vertical axis looks at the nature of relationships, both internal and external. The higher up the scale, the more complex the relationships.

"We found there was some consistency around the needs from a CX perspective for each of those four quadrants," says Claire.

## CX Challenges



## Section 2

# Monitory and measurement

### Where does your CX data come from?

“No organisation is struggling for information, the problem is the information is spread everywhere across the organisation. We need to make sense of that,” says Claire. “The first job from a CX perspective is bringing that information and data and turning it into something that’s more useful to us – we call that richer insights.”

Nicole explains how this works at Western Union: “First and foremost, what we are doing in the customer and marketing organisation is making sure we have all touchpoints the customers are interacting with, and the information is flowing back to us so we can analyse the data and make sure we have a good understanding of what those pain-points are.”

This information is then analysed to drive the firm’s B2B CX action programmes. “This information is consolidated and given to our product and operations teams, and working with them to design our product roadmap or to develop new features driven by these customer needs, feedback, and pain-points. There is a closed loop across the function, but driven by my team – so someone is co-ordinating, owning, tracking the programmes, and making sure these [improvements] really are implemented.”

### What information should be captured?

According to Nicole, this is where B2B marketers have the upper hand over their B2C counterparts. “On the B2B side you have sales or account management organisation very much driving individual customer relationship management, so you have more access to the information about customer feedback and addressing their pain-points.”

There are a whole host of metrics that could be analysed as part of a CX programme. For Ali at Slack her North star is the average number of contacts versus number of total users. Slack has an average of 80 million hours of product use every day, so she knows if that contact number is trending too high. “Realistically, how low can we get this number?” she asks. “Not because we’re trying to drive down support costs, but because we’re trying to drive down customer pain.

It took Finastra four to five months of debate with the functional owners to establish the KPIs that would ultimately contribute to the Customer Health Index – a real-time measure of the strength of Finastra’s relationships with clients. (See p9)

Martin says: “It was difficult to nail them down on just three KPIs that have an impact on the customer, because

every function has internal scorecards and measurements, and they would come back with all these various KPIs they have in their drawer already. We had to ask clients, if they move the needle on this, does it really matter to you?” he says. And when you strip it back there are really just a few metrics that customers truly care about: How quickly did you respond? And did you solve my problem?

*The point is not to try and drive down costs, it’s to try and make the customer’s experience better*

### Don’t forget about anecdotal feedback

Organisations are accruing feedback from their customers through a variety of channels all the time, but there needs to be a formal method of capturing this – whether it’s interactions with the sales or account management execs or conversations at conferences and trade shows. Most organisations tend to do this through their CRM system.



## We need to talk about NPS

Net Promoter Score (NPS) was developed in 2003 and has quickly been adopted by organisations as the most common measure of CX efforts in the market. It asks customers one question – ‘How likely is it that you’d recommend [this company] to a friend or colleague?’ – with a simple zero to 10 ranking. Those who give a score of nine or 10 and classed as ‘promoters’, with those responding zero to six labelled ‘detractors’ (the remainder are known as ‘passives’). The idea is to focus on these two groups, to drive both improvement and advocacy.

It’s popular, but not without its critics – especially in the B2B environment. NPS is popular with CEOs, because everyone uses it and knows their number like their golf handicap. Paul says. But ignoring the bulk of answers in the middle, if you only have a small sample, means you have a very small base to track NPS. The ranking also tends to be hugely influenced by the final touchpoint, so if the customer had a great experience through their journey and was let down at the final stage, it will lead to a negative response. With the long sales cycles typical in B2B, this can be dangerous.

Nevertheless, NPS can give a quantitative validation of CX

improvement measures. At Western Union NPS is combined with other metrics to show programmes are having an impact. “The NPS is really the leading indicator that’s giving

us the final outcome on a quarterly basis, to make sure we’re tracking in the right direction and with the trend toward the right goal at the end of the year,” says Nicole.

## The Customer Health Index: Finastra’s NPS alternative

Finastra went one step further, developing its own Customer Health Index. The business analysed the customer journey and sliced it into 10 areas, with three KPIs identified in each of these. These KPIs were also selected on the basis the information already existed in current systems, such as Marketo and Salesforce, so it could be produced in real-time. The KPIs were weighted based on their impact, and given a weighted average out of 100. Below 70 means a red rating, 70 to 85 is yellow, and above 85 is green. This allows those at Finastra to see whether the relationship is healthy, and can be drilled into to find the root causes.

“The Customer Health Index is a real-time indicator of the health of a customer relationship, and in a lot of customer dialogues it’s the first type of report the CEO wants when he goes into a customer situation,” says Martin.

The index provides crucial accountability. Each set of KPIs is owned by the appropriate function, and has a board-level owner. “The beauty of this is every function has a board member responsible, so our CEO can come to me and say ‘Martin, I think we have a problem in a certain account because the account has never heard of Finastra, so fix it’. Simple questions such as who’s fixing stuff and who’s really thinking of the customer experience can be resolved in a lot of companies.”

With around 9000 clients, it’s not practical to run health checks with all customers, so Finastra concentrates on its primary customers – tier one or two banks plus a few in emerging markets. “For the rest we still stick with NPS scores, which gives us a rough indication of where we are because if people are not recommending us they’re probably also not happy. But it’s a very simple metric and I never believe it completely matches with the CX.”

*She adds: “The critical point to understanding customer engagement – and how customer satisfaction is actually working – is to understand the correlation between a satisfied customer and our business performance.”*

### How often should you review your metrics?

Once you’ve nailed down your metrics, how frequently should you be checking and changing them? At Slack, Ali says she and her leadership team spend 20 minutes going through the same dashboards every week.

“The reason for doing that is two-fold. If you look at a metric week after week you get a really good understanding of what it should be and when you’ll have aberrations and why. That way, when you have an aberration you don’t understand you can start digging into it before it gets out of control,” she says.

“The other reason is when you start talking about your metrics together you gain a common understanding of why you’re even looking at them. Is it the right thing to look at? Should we be looking at something else? Understanding the rhythms of the business from a data perspective is incredibly important to those decisions as part of an ongoing basis.”

Ali describes her dashboard as a constant work in progress, reporting on data, solving the problem, then replacing it with the latest hot issues to be tackled.

In contrast Martin says they haven’t changed the KPIs that underpin the Customer Health Index since it launched two years ago, to be able to provide that year-on-year comparison to determine relative performance.

### Beware of analysis paralysis

With so many metrics to track, there is the potential to go round in circles to find exactly the right dashboards to produce. The metrics are only ever an indicator, and what really counts is action.

But how do you prioritise what to focus on? “The way we prioritise is we establish a ranking of pain-points – the ones that actually have most impact on the satisfaction of the customer,” says Nicole. “We set a goal every year in terms of improving and increasing our customer satisfaction. We look at which of those pain-points have the biggest impact on a detractor or promoter and then we prioritise what we are trying to address on that basis.”

Claire concurs: “If we don’t align our CX programme to the business priorities then we’re not going to demonstrate ROI, which will deliver the future investment. Think about the business priorities within the organisation, understand what’s most important, then align that to the needs of different stakeholders.”



## Reader, I married Slack

Much of what we've discussed has looked at taking action on customer pain-points to improve the customer experience. But remember, CX isn't always about focusing on what's gone wrong.

Slack has TVs set up in lobbies of each of its office around the world that run constant feeds of tweets people have posted in praise of the company and its software, so all employees "see it and remember it".

"It's not a set of data that's useful in and of itself – and it might almost be a bit dangerous, because we never want people to think 'we've got this, it's cool'," Ali says. "But we did an ad campaign [Wall of Love, see right] where artists represented those 'love tweets' as a series of tattoo [designs], and that was a really fun campaign."

And the love tweets aren't the only ones she looks out for.

"One metric we do track is how many times people have proposed to us [the brand]," she jokes. "I'm pretty sure that @SlackHQ has had a marriage proposal more than 20 times at this point! So we like that metric, it's a fun one."



Thanks @SuperZero0017. You rule.

We like to think Slack's changing the way that teams communicate. But don't take our word for it.  
[slack.com/love](https://slack.com/love)



## Comment

# Empowering people to change their world



**Claire Sporton**

SVP CX innovation, Confrontit

There's a sense in most organisations now we should 'do' customer experience. It's been a hot topic for ages, variously described as a silver bullet and the next competitive battleground. Lots of big talk, but in many cases, limited action.

This is understandable. Doing CX well, using the voice of the customer (VoC) to really make a difference is not a one-click solution. This is particularly true in B2B, where there is a level of complexity undreamt of in B2C. Complexity in relationships – fewer, more valuable clients, but each with multiple contacts and multiple members of your team (or outsourced contractors) managing different aspects of the service. This 'many-to-many' relationship means a clear view of the experience across the customer journey is opaque at best, and baffling at worst. And complexity doesn't end there, B2B offerings are rarely simple and longer sales cycles add to the risk attached to individual clients.

Your business will have more data points from across this journey than you know what to do with. Alongside survey data, there's social media, call transcripts, operational metrics, revenue trends... the list goes on. But in this complexity lies opportunity. With this depth of relationship and range of data, you can understand clients better than ever to deliver a truly different CX. You just need to bring it together and drive change.

### **Think about why you are doing this**

Your CX programme has to drive action. 'Doing a survey' is not the same as being customer-centric. Neither is knowing what your Net Promoter Score is. Too many businesses confuse metrics with action – don't be one of them! The purpose of listening is to help you make the right decisions, prioritise effectively, and minimise risk.

For CX practitioners, the focus is on enabling that action. Putting the right tools in the hands of the account managers and functional leads, helping to build an environment where customer and employee feedback are at the heart of every decision.

CX is about every individual in your organisation from senior leadership to front line. Empower them with the insights they need to improve their area. And then – take a deep breath – you

need to let them do it. Great CX is not achieved by sitting back and waiting for someone else to make things better. Everyone needs to step forward and become part of the change.

That sounds scary but it's much less risky than trying to be the only change agent. Build in clear governance – freedom within a framework. This enables you to act quickly when mistakes are made and to replicate successes, providing guard rails so leadership, CX teams and individuals can be sure you're moving in the right direction, and can correct course as required.

### **Where to begin?**

How do you actually do it? If you're going to trust your teams to make their own decisions, you need to ensure they have the clearest picture possible of the client relationship. This means bringing together data from all those touchpoints, adding feedback from your VoC programme, and presenting it so it makes sense to your frontline teams.

Ultimately, you need to give them richer insights, to drive smarter decisions so they can take faster actions. This can enable them to provide a differentiated and personalised service to each customer that will not only create client advocates but contribute to the ongoing profitability of your business.



# About B2B Marketing

Established more than 12 years ago, we are the number one go-to resource for B2B marketers across the globe.

Through our content hub and professional development services – including events, training and networking – B2B Marketing users are empowered with the tools, insight and inspiration they need.

## Our promise to you

Things change fast in B2B. Just staying on top of the changes can be a full-time job. So, we do that job for you.

With our subscriber content, training and events we guarantee you'll:

- › Put your best-ever strategies in place.
- › Lock down the multiple skills, tools and insights you need.
- › Find real-world inspiration for rolling out some outstanding marketing initiatives.
- › Make the progress you've always wanted in putting marketing at the top table of your business.

## How we help you, your team and your business to grow and succeed

- › Free online member content, including guides, toolkits, interviews and case studies from experts and inspirational leaders in B2B.
- › Premium, subscriber-only content, including industry research, benchmarking and analysis, expert strategy and tactical guides and a *B2B Marketing* magazine subscription.
- › Four, flagship UK-based, annual events for B2B marketers and leaders: Ignite; The Conference; InTech; and the B2B Marketing Awards.
- › Bespoke training for marketing teams (UK only).
- › More than 40 one-day open training courses and workshops each year (UK only).
- › Leaders networking, through the B2B Marketing Leaders programme and Leaders Forum (UK only).

## First step

- › Choose a 12-month subscription to all our Premium subscriber content – for just £399/\$499.
- › Go to [b2bmarketing.net/unlock](https://b2bmarketing.net/unlock) to find out more about the benefits of subscribing.
- › Or call our client services team on +44 (0)207 014 4920.



# About Confirmat

Confirmat enables organisations to develop and implement voice of the customer, employee engagement and market research programmes that deliver insight and drive business change.

Confirmat's clients create multi-channel, multi-lingual feedback and research programmes that engage customers, empower employees, and deliver a compelling respondent experience. Confirmat's solutions are the most secure, reliable and scalable in the world, and provide technology and expertise that deliver high return on investment to leading companies across a range of industries.

Confirmat's customer engagement model provides the power to listen to the voice of the customer, integrate it with financial, operational and free-form text data to generate powerful insight, and take action that will deliver effective business change and create competitive advantage.

Confirmat is the world's leading SaaS vendor for multi-channel customer experience, employee engagement, and market research solutions. The company has offices in Oslo (headquarters), Grimstad, London, Moscow, New York, San Francisco, Sydney, Vancouver, and Yaroslavl. Confirmat's software is also distributed through partner resellers in Madrid, Milan, Salvador, and Tokyo.

[confirmat.com](http://confirmat.com)

