

Wholesaler and Retailer Survey Program Refresh


ANHEUSER-BUSCH

Sales & Service Monitor increases thirst for additional, more timely feedback

OVERVIEW

For more than 160 years, Anheuser-Busch (A-B) and its world-class brewmasters have carried on a legacy of brewing America's most popular beers. Starting with the finest ingredients sourced from Anheuser-Busch's family of growers, every batch is crafted using the same exacting standards and time-honored traditions passed down through generations of proud Anheuser-Busch brewmasters and employees. Anheuser-Busch owns and operates 21 breweries, 21 distributorships and 22 agricultural and packaging facilities, employing more than 18,000 people across the United States.

The company produces 20 billion bottles and cans annually, distributed by 463 wholesalers and sold by thousands of retailers.

Since the repeal of Prohibition, the beer industry has operated under a three-tiered distribution system whereby brewers or producers generally sell their products only to wholesale distributors who then sell to retailers, and only retailers may sell to consumers. This system adds complexity when it comes to measuring channel satisfaction and improving their customer's experiences.

A REFRESHED PROGRAM BUILT ON TENETS

In 2014, in partnership with their long-standing research team at MaritzCX, A-B wanted their wholesalers to have a more comprehensive view and real-time access to data from their retailers to help drive business success. A-B believed a refreshed CX channel satisfaction measurement program would provide this, so they developed the Sales & Service Monitor (SSM) as a result. The SSM program was built on the following tenets:

- **Flexibility** – Strong response rates were important, so the refreshed program provides options for retailers to complete the survey based on their preference. Both online and phone surveys identify how satisfied retailers are with their wholesalers related to overall service, sales team performance, and delivery activities.
- **Pulse vs. Point in Time** – Continuous sampling has been implemented to provide a constant pulse of retailer satisfaction to wholesalers. This new model reduces the impact of seasonality and enables wholesalers to see changes implemented faster than more traditional point-in-time research.
- **Dynamic, Interactive Reporting** – A-B's wholesaler network needed data fast in an interactive, dashboard format that included an 'alert' system to notify the wholesaler about service issues needing immediate attention.
- **Shift in Ownership** – A-B wanted wholesalers and their teams to be owners of this data, to have easy access, and a way to set actions to improve satisfaction, so they would no longer be bound to a document or a static report.



RESULTS

- Increased wholesaler CX participation over 90%
- Gained 30% more feedback from retailers
- Decreased feedback lag time from retailers to wholesalers
- Improved service and customer follow-up with more timely data and a holistic view

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A MORE COMPREHENSIVE CHANNEL VIEW

Anheuser-Busch’s CX program was designed to address challenges they were experiencing, create a holistic view of their wholesaler/retailer experience, and to accomplish the tenets they’d set for themselves. They are already seeing thirst-quenching results from these efforts with significantly increased survey response rates, improving retailer participation by 30 percent and growing wholesaler participation in the program to 90 percent. Wholesalers report that the data from the refreshed program, and easy access to it, delivers more valuable information which is helping them make better business decisions.

The comprehensive CX platform and program gives A-B and wholesaler sales teams the ability to view feedback through seven customized dashboards displaying details about sales and service, competitive comparisons, retailer ratings and the health of the channel.

As a means of driving adoption and awareness of the SSM program, the team incorporated best practices, set up push reports to entice frequent viewing, regularly deliver tips and tricks, and have added quick-launch buttons to the online surveys to encourage retailer responsiveness.

Anheuser-Busch’s and the dedicated MaritzCX teams continue to work closely to identify internal champions and to introduce and leverage the right communication vehicles for the program. The teams have worked tirelessly to create robust communication plans and training materials that empower all stakeholders (wholesalers and retailers) using the MaritzCX Platform.

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The refreshed program is providing a greater understanding to A-B’s wholesalers about their retailers’ wants and needs.

ANHEUSER-BUSCH—TAKING IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

Anheuser-Busch’s culture rides on the premise of “We are never completely satisfied with our results”. The Sales & Service Monitor team – both at A-B and MaritzCX will continue to learn first-hand about gaps and opportunities to include in the next phase of the CX program by conducting qualitative interviews with wholesalers and retailers, participating in wholesaler driver ride-alongs, and challenging what the team thinks they know about research to determine what should come next.

To that end, MaritzCX and Anheuser-Busch have begun assessing the impact of additional satisfaction metrics occurring among other distribution channels in the hopes of developing deeper, and more comprehensive insights to further guide their business. They will continue to take their CX channel satisfaction measurement program to the next level by continually innovating, and implementing new ways to learn about their channels, so they can ensure the best experiences possible for the Anheuser-Busch customer.

Case studies are illustrative only and do not imply an endorsement of any particular product or service. Each customer’s situation is unique and results will vary.

To demo a product or to contact MaritzCX call

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