Bowflex

Client: Nautilus, Bowflex brand

Timeframe: 3 weeks

Role: Speech Analytics (NLP) Analyst

Team: Operations Analytics team

Methods: Observation, Interviews, Literature Review, Personas, NLP Tagging and

Quantification

Tools: CallMiner, R, Excel

Time: 2018

Introduction: When Bowflex launch the HVT with media frenzy, they did not get their expected sales boost. Despite the machine being a popular choice for their customer base, sales calls were lackluster and frequently failed to close.

As the Speech Analytics (NLP) Analyst, my job was to find what went wrong with a qualitative post-launch study, and determine next steps.

Methodology: Call observation, interviews, literature review, and NLP tagging.

Call Observation: Using CallMiner, our call logging program, I listened to forty sales calls where the brand HVT was mentioned. This review yielded qualitative notes, noting general pain points and refusal categories.

Literature Review: Sales calls for fitness equipment is well-trodden ground. A review of current fitness trends, market chatter, and industry articles helped ground the study, ensuring our scope was broad enough and we had a good grasp of the problem domain.

Interviews: I conducted five semi-structured interviews with conducted with call center sales staff during non-peak hours to listen to their experiences and frustrations with customers. Particularly, I wanted them to sanity test the broad refusal categories I had made, to make sure we understood the most likely objections and customer types.

Personas: Based on the refusal categories, interviews, and literature review, I was able to make four personas for our users, including user stories and quotes, to illustrate the kinds of pain points for management and staff alike. This helped elevate conversations by providing a common language, as well as helping group later NLP tagging.

NLP Tagging and Quantification: Once we had qualified refusal categories, I started making NLP tags through our database of calls.

While no NLP system is perfect, the goal was to create a rough estimate of refusal categories so we could aim for the largest impact in our attempts to help our sales team. By drawing on our previous slate of NLP tags, mainly our Sales Refusal tag, the customer language following the sales refusal could be isolated and then tagged with one of the Sales Refusal Reason categories.

Results:

We found several challenges with the HVT machine sales. Unfortunately, these results are under NDA. Speaking broadly, we found our main personas had objections to the machine, and the product did not fit their mental model for what they wanted from our company.

We were able to provide scripts and additional marketing copy for the most common objections like machine size and results, somewhat boosting sales, but ultimately we found the need for a market pivot to different offerings.

Reflection:

The types of user research being done needed to be broadened throughout the product development pipeline. A disconnect between product design and our sales department created a rift, ultimately spoiling the marketing budget given to the HVT. Internal communication early and often on personas and value propositions could have made this a much more successful launch.

Ultimately, the sales team uncovered most of the issues during their interviews. My role became quantifying their fears with analysis, and presenting them throughout the organization, while the sales team did what they do best. Because I built rapport with the sales team, instead of assuming I was right, I was able to make fast progress on this project so I could take the time to patiently explain the root problem.