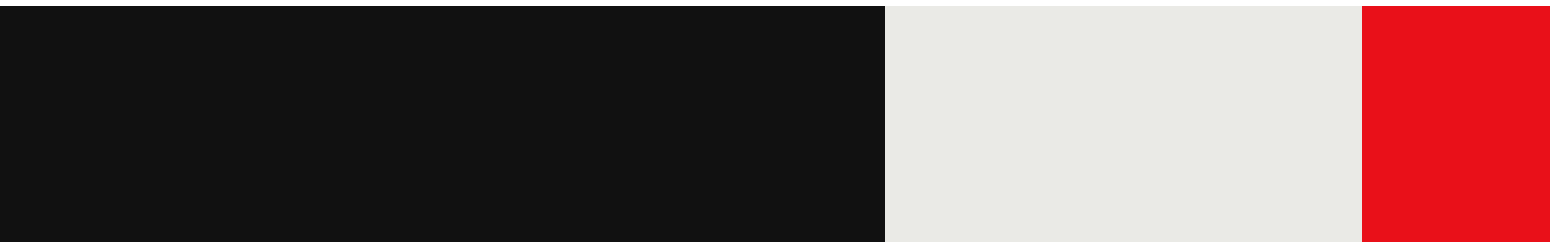



What is net searcher sentiment?

Article



“Search is really the most powerful indicator of how folks feel about your brand. It gives a really deep, real-time, and true sense of what and why people care about, and how that changes over time,” Isaac Gerber, director of global insights at Captify, said at our recent [Tech-Talk webinar](#).

Many brands use traditional market research as the bedrock to their strategies, and it’s a powerful way to understand what people say, Gerber said. “Unfortunately, what people say isn’t always what they do.”

Enter net searcher sentiment (NSS), a measure of consumer attitudes that goes head-to-head with the Net Promoter Score (NPS). While they both calculate the detractors from the promoters, NSS uses aggregated and anonymized search data. NSS analyzes brand searches over a specified period of time, classifies them as positive or negative through keywords, then subtracts the positive from the negative.

“It’s free from the bias that might come from selecting who gets a survey,” Gerber said, and removes the gap between what consumers say versus what they’ll actually act upon. “There’s no way to influence how people are searching because it’s unprompted. Consumers will search because they’re interested, want to learn more, and want to buy it,” he said.

How NSS compares to NPS:

Nearly 6 in 10 (59%) decision-makers in North America use NPS as a nonrevenue metric to measure success, according to an October 2023 report by Gainsight and Benchmarkit.

However, because NPS relies on self-reported attitudes—not behavior—it’s more prone to sampling bias and non-participation bias, [according to Gerber](#). Bucketing users in all-or-nothing promoter or detractor categories means NPS also lacks nuance. It overlooks the instances of a customer who has mixed feelings about a brand, for example, if they love the brand overall but dislike a specific product. Although this customer may still have a strong affinity to the brand, one negative experience may skew an NPS survey, labeling them as a detractor.

How NSS compares to social listening:

Just one-fifth (22.6%) of businesses worldwide use social listening as a customer experience strategy, per an October 2023 survey by GoodFirms.

Still, [social content](#) has to be taken with a grain of salt. “Many people are posting on social media because they’re trying to go viral. It doesn’t reflect reality,” Gerber said.

“Second, a lot of the social listening tools came from a time when the landscape was more certain,” he said. With social platforms and user preferences shifting, “social listening tools no longer get as much signal as they did. You’re getting less data than you would have a year ago and the quality of it can be suspicious.”

3 best practices to implement NSS:

1. **Tailor the keywords to the brand.** Filtering searches with the word “bad” doesn’t always accurately capture negative sentiment. For example, a pharmaceutical company may decide to remove the word from its analysis because many of the search queries would relate to “bad” symptoms, which isn’t necessarily a reflection of the brand or its products.
2. **Expand the scope of data.** Smaller brands may not have as much search data to draw insights from. These brands may consider analyzing competitors, similar products, or related keywords to identify gaps in the market.
3. **Stay consistent.** We see the most success from brands that are paying attention to their sentiment and working on it over time, Gerber said. "Those that have positive NSS scores tend to maintain them."

[Watch the full webinar.](#)

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