

Please enjoy this round-up of news, thought-starters, and recent projects from SMS!  
(And, of course, let us know if *our* thinking inspires *yours*: We'd love to help!)



SMITH MARKETING SERVICES, LLC

## Marketing Minute

Your e-newsletter | Issue 16 | 2018



### Are you fully leveraging your people's value in your advertising? We just helped NYAB do exactly that!

The total value our client [New York Air Brake](#) provides to its customers is equal parts amazing products and intangibles like superior customer service and on-time delivery. SMS recently developed an approach to helping NYAB dramatize both sides of the equation. The branding/ advertising effort brings to life the theme "*Everything we do is Engineered to Outperform*" -- and carefully strikes a balance between promoting the company's best-in-class train control technology and its terrific people. Included in the effort was a 'corporate' ad (shown at right), product ads (shown below), trade-show collaterals, a new video, internal communications, and more! Take a closer look and see other SMS work for the RR sector [here](#).



### Free download: 6 Ways to Inexpensively Capture the Voice of Your Customer (VOC)

If you've been a marketing professional in your industry/sector for some time, you've no doubt got a good 'gut feel' for what makes your customers tick, act, or react. Just the same, there's nothing like directly gauging (and informing your marketing decisions!) based on legitimate feedback and insights from your actual customers.

To that end, SMS is well-practiced in a wide range of research strategies, adept at analyzing data, and adept at turning VOC insights into

thoughtful strategies and messaging. (Give us a shout if you want a proposal!)

Just the same, we've put together some low-hanging-fruit approaches to conducting your *own* customer research in case you just want to put your toe in the water first. [Download it here!](#)

## 6 WAYS TO LISTEN TO THE VOICE OF YOUR CUSTOMER (VOC)



### 1) Conduct low- or no-cost 'push' customer surveys

Used in concert with your customer email list, today's online survey tools like SurveyMonkey, Constant Contact, and MailChimp make it easy to check your customers' pulse on your service quality, buying experiences, selections, product features, and more. You can also reach out to prospective customers this way, but be sure you've got a legit opt-in list – otherwise you could be flagged as a spammer.

### 2) Conduct similar online surveys through 'pull' methods

Don't have a robust email list to distribute your survey? No problem. You can build a web-based survey and then promote it – push-style – via your social media (free or paid posts), by enticing participants in targeted social media groups, on your own website (pop-up surveys work great, if not overused), and even on paper receipts generated by many point-of-sale systems.



### 3) Exit interviews

Not all businesses have a brick and mortar storefront conducive to catching customers as they head out the door following a purchase or visit – but those that do have a fleeting but powerful opportunity to poll customers about the experience they just had. Just be super polite, keep it short, and thank them for their input with a coupon or other token of appreciation... If done right, you'll learn something and your customer will appreciate your asking.

### 4) Trade shows

Apart from exit surveys, trade shows may be the next best, high-density collection of customers and prospects you'll find for capturing customer insights. Even better, many trade show attendees – who may be both tired by the day's activities and very much in the buyer's mindset that comes with walking a show – will actually welcome a chance to take a break from a crowded floor to tell you what they think about the industry, your competitors, or your business. As with other approaches, politely and clearly identify yourself and the nature of your survey; keep it short and sweet; consider a small thank you gift; and smile! Be gracious if they decline to participate.



### 5) Survey through the mail

If you haven't used the U.S. Postal Service for any aspect of your marketing in a while – including the classic mailed survey – you should know this long-neglected vector to your customers is experiencing a comeback, of sorts. Why is that? Probably because business-people are tired of paper-filled mail inboxes and because, with so few marketers using the regular mail, it's easy to stand out. Surveys take note, though: You'll still want to keep your survey short, clearly ID who you are and how your information will be used, and include a postage-paid return envelope.



### 6) Telephone surveys

We've all been asked (typically by an automated voicemail attendant) if we'd like to stay on the line to take a survey, following a telephone interaction with some company's customer service call center. So, that's one way to conduct telesurveys. Another is outbound calling to a targeted list. Though less common these days, for the obvious reason that such calls can be super disruptive, they can nevertheless work well – particularly when used in conjunction with a prequalifying email to set an appointment first.



Need help devising a statistically sound customer research strategy, writing your survey, conducting customer or competitor research, or analyzing and teasing truly useful insights from your research? SMS can help! Give us a call at 607.257.7000 or email Doug Smith at [doug@onlinesms.com](mailto:doug@onlinesms.com) for a no-obligation, no pressure initial consultation.



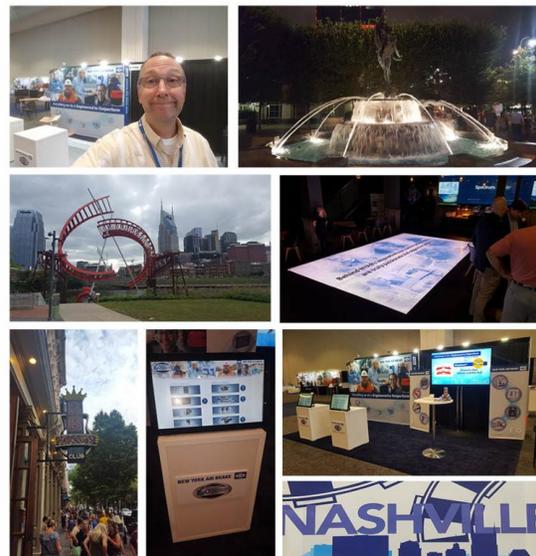
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## SMS attends & helps NYAB with RSI/CMA 2018 rail supply show in Nashville, TN -- Sept 8-11

SMS was pleased to attend the RSI/CMA 2018 show and conference this week in Nashville -- as both a long-time RSI member and in support of our awesome client, NYAB. At right are pics from the event -- which boasted over 100 exhibitors and well over 1,000 attendees from Class 1, Short Line, and other segments of the freight rail sector.

Though the event is now behind us, you can still learn more about the event's proceedings, schedule, exhibitors, and more on the [RSI website](#). You can also learn more about SMS's experience in the rail sector [here!](#)

Finally, if you like railroading, our VP/Creative Director happened to [record the Music City Star commuter line pulling into Riverside Station](#). (Mind you, this is no fancy video production -- rather just a cell-phone video that true railroaders might appreciate! ; )



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