

Case Study

Building Stronger Business-to-Business Relationships Through Customer Engagement

+20

PERCENTILE POINTS

B2B clients reported a renewed sense of trust in working with the company, and their confidence in the organization soared by almost 20 percentile points. Overall, the company's customer engagement score grew by over 15 percentile points.

Source: GALLUP

CHALLENGE

A LARGE PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANY needed to move beyond its transactional relationship model with business-to-business (B2B) clients to thrive in a complex, changing industry. With healthcare reform and the economic crisis reshaping the competitive landscape, the company realized that its B2B clients required more than just a pharmaceutical supplier. Instead, they needed a strategic partner to help them develop holistic, innovative ways to improve patient outcomes through education and outreach to key healthcare stakeholders and customers. The company needed to diversify its revenue stream by offering B2B clients additional services and expertise, but to accomplish this it needed to reorganize and update its service model to better meet customers' needs.

As the company changed the way it approached clients, leadership knew it wasn't enough to simply implement changes — the changes needed to be accompanied by metrics that would accurately gauge the effort's success. Leaders were looking for simple, credible and actionable measures that linked to business outcomes, as well as key drivers of success, to determine how to improve performance. The company lacked the depth of expertise to create, test and validate customer-focused metrics, so it partnered with Gallup to develop a measurement tool and identify insights into behavioral, process and policy changes to help it become more client-focused.

APPROACH

GALLUP DEvised AN IN-DEPTH, THREE-PHASED APPROACH to explore the company's B2B relationships and discern how to optimize these partnerships. In the initial diagnostic phase, Gallup conducted interviews with key account team members within the company and with influential representatives at its top B2B clients. These interviews helped Gallup identify and define the key drivers of best-in-class collaboration between the company and its clients, and gain a nuanced understanding of the current state of these relationships.

In the second phase, Gallup administered its customer engagement survey to the company's B2B clients to get a baseline measurement of their perceptions. This survey reviewed collaboration levels between the company and its clients, as well as the company's knowledge of the client and the healthcare industry in general, its communication quality, and its strategic thinking. The survey also included the key drivers that Gallup developed in phase one. Following the data collection period, Gallup researchers analyzed the findings to rank the key drivers in terms of impact on business outcomes. They uncovered processes within the company that acted as barriers to optimizing customer relationships.

Finally, in the third phase, Gallup reported findings to the company that served as a catalyst for action among the client's account teams. Gallup provided insights from the company's B2B clients about the overall relationship and the company's perceived importance to their business. Most B2B clients wanted the company to provide education and expertise relevant to changing healthcare dynamics and research.

As a result of these findings, Gallup made strategic and tactical recommendations and helped the company formulate a plan of action to overcome specific barriers and ensure its level of service fulfilled clients' expectations. Lastly, Gallup recommended that the company use these insights to develop a customized service approach to working with each client.

IMPACT

THE COMPANY'S ACCOUNT TEAMS THAT INTERACT DIRECTLY WITH B2B CLIENTS

regrouped internally to create action plans based on Gallup's findings. They focused on a phased approach, outlining what they could address in the near term while setting long-term priorities. The company capitalized on its extensive knowledge of the healthcare field by providing clients with subject-matter experts as requested. It assigned new account leaders for every team and charged them with creating a client-focused approach unique to each client's needs. These leaders ensure their teams consistently deliver on the approach designed for their accounts. The teams also divided action items into client-specific versus companywide issues, with the goal of identifying cross-departmental collaboration where needed.

Recent measurement since the baseline metric was established shows the interventions are paying off. B2B clients report a renewed sense of trust in working with the company, with their confidence in the organization soaring almost 20 percentile points since it was first measured. In fact, the company's results improved in each of the five engagement categories of loyalty, confidence, integrity, pride and passion. Scores also increased on each of the nine critical service drivers focused on communication, collaboration and expertise — ranging from nine to 20 percentile points. Overall, the company's customer engagement score grew by over 15 percentile points. A deeper integration of client-focused principles across the entire organization helped the company adapt to the pharmaceutical industry's changing dynamic and remain the partner of choice for its high-priority clients.

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