

Driving VOC Program Maturity

Why customer journey insight and
organizational engagement are key

NICE



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Why VOC programs fail

Customer experience programs promise big results, but often struggle to deliver¹. Even after years in operation, many programs don't live up to expectations.

Some ramp-up time is to be expected, but in most cases, a lack of program maturity is the underlying problem.

Early successes quickly fade if the program itself doesn't advance to drive deeper customer journey insights and engage employees to deliver the best possible customer experience.

To help you advance and mature your program, this eBook details the elements of a mature customer experience program, the stages of program maturity, and best practices at each stage. You'll also learn the common obstacles to broad program adoption—and how to overcome them.

Why focus on **customer experience?**

TO CREATE AND RETAIN LOYAL CUSTOMERS

We'll begin with a quick review of why it's important to focus energy, effort, and quite often, financial investment to create positive customer experiences. The goals of a strong customer experience program are to retain loyal customers, reduce your cost to serve customers, and drive referrals of new business—all of which combine to drive profitability.

Promoters, your loyal customers, bring value to your company in several ways:

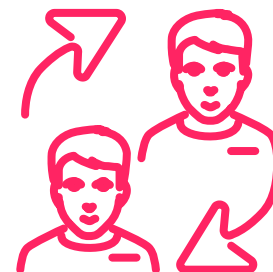
- They stay longer and purchase more
- They help identify improvements and efficiencies that reduce operating costs and improve the experiences of others
- They reduce new customer acquisition costs through positive referrals
- They cost less to serve in the first place



Purchase more



Identify improvements



Make referrals



Cost less

6-7x

*Acquiring new customers can cost **six to seven times more** than retaining current customers.²*



TO BECOME A MARKET LEADER

If we look at yesterday's leaders, they often followed very product-centric models and competed on price.

Today, products are often very similar, and competing on price alone can drive companies right out of the market. So today's market leaders set themselves apart by taking a customer-centric approach. That means giving customers the best possible experience from the first touch—consistently through every interaction after that.

Proof that it works? A recent Gartner study found that organizations that are exceeding customer expectations are more focused on competing based on enterprisewide, end-to-end customer experience.³

Yesterday's leaders

- Compete on price/product
- Simplistic ideas of customer experience journey
- Product driven model

Today's leaders

- Compete on differential experiences
- Complete understanding of the customer journey
- Customer experience driven model

Survey programs **won't cut it**

We've established that a strong VOC program creates Promoters or loyal customers. It also sets companies apart as market leaders that stand above their competition in profitability, growth, and positive brand perception.

And yes, a strong VOC program relies on customer feedback, often in the form of customer surveys. However, holistic VOC is more than just an occasional or sporadic survey program. Let's look at the differences between a survey program and true customer experience management.

The chart below shows that survey programs can take a few forms—but they all fall short of the promise of holistic VOC. These common types of survey programs illustrate the shortcomings of a survey-centric approach.

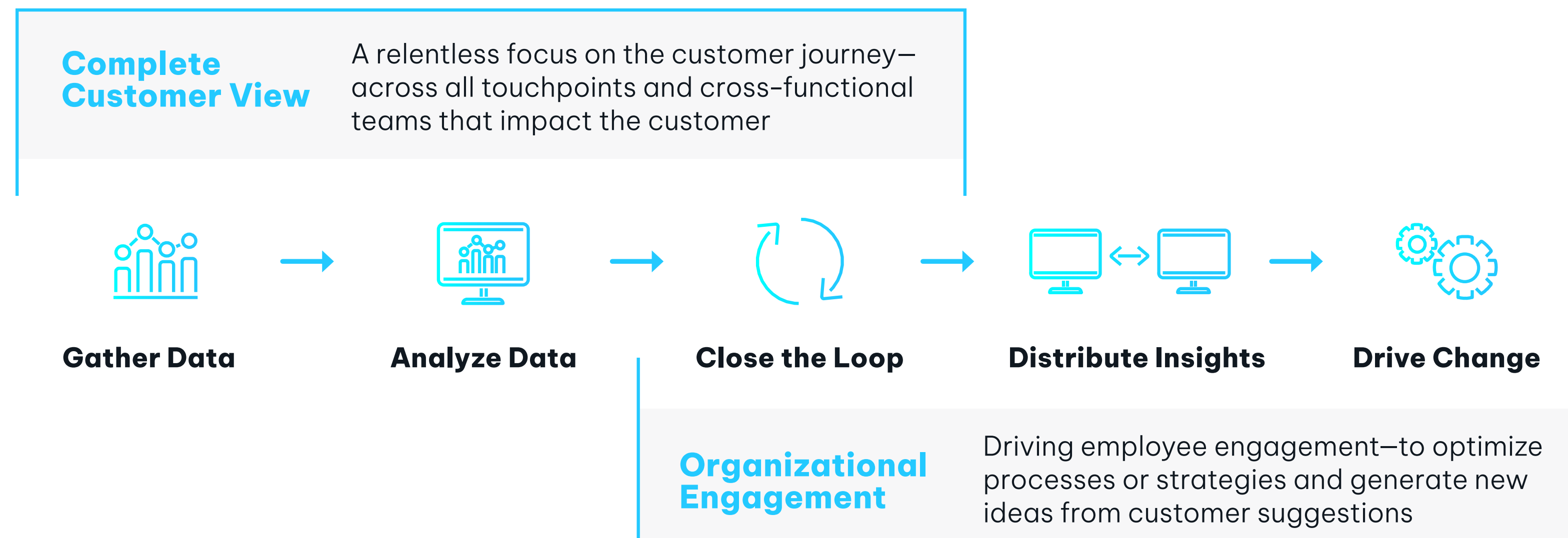
Survey program type	What it includes	Why it fails
The annual event	A major annual or infrequent survey collects customer feedback, often at length	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual or infrequent surveys are only fresh for a short time • Infrequent surveys often get loaded up with too many varied questions • Scheduled surveys don't feel relevant to customers
The buckshot approach	Multiple surveys on various aspects of the customer experience collect disjointed information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncoordinated surveys risk overwhelming customers • Inconsistent management often results in hard-to-reconcile scales for metrics and data • Drawing unified conclusions is near impossible • Prioritization of resources is haphazard
The ivory tower angle	Market and customer research collected ad hoc, often managed by a research or analyst team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research can play a key role in planning, but it's not connected to day-to-day relationships • Customer follow-up is usually slow, ineffectual, or non-existent • Analysts tend to control data tightly



Beyond surveys to **experience management**

Yes, surveys are one element of experience management, but your program won't get very far without additional customer-focused data, tools, and processes.

A comprehensive approach to VOC involves gathering customer feedback data from surveys or other sources, analyzing the data to understand what the feedback means to your business, closing the loop with customers, acting on the feedback data, and driving positive change within your company.



Unlike a mere survey program, holistic VOC:

- Finds meaning in data from surveys and other sources and puts it into context along the customer journey
- Organizes, analyzes, and interprets data so that every employee has the right information at the right time to do the right thing for the customer
- Fosters collaboration, removes silos, and provides tools for companywide cooperation
- Focuses the organization on the customer to address experience gaps at the individual and company level
- Puts processes in place to systematically recover Detractors, as well as engage and empower Promoters

The path to **VOC program maturity**

Our model of VOC program maturity shows how companies progress along the customer experience path. The two key elements of program maturity—the depth of your customer journey insight and the strength of your employee engagement—combine to determine the stage.

Transformational VOC

- Predictive analytics
- Integrated operational data hub
- All-employee engagement

Operational VOC

- Continuous, real-time data
- Complete customer view
- Robust, effective closed loop
- Broadening employee engagement

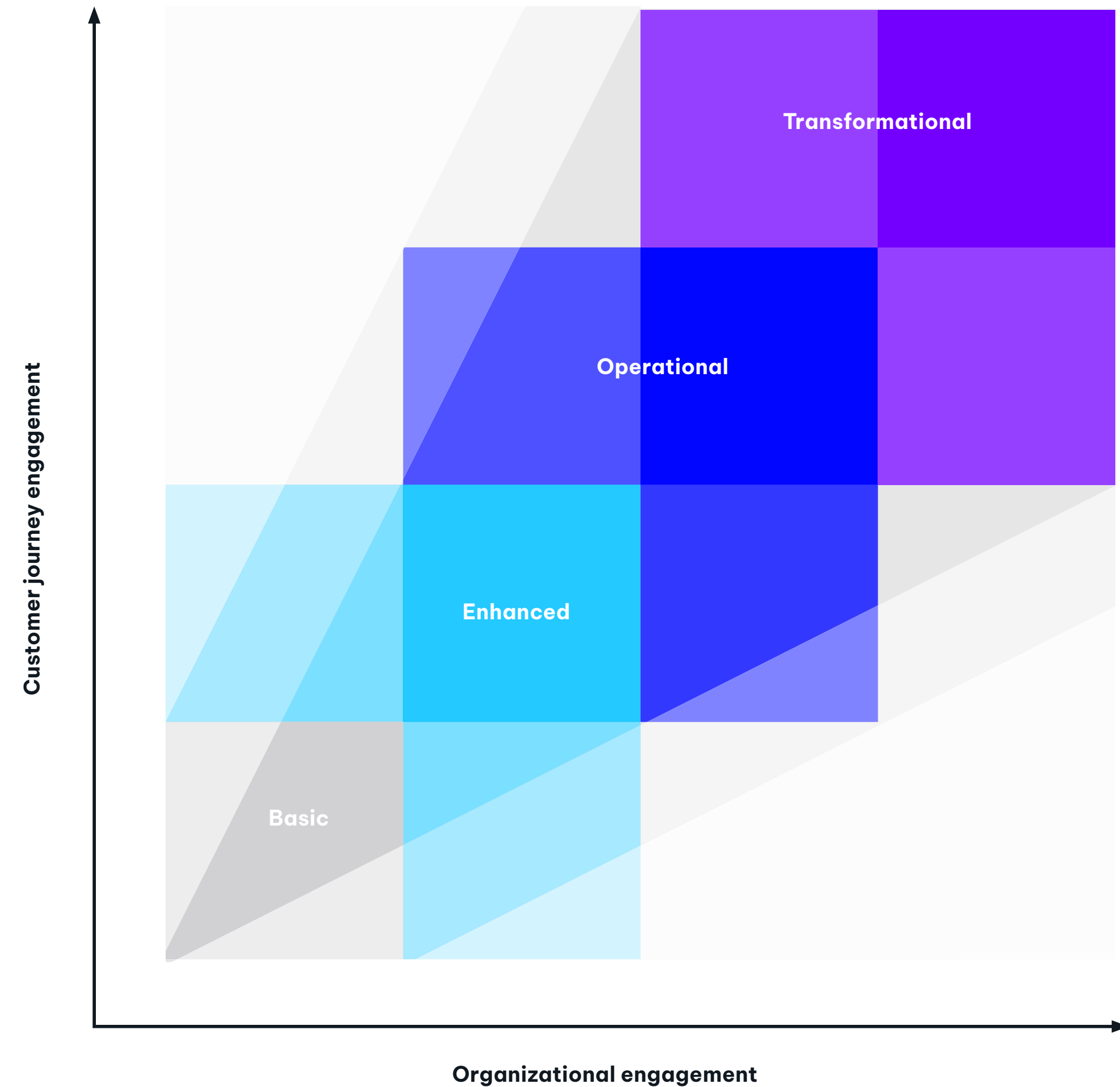
Enhanced Survey Program

- Periodic data collection
- Lacking data integration
- Introducing organizational engagement

Basic Survey Program

- Infrequent data collection (such as annual NPS)
- Time to analysis typically long

Be patient! Bottom-line benefits only start to accrue when you reach the operational stage



DIMENSIONS OF PROGRAM MATURITY

Customer journey insight and organizational engagement

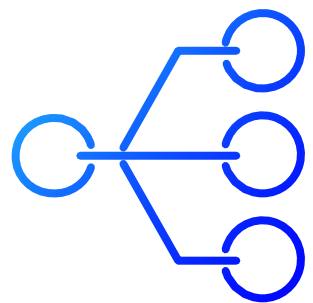
Pogressing through the stages of VOC program maturity requires a focus on two key elements of your program—which are interdependent and often progress together.



Customer journey insight

The most mature VOC programs reveal a comprehensive, nuanced view of the customer journey using multiple data sources.

- Organizing data collection around the customer journey delivers deeper insights than simply collecting data at various touchpoints
- Multiple points of data collection are critical
- Integration of operational data with customer feedback data (such as survey responses) reveals deeper insights
- Data is both frequently collected and of high quality
- Role-specific insights result from targeted analysis



Organizational engagement

The most mature VOC programs deliver customer experience data to all employees based on their role—and drive them to take both responsive and strategic action.

- Automated delivery of employee-specific insight drives engagement
- Follow-up to customer feedback must be consistent, prompt, and programmatically managed
- Employees in all roles should have a clear understanding of their role in the customer experience
- Customer experience insights should be routinely incorporated in both day-to-day work and longer-term planning
- Frequent, trustworthy data improves employee engagement



Path to VOC maturity

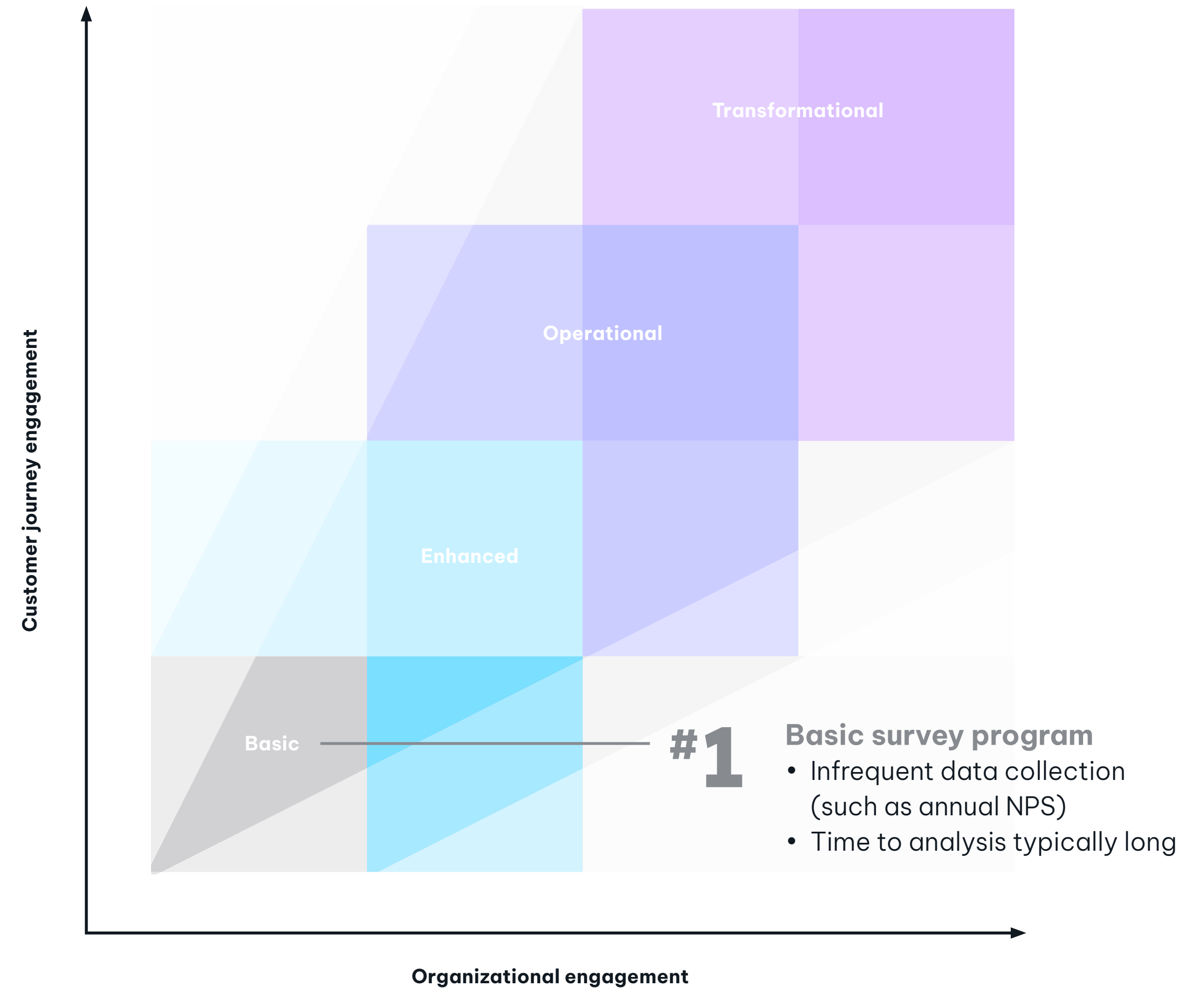
STAGE #1—BASIC SURVEYS

This initial stage of VOC maturity is one to move through as quickly as possible. It's the riskiest stage, in which the potential for active harm is highest. That's because uncoordinated or inadequate insights can undermine employee confidence in the program and set your efforts back years. Also, improper follow-up and management of feedback can undermine customer relationships.

Setting up your surveys for progress

- Create a conversation with customers using a regular cadence of relationship surveys that use Net Promoter Score® (NPS®) as the key measure of the customer experience
- Ask about satisfaction with journey touchpoints so you can uncover “moments of truth”
- Allow your customers to give opinions with yes/no questions and radio button responses, as well as offer suggestions in open-ended dialogue boxes
- Connect questions to internal departments to funnel feedback to appropriate business leaders

Pro Tip: Here, the goal is to gain insight into what's working and what's not



STAGE #2—ENHANCED SURVEYS

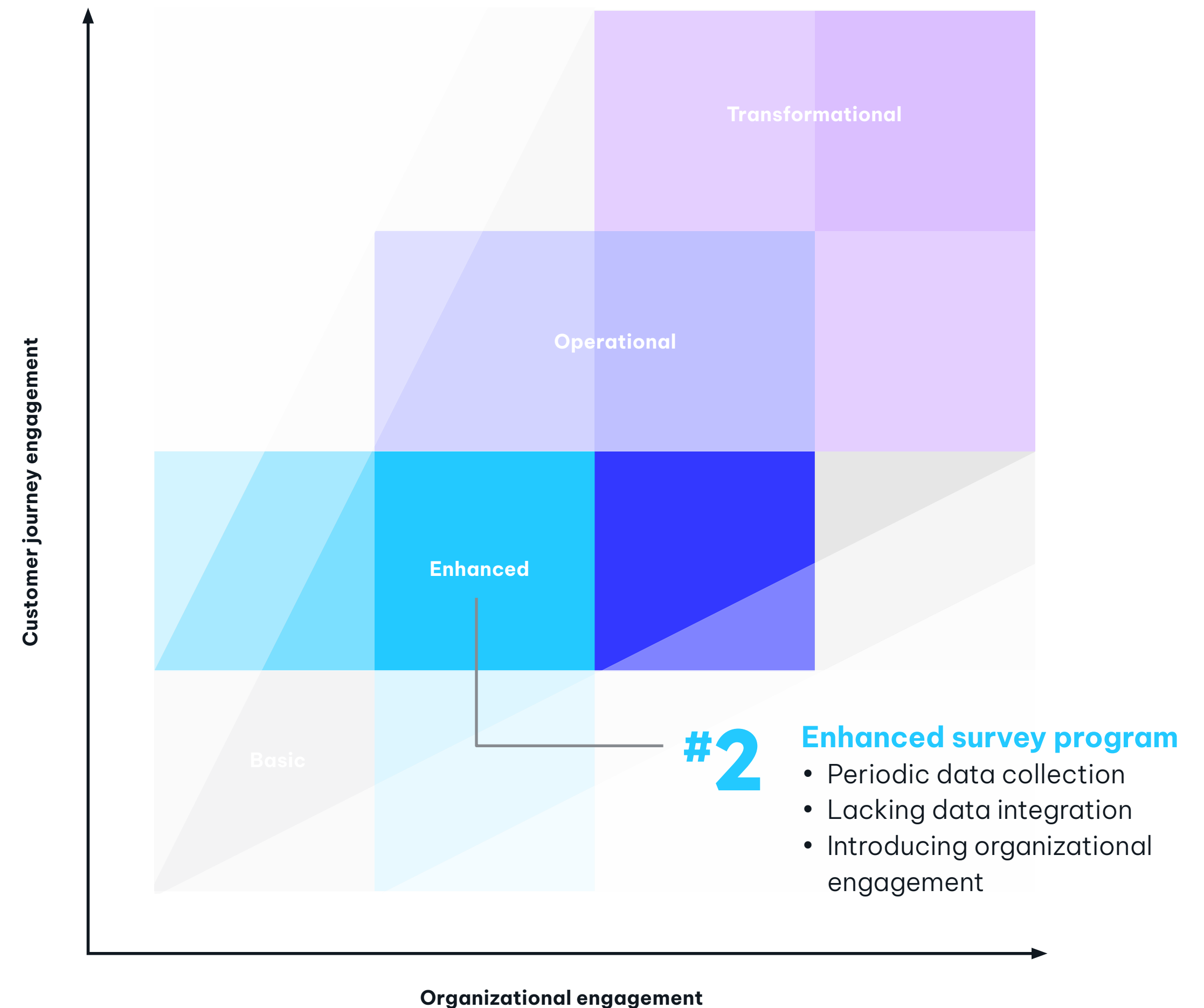
In this stage, programs begin to coordinate customer feedback efforts and often introduce the customer journey concept. But forward progress may stall if the program doesn't deliver insights that employees find useful, or if follow-up with customers falters.

Another risk at this stage: failing to rally employee teams to make needed improvements. A lack of employee involvement undermines both internal and external confidence in the program. If customers don't trust the company's commitment, it drives lower response rates—which often begins a downward spiral in employee engagement too.

Continuing your progress

- Create a map of your customers' typical journey
- Develop a listening strategy that includes both a relationship survey and touchpoint surveys
- Connect your listening strategy to your customer journey map
- Plan aggressively for delivering insights to various roles in your organization

Pro Tip: *In this phase, you should be engaging business leaders and employees across the organization to share key learnings from surveys to improve processes that enhance customer experiences*

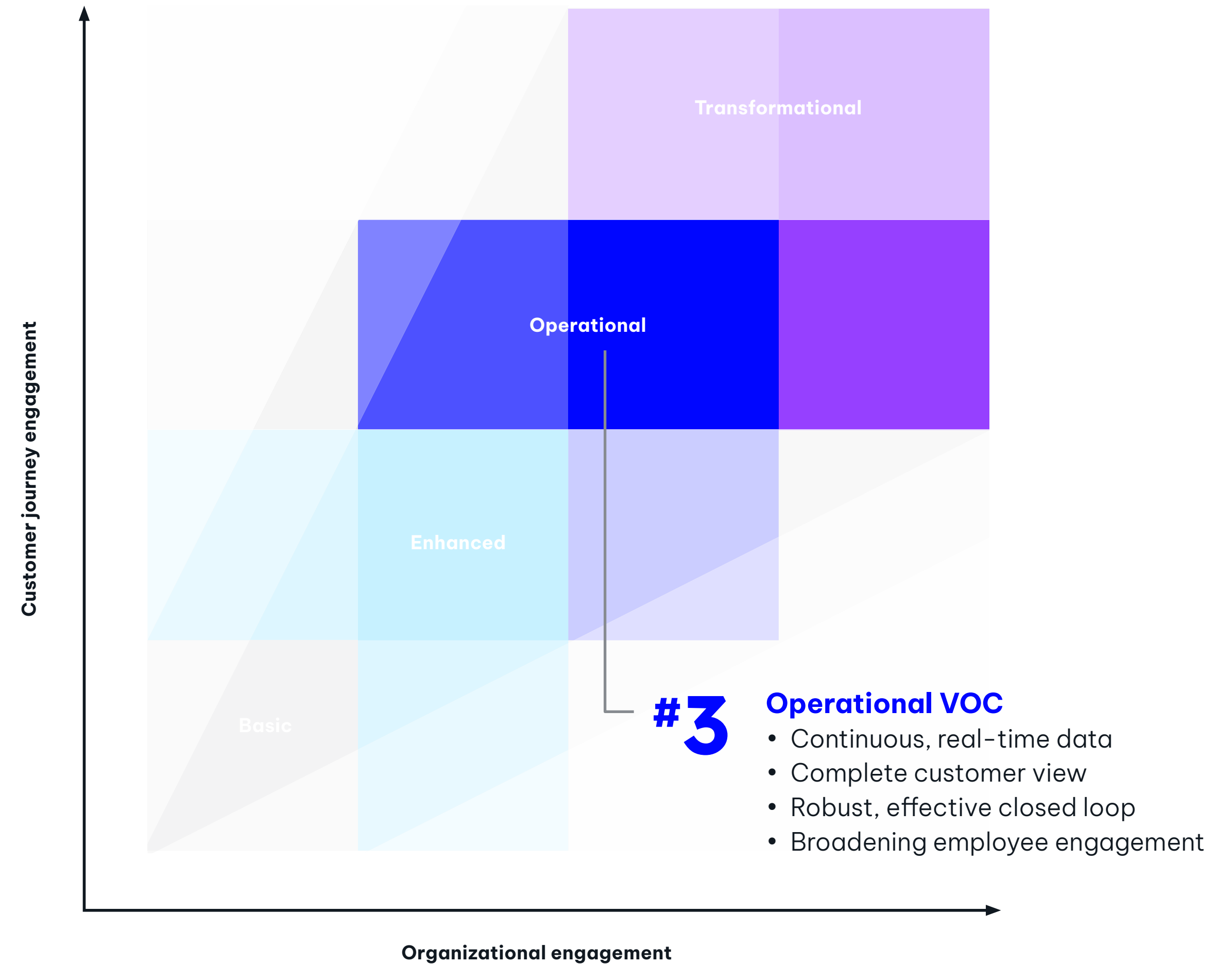


STAGE #3—OPERATIONAL VOC

Our experience and data indicate that a VOC program can't really make a significant impact until it reaches the operational stage. This is when a more nuanced view of the customer journey comes together with increased employee engagement to drive real change and improve the confidence and commitment of both customers and employees.

Key elements of holistic VOC at the Operational level

- Multiple journey maps: They may vary by different customer types or you might rely on segmentation
- Layers of continuous feedback—from a relationship survey measuring NPS® to touchpoint surveys tied to customer journeys
- Integrated data—incorporating operational and other information sources about the customer experience
- A deepening and broadening of employee engagement because VOC has become a part of your culture and every employee is invested in positive customer experiences
- Closing the loop on both kinds of surveys—to let your customers know their voices were heard
- Clear accountability with business leaders and employees—so you know who's responsible for follow-up, improvements, or praise

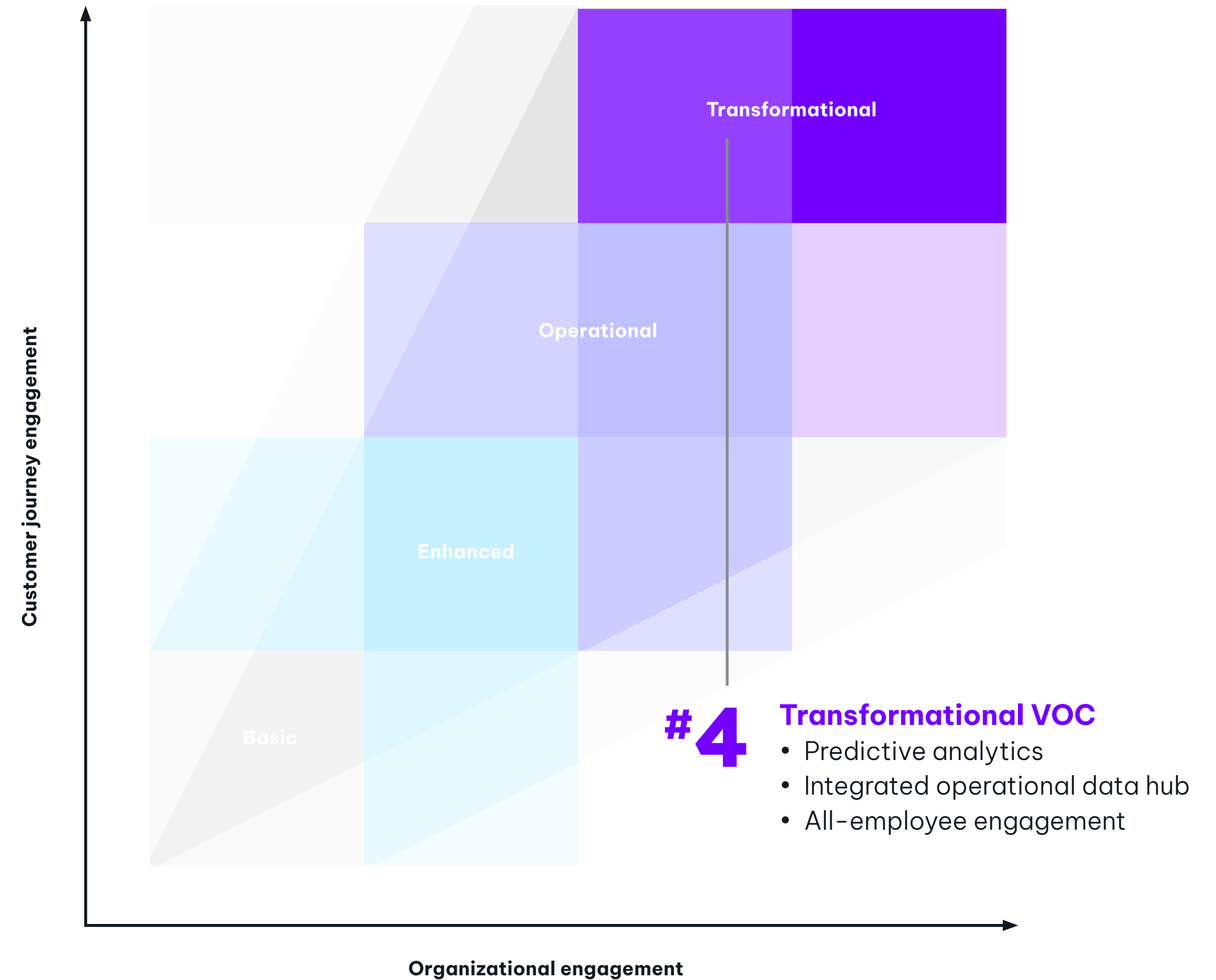


STAGE #4—TRANSFORMATIONAL CEM

This is where you really get to the promise of VOC—driving change within your organization to enhance customer experiences! At this stage of maturity, commitment to the customer experience is assumed at all levels of your company and the impact on your bottom line becomes significant.

Key elements of Transformational VOC

- Focus on action and change: Your customer experiences and NPS® reflect what you do
- Systematize and automate tasks: A solid technology foundation can help you manage your CX program across your organization to share information, automate processes, and empower employees to create positive outcomes
- Build momentum: A mature VOC program frequently and regularly puts CX data into employees' hands, as well as leaders', to build a customer-centric culture and drive both daily and strategic improvements
- Fix issues: As your organization understands and resolves the root causes of negative experiences, you can create more and more Promoters, and fewer Detractors
- Improve operations: VOC maturity means you can quickly identify inefficient processes and correct cross-functional behaviors and processes to drive change across your organization
- Innovate and differentiate: With a loyal following of Promoters, you can create breakthrough experiences that differentiate your brand





Common obstacles to **VOC maturity**

Here are a few real-world challenges that organizations commonly face on the path to VOC maturity...and some ideas to keep *your* program on the right track.

Obstacle	What program managers say	What to try
Everyone's and no one's job	<p>"I manage customer surveys, but we don't have a formal customer experience program because executives say delighting customers should always be everyone's job."</p> <p>- Senior Director, Marketing, Healthcare Industry Services Provider</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document instances in which a lack of coordination has harmed the customer relationship • Explore a project to demonstrate the efficacy of cross-team customer experience collaboration
Analysis paralysis	<p>"My company collects survey feedback, but we don't really know what to do with it."</p> <p>- Survey Program Manager, Leading Regional Bank</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map your customer journey and link your data to it to expose gaps and uncover insights • Bring together a cross-functional team to look at the data • Put program governance in place to drive action
Lip service	<p>"My company talks about valuing customer feedback, but I have trouble getting teams to invest in change."</p> <p>- Customer Experience Director, International Manufacturer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build a business case for investment • Demonstrate the linkage between customer experience and the bottom line with research • Work to demonstrate your own company's linkage
Stacking the deck	<p>"Our account teams have ways to cherry pick customers who participate, so we can't really trust the data, and it's hard to feel confident in that feedback."</p> <p>- Feedback Program Manager, Industrial Site Services Provider</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow best practices on data collection to build trust • Use sampling guidelines, clear policies, and centralized program management to overcome "gaming"

Transformational experience management is possible with NICE VOC

Every interaction is a chance to forge lasting bonds between your customers and your brand. With NICE VOC, you can infuse the voice of the customer into every aspect of the customer journey—from the contact center front lines and beyond—to transform CX, at scale.

Request Demo

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Sources

- ¹ *Gartner Press Release: “Gartner Says Most Customer Experience Programs are not Delivering on the Promise of Improving Differentiation and Helping Brands Better Compete”, May 10, 2022.*
- ² *American Express blog, Retaining Customers vs. Acquiring Customers, Nov. 21, 2019.*
- ³ *Gartner blog, “Customer Experience (CX) Actions to Drive Strategic Focus in a Challenged World”, July 21, 2022.*



About NICE

With NICE, it's never been easier for organizations of all sizes around the globe to create extraordinary customer experiences while meeting key business metrics. Featuring the world's #1 cloud native customer experience platform, CXone, NICE is a worldwide leader in AI-powered self-service and agent-assisted CX software for the contact center—and beyond. Over 25,000 organizations in more than 150 countries, including over 85 of the Fortune 100 companies, partner with NICE to transform—and elevate—every customer interaction.

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