

Information In, Impact Out: Transforming Customer Data Into Decisions Takes a Trifecta

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In this era of accelerated digital transformation and customer fixation, organizations are accumulating record volumes of customer data. But only 23% of business leaders say they are able to act on all or most of what they collect. Information intended to embed customer empathy is, instead, inducing overwhelm and underutilization.

The gap? Too often, these treasure troves of knowledge aren't easily accessible, digestible, or actionable. And no single solution provider has the toolbox to take on this multilayered challenge. In response, three companies with complementary expertise in the areas of knowledge platform software, AI-powered knowledge management, and customer centricity operationalization are uniting to ensure customer data does indeed fuel business decisions companywide.

In this interview, Kristi, Scott, and Camille discuss their integrated approach to helping organizations achieve real impact by setting information and individuals in motion.

What is missing from the marketplace that Lucy, KnowledgeHound, and Gongos can bring forth?

KZ: Structured data is often excluded from knowledge management strategies. Typically, performing survey data analytics is a specialized capability that can add a tremendous amount of impact inside an organization. KnowledgeHound brings this capability to the fingertips of all researchers and their stakeholders, no matter their level of analytics abilities.

SL: Large enterprises are increasingly exploring how to deploy a complete knowledge portal that's capable of linking together all of their data. That can include answers from internal documents and subscriptions, data visualizations from databases, and expertise across the organization. Since no solution currently exists in the marketplace, we are bringing together best-of-breed solutions to lead that creation of a one-stop location for knowledge across the entire organization.

CN: It's often said that knowledge is power. But all too often this isn't the case in organizations where more knowledge can lead to overload and contradiction if not harnessed correctly. In its ideal form, knowledge will fine-tune decision making across teams to move the organization forward. Our trifecta goes beyond consolidating consumer wisdom to advance the mindset and behavioral shifts necessary to make that knowledge go to work for those who rely on it.

Why now? What customer trends are you seeing in the marketplace today that fuel your thinking on this partnership?

KZ: The need to democratize and socialize data because often, in completely remote worlds, information gets lost in translation. The days of walking up to desks of insights team members for information are long gone, and companies implementing new ways to socialize information throughout their organization need two things: the right technology and a comprehensive plan for changing behavior. The partnership between Lucy, KnowledgeHound, and Gongos provides the end-to-end solution to achieve these goals.

SL: New technology is making possible today what was impossible before. The trend toward knowledge platforms was already in full swing pre-pandemic, and it is only being exacerbated as companies around the globe seek new ways of doing business, along with technology that can increase efficiencies and improve productivity. This partnership, with our combined strengths and expertise, allows us to even better support clients with their evolving needs in this area.

CN: Today's insights professionals have greater visibility and responsibility to bring the outside in. In fact, 83% of consumers today say it's highly important for companies to listen to their opinions and concerns. But just showing up with information isn't enough; they must sharpen their expert skills and influencing skills. This often requires change management-inspired approaches to ensure adoption by all who need to activate on customer knowledge. And, it also results in greater ROI on the knowledge being brought forth.

They say, "information wants to be free." How do you ensure organizations reap value from this concept?

KZ: The benefit organizations reap from freeing information is getting the right information to the right people at the right time. Lucy and KnowledgeHound accomplish this by centralizing information, making it easy to search for and identify the correct information, and disseminate it to the correct people inside organizations.

SL: Teams across every industry hold a bounty of information without an effective way to search the knowledge assets owned by the company. That all changes with AI platforms like Lucy. "She" reads, watches, listens, and learns all of a company's data assets across files, formats, and systems, and instantly finds the information needed. A single gateway to enterprise knowledge—freeing up not just time, but terabytes of hidden information.

CN: To see true value you need to start with the why—and be clear about the benefits to the organization in having customer information democratized. Once you set that vision, it's about architecting a strategy to create the change and the interplay between the dimensions of people, process, and technology to affect the change. At face value this may seem like a lofty goal and it can be when it's not your day job. That's where we come in—to help simplify and create milestones of success.

What are the challenges and/or opportunities with giving the broader organization access to customer data?

KZ: Some may be apprehensive that individuals outside of the insights function will misuse the information. Insights leaders may also be concerned that a solution like KnowledgeHound or Lucy makes their jobs less valuable. An opportunity, though, presented by our partnership is that these leaders are empowered to be more strategic when their stakeholders are easily able to utilize data for decision making. No more time wasted digging through banner books!

SL: In a world of expansive research and data, there is simply too much to learn. Nobody can find the information. Or worse—nobody knows it exists. Unshared knowledge costs time, wastes money, and affects performance. When it is shared and accessible to everyone, you have an entire company culture focused on making the best data-driven decisions. The benefits, productivity improvements, and competitive advantage would be substantial.

CN: In my mind there is only opportunity in raising the organization's IQ and EQ to understanding customer needs and meeting them where they are—often at the frontline where it matters most.

How do you ensure adoptability of a platform across an organization?

KZ: KnowledgeHound has dedicated customer success representatives for each of our clients. These reps are responsible for making sure our clients receive the absolute most from our solution. They assist with everything from internal marketing campaigns promoting the solution, to regular usage reports that provide our key contacts with updates on how the solution is being leveraged organization-wide.

SL: Choosing the right technology is critical. However, adoption requires alignment across people, processes, and content. Without all the pieces in place, the system is bound to fail. Change needs to be tightly integrated into the way new technologies and processes are introduced to an organization. Driving change is best done as collaboration—leveraging the experience of experts, both internal and external.

CN: In order for technology to be fully adopted, one must look at it through the lens of people and process, like Scott says. People = the human element and/or user needs. What do people need to be successful and get ROI? Process = the business goals that the technology facilitates. Who are the stakeholders? What other systems, processes, rituals do the platform intersect with? If we don't consider both elements, chances of adoption diminish.

In three words or less, can you define what your unique value proposition is?

KZ: Intuitive, accessible analytics.

SL: Leveraging knowledge.

CN: Cultural adoption.

Partners often have philosophical synergies. What are yours?

KZ: That the democratization and socialization of customer information is critical to the success of an organization.

SL: Separately, each of us believes in focusing on what we are best at—not trying to be everything to everybody. Together, we help enterprises get the most value across all of their knowledge, data, and insights.

CN: A shared desire for organizations to truly put customers at the heart of their business.

What are the ingredients for a successful partnership?

KZ: A partnership is an ongoing demonstration of creativity—finding new ways to combine tools and services to make better, super tools and services. Partners must all share innovation as a core value, then continue to iterate on those innovations.

SL: First, it's about people. Do you respect, trust, and enjoy the team you are looking to partner with? This also includes clients; it is critical that your values are aligned with how you serve them, from sales through ongoing support. There need to be clear benefits and a competitive advantage that the partnership delivers, e.g. how our offerings are complementary and have a natural synergy that is to the benefit of all.

CN: All partnerships should be rooted in creating new value for both existing customers and underserved customers. Because strategic partnerships require a high level of commitment, discipline, and respect, it's also important that partners align from a values perspective. Companies with similar cultures often create synergy faster through an unspoken code of trust that enhances the benefits they bring to customers. ■

