

Scale or Fail: Building an Infinite Feedback Loop

How can Atlassian empower customers and product teams with insights that matter?



Atlassian sells team collaboration software, including Jira, Confluence, and Trello. Thousands of their users seek help every month, providing feedback, both publicly and privately. With over 30 years of experience in CX and EX, the company understands the importance of listening to customers. But listening is only half the job.

Atlassian sees feedback as a gift and frequently gives feedback. If change is desired, people need to be informed.

Feedback is a two-way relationship

When customers share feedback, they expect something in return. For the most part, they don't expect a company to solve every single request, but they expect more than nothing in response. But nothing is what many companies give. Customers are left feeling like they're shouting into a void.

Atlassian relies on user word of mouth and viral products, instead of traditional enterprise sales, and they have a close relationship with their community of users. Their users are seriously passionate and vocal when it comes to Atlassian products. There's no shortage of feedback or suggestions about how to improve the experience.

Atlassian's product development teams often became overwhelmed by the volume and complexity of the feedback coming in. They wanted to do the right thing but didn't know how to engage with feedback effectively at scale.

This left users frustrated by the lack of response, which in turn impacted user experience and overall product satisfaction scores.

Dealing with data overload!

An Atlassian team member joined the company in May 2020 to work on a customer feedback ecosystem initiative. This was to address the feedback overload and make sure customers felt heard.

The challenge they were tasked with was how to harness and respond to the estimated 60,000 pieces of customer feedback received every month.

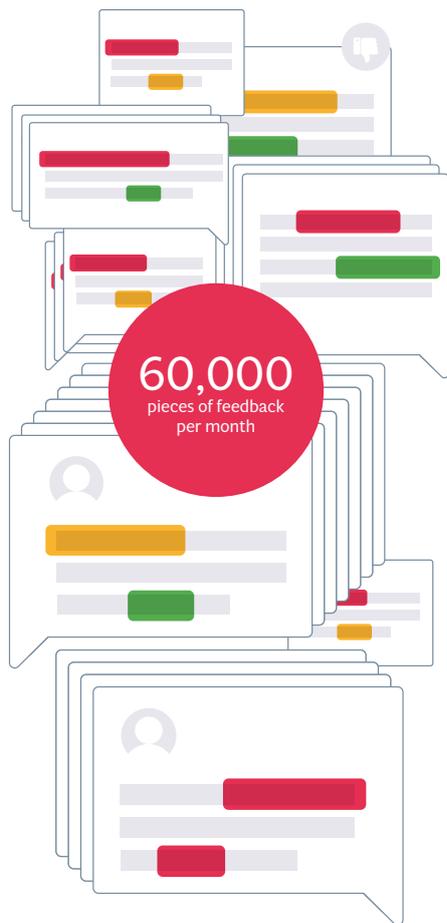
Atlassian's customers are super engaged, and the company has fostered a culture of conversation. They have launched a community to provide a platform where their strongest customer advocates could work with them to support others at scale.

Atlassian encouraged their product teams to reach out for customer input and feedback. And they had established a customer listening program that allowed them to keep their finger on the pulse of what customers value.

But many of these channels were being analyzed in isolation.

And some legacy feedback collectors were leading customer feedback into a dead end. Their customers deserved better, and their teams were missing out on valuable insight.

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Atlassian wanted to ensure that ALL product teams were leveraging ALL customer feedback to make informed business decisions when prioritizing roadmaps.

There was a lot of data to collate and process - it was one big challenge!

It was time to build a system that showed users Atlassian cares

To continue to grow, Atlassian needs to give their customers and users products that deliver real value and ensure that every interaction with Atlassian is effective and empowering.

Most importantly, they wanted to show customers that Atlassian teams care about them and their needs. Research showed that customers didn't believe Atlassian was listening to them.

Atlassian didn't consistently close the loop on feedback. This led to frustration and undermined trust in Atlassian's ability and commitment to deliver quality products, risking growth and retention.

Product teams have always used feedback to provide directional signals when making decisions, but they were overwhelmed by the relentless growth of feedback volume. It made this process difficult to manage in an efficient and balanced way.

At the same time, customer-facing teams found it hard to have visibility on what product teams were sharing with customers.

The leaky customer feedback ecosystem was the result of gradual evolution over the years as Atlassian and its products and services scaled.

Where once it was possible to close most of the feedback loops with customers, the scale became so enormous that they were failing to manage customer expectations. There simply wasn't the ability to respond to customer feedback and make sure they knew Atlassian cared.

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The CARE framework

The CARE framework was developed to establish a robust, sustainable process for closing the loop with customers when they share feedback, making sure they feel heard and valued.



The four facets of CARE are:

1. **Collect**
2. **Analyze**
3. **Resolve**
4. **Empower**

CARE starts with how Atlassian collects feedback. They designed and delivered a seamless and integrated experience for customers when they share their feedback with Atlassian across multiple channels. They developed a public-facing policy to manage customer expectations, outlining the process that feedback goes through and explaining how they will communicate any developments back to customers.

Atlassian analyzed and sorted their feedback data using Thematic, which transforms the raw data to enable bulk processing using AI. They refined the themes to make them more relevant to their product teams and support systems.

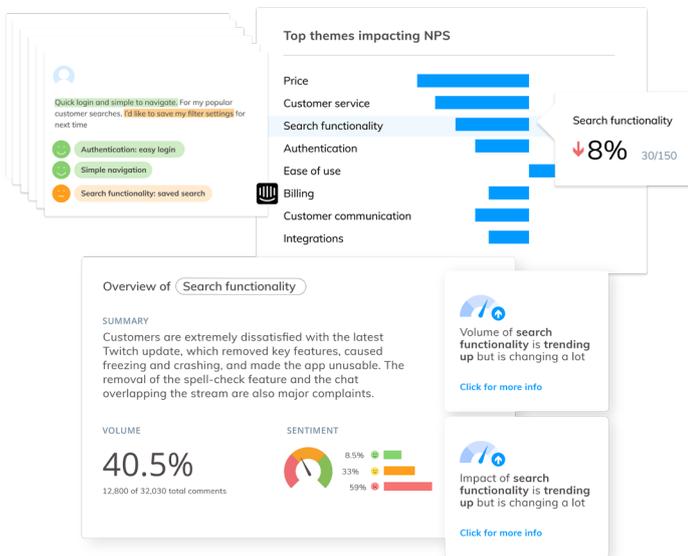
They paired the themed feedback with other customer data to provide context, adding meaning to the data and helping tell a story. Through an API, they transferred and consolidated the analyzed data into their BI dashboard, purpose-built for their teams to directly access the feedback relevant to them.

Atlassian can't possibly resolve all customer issues, but they can share how they approach the prioritization of customer feedback to influence product roadmaps. They used feedback to identify key pain points, and opportunities for deeper research, inspiring proactive outreach like creating a survey or plans for further investigation.

They helped make product teams more accountable by mapping customer priorities to related initiatives, ensuring teams were developing solutions to address customer needs first.

Empowering means creating content to provide customers and other teams with a shared understanding of what product teams are working on and why. Closing the loop doesn't mean Atlassian acts on or delivers on every piece of feedback that comes through, but it does mean they provide a clear response.

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Atlassian leveraged their community champions - customers who love and advocate for their products - so they had the knowledge to support and empower others at scale. They shared feedback insights across the organization, enabling customer-facing teams to share accountability for improving the customer experience across departments.

Atlassian selected Thematic from 36 vendors as the best partner to help them scale. Since implementing Thematic, they have discovered that the AI does a better job of analyzing feedback than they initially expected. Thematic's AI learns really fast, which means that over time, it does better than a human can. This is because the AI does it consistently, and there's no bias creeping in from different people doing the analysis.

Atlassian has also moved on to manage a project to launch their employee listening program, where they process ER data confidentially using de-identified data extracts. They engage their teams monthly to understand how macro and micro factors are impacting team wellbeing and effectiveness. Thematic allows them to do this quickly and accurately so they can take action immediately and responsibly when it matters.

Atlassian appreciates Thematic's supportive and responsive approach, valuing their feedback and helping them deliver a scalable feedback loop with their customers.

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