



Anna Lake Consulting

# FIVE GOLDEN THINGS TO ILLUMINATE YOUR CLIENT LISTENING JOURNEY IN 2022

Client expectations are changing. B2B companies are now part of the 'experience economy' which means your clients aren't just looking at your technical expertise or even your price, they want to know how you're going to make them feel.

You may already be asking your clients for feedback (great!) but are you asking them when it suits you or them? Are you asking throughout the client journey or just when you've completed a piece of work?

Client listening is evolving quickly so here are five golden things to incorporate into your activities whether you're starting out, or accelerating your programme, in 2022.

- 1 CONSIDER THE VALUE CLIENT LISTENING ADDS TO YOUR CLIENTS
- 2 MAKE IT EASY FOR YOUR CLIENTS TO GIVE FEEDBACK
- 3 CLIENT LISTENING ISN'T JUST AN AFTER-SALES ACTIVITY
- 4 USE AI FOR DATA ANALYSIS.
- 5 ALLOW MORE TIME THAN YOU THINK YOU'LL NEED.



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## 1 CONSIDER THE VALUE CLIENT LISTENING ADDS TO YOUR CLIENTS

If you're still not convinced of the benefits of introducing a client listening programme, take a step back and consider the value client listening adds to your clients, not just to your own business. This is how some of the people I spoke to over the past year in my client listening interviews see things:

"This [interview] is more human and gives me a chance to focus on the relationship, to think about it and make sure I'm getting the most from it."

"Doing things like this is a good example [of demonstrating that I'm a valued client], that they have somebody independently to ask my view on things, and they don't just sit back on the relationship and think 'oh it's okay' because that's where things can go a bit sour."

"I think it's fantastic that she [the Anna Lake Consulting client] is investing in you to do this because I think it's absolutely worthwhile talking to a stranger who's separate from the business. It really demonstrates she really wants to do her best and that she cares."



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## ② MAKE IT EASY FOR YOUR CLIENTS TO GIVE FEEDBACK

Make it easy for your clients to give feedback when they have something to say, and make sure that what they say gets captured.

Many businesses still only capture client feedback when it suits them. But what do you do if your client has something to say outside of the times when your feedback is scheduled?



Some clients will raise issues with you directly, but some won't.

Putting a simple form on your website and email footer to give clients the opportunity to give feedback as soon as they have something to say, is a proactive demonstration of your commitment to listening to your clients at all times. Make sure the insight you capture in this way is fed into your overall view of client feedback and deal with any issues promptly.

It's important to listen to clients across the client journey from onboarding then at regular intervals thereafter – asking little and often yields better results, especially if you're using online surveys as your preferred method of capturing feedback.



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### 3 CLIENT LISTENING ISN'T JUST AN AFTER-SALES ACTIVITY

Client listening isn't just an after-sales activity, it can help define and even supercharge your ongoing marketing strategy.

I'm currently working with the new Marketing Director of an e-learning company. I was initially tasked with speaking to some of the company's existing clients to make sure they were being looked after properly before the company embarked on efforts to bring in new clients.



After all, no one wants 'leaky bucket' (where you lose existing clients) syndrome! It's also proved a great opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the priorities and challenges these clients are facing, and find out what topics are of most interest to them. These sort of insights can then go on to increase the impact of any future marketing campaigns.



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## ④ USE AI FOR DATA ANALYSIS.

Manual processing of data, especially qualitative data is one of the reasons that many businesses shy away from client listening. It can be difficult to work out what the data is telling you, and therefore what you should do as a result.

I work with a tool called 'MyCustomerLens' which pulls in data from multiple feedback sources, analyses it using AI and presents data back in a format which easily allows you to see what you're doing well and where you have room for improvement.

It allows you to see how you're living up to your brand promises, the emotions your clients feel when dealing with your business – and much, much more!





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## 5 ALLOW MORE TIME THAN YOU THINK YOU'LL NEED.

Programmes always take longer than you think they will. If you're looking to move from a purely online client listening programme to incorporating activities such as interviews, allow more time than you think you'll need.



As much as I love working within B2B, decision-making processes are rarely speedy and gaining buy-in for an external person to speak to your clients can take a while.

Once you've overcome any internal resistance, you need to agree on the questions that are going to be asked and the clients that are going to be approached and invited. Communicating your intent to run a client listening exercise is a good idea, so clients know to expect an invitation to participate.

Once you've invited clients, you're then beholden to their diaries so although as I said at the start, it's a worthwhile exercise, it's not usually one that can be completed quickly.



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And for reassurance, if that's needed, here's a quote from one of my own happy clients-

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“We have established a brilliant client listening programme with Anna's help which is being so well received internally. She was also a hit with our clients when she did some qualitative research for us. I feel really fortunate to have been introduced to Anna and have no hesitation in recommending her to anyone looking for a client listening strategist and partner”

Emma Dark, Chief Customer Experience Officer, Sullivan & Stanley

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If client listening is on your agenda for 2022, and you'd like to have a chat about how I can support you, please do get in touch or [book a call here.](#)