

PRESENTATION

Net Promoter Score, Explained

One survey question, how the score is calculated, and where marketers should be careful with it.



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OVERVIEW

What NPS Is

NPS is a market research metric built on **a single question**: how likely are you to recommend this company, product or service to a friend or colleague? It was developed by **Fred Reichheld** of Bain & Company.

Explore the **4 core pillars** that define this topic — each backed by research and real-world insight.

01 The question

KEY

Rate how likely you are to recommend us. It is almost always followed by an open-ended Why?

02 The origin

CORE

Popularized in Reichheld's 2003 Harvard Business Review article, The One Number You Need To Grow.

03 The use

FOCUS

Read as an indicator of customer loyalty, shown through repurchase and referral.

04 The variant

IMPACT

Employee NPS (eNPS) applies the same idea to how staff feel about their workplace.



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How the Score Is Built

Respondents are split into three groups by their rating, then two of the groups are compared.

[↑ Key Metrics](#)

9-10

PROMOTERS

The customers most likely to refer and come back.

▲ Counted as a share of all responses

7-8

PASSIVES

Counted in the total but left out of the subtraction.

▲ Critics say NPS undervalues them

0-6

DETRACTORS

Their share is subtracted from the promoter share.

▲ Score = % promoters minus % detractors

2/3

FORTUNE 1000 USE

Share of Fortune 1000 companies using a version of NPS as of 2020.

▲ Reported as an integer, not a percent

▮ Its popularity comes from **simplicity and a transparent method**, not from proven superiority.



Key Insight

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Running an NPS Survey Well

4-Step Framework

01

Ask

Send the core recommend question.

- ▶ Use the 0 to 10 scale
- ▶ Add the open-ended Why?
- ▶ Optional driver questions
- ▶ Keep the survey short

02

Score

Group and subtract.

- ▶ Promoters are 9 or 10
- ▶ Passives are 7 or 8
- ▶ Detractors are 6 or lower
- ▶ Report the result as an integer

03

Compare

Benchmark within your industry.

- ▶ Scores vary a lot by industry
- ▶ Pair with revenue retention
- ▶ Pair with customer retention
- ▶ Collect many ratings

04

Act

Follow up with customers.

- ▶ Read the Why? answers
- ▶ Talk to a few customers
- ▶ Track repeat purchases
- ▶ Track actual referrals

KEY INSIGHT

The score is only as reliable as **the number of real ratings** behind it, and email response rates keep falling.



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The Criticism

Researchers have found no empirical evidence that the recommend question predicts growth better than questions about satisfaction or intent to buy again. NPS also gives little detail on what to fix, and it focuses on extremes.

Reichheld himself called over-use a tragedy of the commons as consumers in 2025 complained about constant rating requests. He also recommended de-linking NPS from employee pay, which pushes staff to chase ratings instead of pleasing customers.



TAKEAWAYS

Use NPS, Do Not Worship It

Four rules for marketers, drawn from the method and its critics.

- Evidence-backed insights
- 4 proven advantages
- Ready to implement

1

Keep the Why?

The number says how many. The open answer says what to fix.

NEW

2

Benchmark fairly

Compare against your own industry, since scores vary widely between industries.

CORE

3

Ask less often

Survey fatigue is real. Track repeat customers and referrals by other means too.

PRO

4

Keep it off payslips

Tying scores to pay shifts focus from customers to ratings.

KEY



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