

Application Case 5.6

Whirlpool Achieves Customer Loyalty and Product Success with Text Analytics

Background

Every day, a substantial amount of new customer feedback data—rich in sentiment, customer issues, and product insights—becomes available to organizations through e-mails, repair notes, CRM notes, and online in social media. Within that data exists a wealth of insight into how customers feel about products, services, brands, and much more. That data also holds information about potential issues that could easily impact a product's long-term success and a company's bottom line. This data is invaluable to marketing, product, and service managers across every industry.

Attensity, a premier text analytics solution provider, combines the company's rich text analytics applications within customer specific BI platforms. The result is an intuitive solution that enables customers to fully leverage critical data assets to discover invaluable business insight and to foster better and faster decision making.

Whirlpool is the world's leading manufacturer and marketer of major home appliances, with annual sales of approximately \$19 billion, 67,000 employees, and nearly 70 manufacturing and technology research centers around the world. Whirlpool recognizes that consumers lead busy, active lives and continues to create solutions that help consumers optimize productivity and efficiency in the home. In addition to designing appliance solutions based on consumer insight, Whirlpool's brand is dedicated to creating ENERGY STAR-qualified appliances like the Resource Saver side-by-side refrigerator, which recently was rated the #1 brand for side-by-side refrigerators.

Business Challenge

Customer satisfaction and feedback are at the center of how Whirlpool drives its overarching business strategy. As such, gaining insight into customer satisfaction and product feedback is paramount. One of Whirlpool's goals is to more effectively understand and react to customer and product feedback data originating from blogs, e-mails, reviews, forums, repair notes, and other data sources. Whirlpool also strives to enable its managers to report on

longitudinal data and be able to compare issues by brand over time. Whirlpool has entrusted Attensity's text analytics solutions, and with that, Whirlpool listens and acts on customer data in their service department, their innovation and product development groups, and in market every day.

Methods and the Benefits

To face its business requirements head-on, Whirlpool uses Attensity products for deep text analytics of their multi-channel customer data, which includes e-mails, CRM notes, repair notes, warranty data, and social media. More than 300 business users at Whirlpool use text analytics solutions every day to get to the root cause of product issues and receive alerts on emerging issues. Users of Attensity's analytics products at Whirlpool include product/service managers, corporate/product safety staff, consumer advocates, service quality staff, innovation managers, the Category Insights team, and all of Whirlpool's manufacturing divisions (across five countries).

Attensity's Text Analytics application has played a particularly critical role for Whirlpool. Whirlpool relies on the application to conduct deep analysis of the voice of the customer, with the goal of identifying product quality issues and innovation opportunities, and drive those insights more broadly across the organization. Users conduct in-depth analysis of customer data and then extend access to that analysis to business users all over the world.

Whirlpool has been able to more proactively identify and mitigate quality issues before issues escalate and claims are filed. Whirlpool has also been able to avoid recalls, which has the dual benefit of increased customer loyalty and reduced cost (realizing 80% savings on their costs of recalls due to early detection). Having insight into customer feedback and product issues has also resulted in more efficient customer support and ultimately in better products. Whirlpool's customer support agents now receive fewer product service support calls, and when agents do receive a call, it's easier for them to leverage the interaction to improve products and services.

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The process of launching new products has also been enhanced by having the ability to analyze its customers' needs and fit new products and services to those needs appropriately. When a product is launched, Whirlpool can use external customer feedback data to stay on top of potential product issues and address them in a timely fashion.

Michael Page, development and testing manager for Quality Analytics at Whirlpool Corporation, affirms these types of benefits: "Attensity's products have provided immense value to our business. We've been able to proactively address customer

feedback and work toward high levels of customer service and product success."

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How did Whirlpool use capabilities of text analytics to better understand their customers and improve product offerings?
2. What were the challenges, the proposed solution, and the obtained results?

Source: Attensity, Customer Success Story, attensity.com/2010/08/21/whirlpool-2/ (accessed August 2013).

Sentiment Analysis Applications

Compared to traditional sentiment analysis methods, which were survey based or focus group centered, costly, and time-consuming (and therefore driven from a small sample of participants), the new face of text analytics-based sentiment analysis is a limit breaker. Current solutions automate very large-scale data collection, filtering, classification, and clustering methods via natural language processing and data mining technologies that handle both factual and subjective information. Sentiment analysis is perhaps the most popular application of text analytics, tapping into data sources like tweets, Facebook posts, online communities, discussion boards, Web logs, product reviews, call center logs and recordings, product rating sites, chat rooms, price comparison portals, search engine logs, and newsgroups. The following applications of sentiment analysis are meant to illustrate the power and the widespread coverage of this technology.

VOICE OF THE CUSTOMER (VOC) Voice of the customer (VOC) is an integral part of analytic CRM and customer experience management systems. As the enabler of VOC, sentiment analysis can access a company's product and service reviews (either continuously or periodically) to better understand and better manage customer complaints and praises. For instance, a motion picture advertising/marketing company may detect negative sentiments toward a movie that is about to open in theatres (based on its trailers) and quickly change the composition of trailers and advertising strategy (on all media outlets) to mitigate the negative impact. Similarly, a software company may detect the negative buzz regarding the bugs found in their newly released product early enough to release patches and quick fixes to alleviate the situation.

Often, the focus of VOC is individual customers, their service- and support-related needs, wants, and issues. VOC draws data from the full set of customer touch points, including e-mails, surveys, call center notes/recordings, and social media postings, and matches customer voices to transactions (inquiries, purchases, returns) and individual customer profiles captured in enterprise operational systems. VOC, mostly driven by sentiment analysis, is a key element of customer experience management initiatives, where the goal is to create an intimate relationship with the customer.

VOICE OF THE MARKET (VOM) VOM is about understanding aggregate opinions and trends. It's about knowing what stakeholders—customers, potential customers, influencers, whoever—are saying about your (and your competitors') products and services.