



Confirmit Sets Its Sights on the Horizon

The enterprise feedback management vendor broadens its multichannel reach and releases a new on-demand platform.

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The days of customers freely volunteering their time to respond to traditional surveying techniques is over. Consumers have grown increasingly busy and impatient -- yet remain incredibly valuable resources. That being so, the management and distribution of customer feedback throughout the enterprise is crucial -- at least according to enterprise feedback management (EFM) vendor Confirmit, which promises to close the feedback loop with Horizons, its new multichannel platform for feedback and market-research applications.

According to the company, the multichannel aspect derives from the Horizons platform's ability to encapsulate data from both on- and offline: the Web, telephone, paper, interactive voice response, and even mobile sources. Confirmit claims to have pumped up its reporting aspects, as well -- so that enterprises can not only see the feedback, but also gain insight from it, and — hopefully — do something about it.

Gary Schwartz, Confirmit's vice president of product marketing, says that there are two key elements to the new platform. The first, he says, is the multichannel aspect: "Our customers can tell their customers, 'You can talk to us when you want through the channel you want.' " Take, for example, a customer responding to a phone survey. If the customer suddenly needs to hang up, the not-yet-complete survey is at risk of ending up useless. Horizon's platform offers a solution. The interviewer can simply email a link for the individual to click on, allowing her to complete the survey at her convenience online. "For our enterprise customers, this means they have greater reach and have more accurate data," Schwartz says.

The Horizon platform also includes an element of on-demand telephony that not only enhances contact center supervisors' capabilities and knowledge about the customers being surveyed, but it's scalable, too. The on-demand offering, Schwartz says, supports the idea of "burstability" — sudden volume spikes. "If you've got 30 people on the team and you need to add 50 people, you don't need to add hardware," he says.

The next notable element of Confirmit's release rests within its reporting-and-analysis functionality. Reporting happens in two parts. The first involves alerts and event triggers. When a customer, for example, delivers negative feedback, the company is immediately alerted and prompted to interact with that customer. The second part of the analysis is with dashboard reports. Organizations can accumulate feedback from different sources of data and present it all in one view. The Horizons platform also includes an "Analyst Role" feature, which allows an external person to view and assess the feedback data without actually providing her with access to the system.

Donna Fluss, president of DMG Consulting, says that with this release Confirmit is successfully addressing two primary markets: market researchers and enterprise customers. "They have done a good job of putting together a solution that meets the needs of the constituents," she says. "It's good not only for companies, but for the EFM market," she adds, noting that EFM is an evolving market that has seen serious adoption only within the past two years. "The trick is to not just get the findings, but to have those findings be actionable."

Fluss also suggests that as the market evolves, providers will need to incorporate social-networking data -- and will need to realize that high-quality analysis relies on both structured and unstructured data. Confirmit seems to agree: Schwartz says the Horizons release takes a stab at unstructured data.

"The integration of data sources," he says, "has made Confirmit a true enterprise solution."

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