



CALIFORNIA  
CLOSETS®

# The Secrets of Staying Power:

A Growth Strategy That Evolves with the Times



California Closets Case Study

In the increasingly digital marketplace full of so many choices, customer loyalty is elusive. Brand recognition and trends come and go. Competitors undercut or outmaneuver one another. Consumers have more options than ever, and they're very aware of it. Age-old brands who were once industry leaders are now fading into obscurity. Achieving staying power for your brand takes a new and improved understanding of the customer relationship.

California Closets has seen what it takes to continue expanding a longstanding brand in the modern competitive environment. The custom home solutions franchise has been cultivating customer relationships for 40 years. "We're installing systems for children of original clients," says Joe Lindenmayer, VP of Franchising. "We see it often now, multiple generations of customers and that's a great thing."

He and California Closets know they can't count solely on that history to drive business, though. High dollar transactions that rely heavily on a strong referral network and repeat customers require consistency. That calls for a strategy that evolves along with the times.

In 2011, California Closets teamed up with [Listen360](#) to implement the [Net Promoter System](#)<sup>1</sup>. The customer engagement platform allows the company to collect actionable feedback in real time. This way, they can implement training and best practices to stay ahead of problems and boost strategies that are working well.

<sup>1</sup> NPS is a trademark of Bain & Company, Satmetrix Systems, and Fred Reichheld

To a premium brand focused on a white glove service, reputation means a lot. "Someone who comes into a showroom in one part of the country has that same experience or option in another part of the country," Lindenmayer says, "and that wasn't always the case with us in the past." He knows one key to sustained growth is scaling brand standards along with the size of the organization. If even one location isn't up to those standards, word travels quickly. "The world is getting smaller, and we're all getting more interconnected," he warns. The prominence of online reviews and social media have made the referral process incredibly fast-paced and difficult to manage. That's why California Closets studies and gathers feedback on a few decisive points in the customer lifecycle.

A home consultation with California Closets is a signature part of the buying process and sets the tone for a customer relationship. This step is a big focus for feedback. "If we get it right, that consultation is like spending an hour and a half with a friend. If we get it wrong, they're frustrated and feel like they wasted time," Lindenmayer says. Customers receive a simple, two question survey after the initial consultation whether they've decided to make a purchase or not. The survey provides all sorts of helpful information: if the consultation was helpful, if the particular associate did a good job, where the customer is in the buying process, and so on. The results can lead to quick adjustments that might help lead to a sale or improve the eventual installation experience.

A second survey goes out after an installation is complete and the crew has left. "The process of letting the client navigate through that survey and give their honest answer versus somebody trying to get them to give a good score is super important," Lindenmayer advises. California Closets wants to know if a customer would refer the service after an installation and why or why not. It sounds simple enough, but customers who feel pressured to answer a survey in front of an employee of any brand often provide inaccurate data. With the automated NPS scoring and open-ended questions, California Closets can find opportunities to turn dissatisfied customers into fans by acting quickly. It also provides teachable moments for future business with that customer or any prospective customer.

And what about those prospective customers who never made it past the initial consultation? Those interactions are still an important resource. Where many brands would consider the opportunity lost or cold, California Closets takes a more optimistic approach. “We started calling them future customers,” Lindenmayer explains. “It’s not a buy-or-die, old school sales relationship. That’s not how our company operates.” He realizes that these are large transactions with some slight disruption in the home, and not everyone is ready to commit right away. The responses from these prospective clients, however, help identify who is likely to make a future purchase. Prospects who scored higher after the initial consultation end up being more likely to become happy, long-term customers. This insight helps California Closets shape their targeted marketing efforts and connect with interested consumers. Tracking feedback along the customer journey has opened new doors for this mega brand. So much so that they’ve expanded this initiative to the e-commerce side of their business where they’ll begin gathering feedback on the online sales experience.

In the end, it all comes down to the relationships. While NPS is a major piece of the puzzle, it’s not a silver bullet. Maintaining a premium brand over time means being dedicated to maintaining those relationships over time. “Being relevant at any point in time is one factor in a business’s life cycle,” Lindenmayer says, “but if you’re a trend or a fad, you don’t have that staying power. You’ve got to earn that every day.” Customer feedback provides the knowledge needed to succeed, but diligently acting on that knowledge again and again is what sets California Closets apart from the rest.



## ABOUT LISTEN360

Listen360’s software compiles customer feedback in real time and in one place, so you can address complaints quickly, keep existing customers happy, and win more referrals. You shouldn’t have to choose between caring for your customers and growing your business. With Listen360, you can build a brand that you and your customers will both be proud of.

[Contact Listen360](#)

[www.Listen360.com](http://www.Listen360.com)

