

## Satmetrix Success Story

# Experian Leverages Client Promise Strategy into Double-Digit Revenue Growth

**Industry:** Credit Services

**Customer Experience  
Management Solutions:**

- Satmetrix CEM Customer™
- Satmetrix CEM Service™

“Eight quarters of double-digit growth compared to competitors’ single digit. We believe there’s a relationship between our company’s growth and customer loyalty scores. Satmetrix provides the technology and expertise to support us in moving towards our vision of customer-centricity.”

—Laura DeSoto, Senior Vice  
President of Marketing,  
Experian

*With annual sales in excess of \$3.1 billion, Experian is one of the world’s largest information providers. In the U.S. credit services sector, Experian is one of three leading companies that share roughly equal portions of the market. Faced with a highly-mature, competitive market, Experian’s challenge was to overcome a commodity perception to singularly brand its company and products and differentiate itself from the competition. This challenge was the impetus for a dramatic culture change at Experian as the company made customer-centricity a key business strategy.*

In 2002, the U.S. Credit Services organization within Experian realized that the company lacked a discernable brand, despite marketing efforts to differentiate the company and its services from its competitors. Given that the credit services business is highly relationship-oriented, Experian decided to focus on creating a sustainable competitive advantage through a differentiated client experience. With those goals in mind, the company initiated a project to improve customer loyalty and drive affinity to the consumer credit area of the business – in short, to create a “wow” experience for its customers.

After experiencing a year of challenges in attempting to create this “wow” experience, Experian realized it was not making the progress it desired to significantly affect customer loyalty. “In retrospect, we were focused on trying to close the gap where individual clients were dissatisfied, but we just didn’t have the momentum or internal resources to drive the level of change we were looking for,” explained Laura DeSoto, Senior Vice President of Marketing at Experian.

## Turning a Project into a Key Business Strategy

At this point, Experian realized that a change management effort of this magnitude would only be effective if it became a key company strategy, with executive-level sponsorship and organization-wide visibility. With the help of outside expertise, Experian launched the Client Promise—a multi-year journey towards customer-centricity. “The Client Promise is Experian’s future,” said Chris Callero, chief executive officer of Experian Americas and former president of Experian Credit Services.

A major component of the new Client Promise strategy was to deliver an intentionally planned and consistent experience across departments and business units. “Our biggest challenge was to create the experience of ‘one’ Experian. We’re a huge organization with many business units that act as individual businesses or companies. However, our clients don’t see us that way—their perception is that they are dealing with one company, whose individual business units work together seamlessly,” said DeSoto.

To gain insight into how to address this challenge, the company conducted a client interview campaign. From this research—conducted via telephone, face-to-face meetings, and Web-based surveys—Experian identified the key values its customers expected from a trusted service provider. The company then created touchpoint maps linking what customers truly valued against the end-to-end experience they had with Experian. This provided a framework for identifying ways to improve each area, process, and interaction with the client. The results were used to design what the ideal customer experience should be.

## Employee Participation in the Vision and Strong Executive Sponsorship

To make the new vision a reality, Experian recognized it would be imperative to enable each employee to realize that he or she impacts the Company's clients in some way.

"We needed to create a 'line of sight' for employees, so that they could understand how they personally affect the customer experience and make it relevant and actionable," explained DeSoto. While Experian's front-line employees wanted to provide good client service, before the Client Promise initiative there wasn't agreement or understanding on what that meant. "Once the Client Promise roadmap was built, there was real excitement because now employees knew exactly what was expected," said DeSoto.

Experian culled a team of change leaders, with one representative from each department across the entire organization. These change leaders were tasked with training groups of employees through hands-on sessions called Client Promise in Daily Work. These sessions helped each employee internalize the Client Promise message for their particular role. The change leaders were also instrumental in generating enthusiasm and support for the Client Promise throughout the company.

Strong executive sponsorship was also key to gaining the hearts and minds of the employees. Then president, Chris Callero, visibly reinforced the strategy with a series of activities such as kick-off events, Webinars, posters, status e-mails to employees, quarterly all-employee meetings, employee recognition, and other actions that emphasized the importance of the Client Promise to Experian's business.

## Satmetrix Implements the Vision

With the goals and definitions for the Client Promise strategy firmly in place, Experian partnered with Satmetrix to help make their vision a reality, by implementing technology solutions that collect continuous customer insight and communicate the results across the organization.

Using Satmetrix CEM Customer and Satmetrix CEM Service, along with consulting and services from Satmetrix, Experian implemented four systems to measure and track experiences throughout the customer lifecycle. "Satmetrix has been instrumental in helping us grow our business by identifying specific areas or drivers of importance that our key clients feel help them achieve greater business success. By better understanding our clients' needs, we are able to focus on selling, developing, and providing superior solutions that result in our clients' ability to improve their business decisions," explained DeSoto.

Using Satmetrix, Experian tracks the customer experience through regular collection of customer feedback data on both an event-driven, transactional basis and an overall relationship basis. Satmetrix enables Experian to deliver this timely and relevant customer insight across the Credit Services organization through tools and reports, such as the Account Advisor reports.

Experian now has visibility into issues before they become problems and can create actionable plans to drive improvements. Using automated processes such as triggers, Satmetrix disseminates critical survey information in real-time to enable rapid response to issues and opportunities. Experian uses these triggers, which are sent to sales managers and account executives, to drive follow-up activities. The Experian sales organization is trained to manage the triggers, while trigger activities and follow-up actions are monitored closely.

## Experian Rallies Around Net Promoter®

Satmetrix also introduced Experian to the customer loyalty metric Net Promoter, the proven, single most reliable indicator of a company's ability to grow. Embracing the Net Promoter principle, Experian saw the Net Promoter metric as an ideal way to communicate progress across departmental boundaries.

Before Satmetrix and Net Promoter, Experian had no overarching customer loyalty metric—only disparate transactional surveys with no company-wide measurement to rally behind. Now, with Net Promoter, the metric resonates with the full spectrum of people who touch the account.

### About Net Promoter

- » A business management discipline by which companies profitably grow by focusing on their customers
- » Created by Satmetrix and loyalty expert Fred Reichheld of Bain & Co.
- » Based on one simple question: Would you recommend us to a friend or colleague?
- » To calculate a company's Net Promoter Score, take the percentage of customers who are promoters (would recommend the company), and subtract the percentage who are detractors (would not recommend)
- » For more information, visit [www.netpromoter.com](http://www.netpromoter.com)

## Benefits of an Enterprise View

With the enterprise view Satmetrix provides, Experian now has a comprehensive, end-to-end view of the customer lifecycle. Employees from the executive team down to front-line personnel can relate to the metrics and understand them. Experian believes that having an enterprise view has fostered more open communication and provided leading indicators that guide the company in its decisions around where to invest in future efforts. "You just can't be a customer-centric company without an enterprise-level view of the business," commented DeSoto.

## Results — Customer-Centricity Spurs Growth

The Client Promise strategy is delivering the business benefits Experian was looking for when it began its customer loyalty initiative. In the past six quarters, Experian's Net Promoter score has more than doubled, increasing from 14% to over 30%. Over the same time period, Experian has enjoyed eight consecutive quarters of double digit revenue growth—strong results for its competitive industry. Experian credits the impressive increase in customer loyalty and complementary growth in part to its Client Promise initiative and its partnership with Satmetrix, which has helped the company differentiate its brand in the market and deliver a consistent vision and experience to its customers.

Across the board, Satmetrix has helped Experian achieve:

- Revenue growth
- A comprehensive view of the customer lifecycle
- Quick response to cross-sell/up-sell opportunities
- 100% retention in strategic accounts
- An improved account planning process

## Key Success Factors

In summarizing the lessons learned over the past several years, there are a number of factors that are key to Experian's success with its Client Promise strategy:

- Making it a key business strategy and recognizing that it's an ongoing journey, not a one-time project
- Not underestimating the effort involved to gain hearts and minds within the organization
- Leveraging internal change agents from every department to train and cheerlead the effort
- Communicating regularly across the entire organization
- Strong executive sponsorship

"We believed passionately that this was the right thing to do. It was our commitment that the Client Promise would become a long-term part of the DNA of the company. When we started seeing the needle move, that was tremendous encouragement," commented DeSoto.

## The Future of Experian's Client Promise

With the help of Satmetrix, Experian's customer-centricity continues to be a key business strategy for competitive advantage. With considerable success under its belt, the Experian U.S. Credit Services organization continues to expand the ways their customer experience management solutions are leveraged to drive revenue growth by improving customer loyalty. From implementing new ways to integrate survey data into internal processes to driving survey response rates higher, Experian is using best practices to hone its Client Promise efforts. And thanks to the success of the U.S. initiative, Experian is planning to implement a similar Client Promise initiative in Europe.

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