

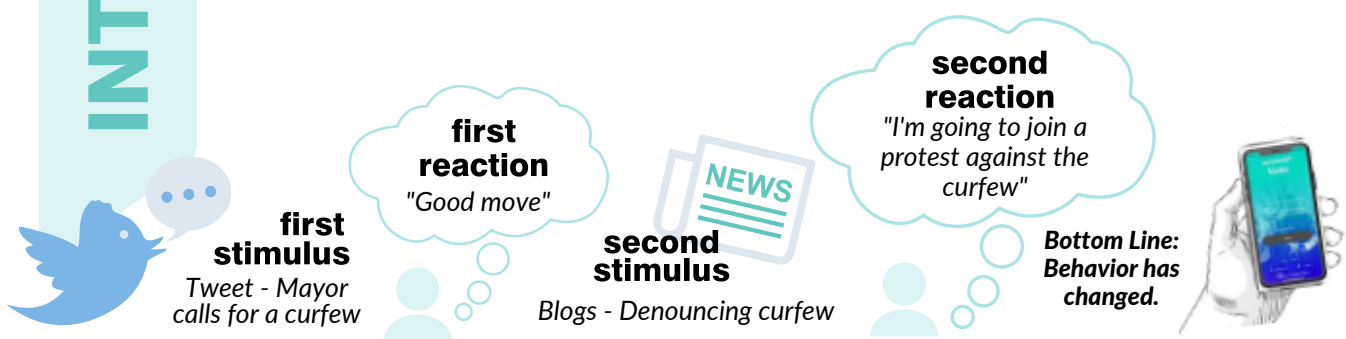
Can your organization respond to changing opinions in a timely manner?



INTRODUCTION

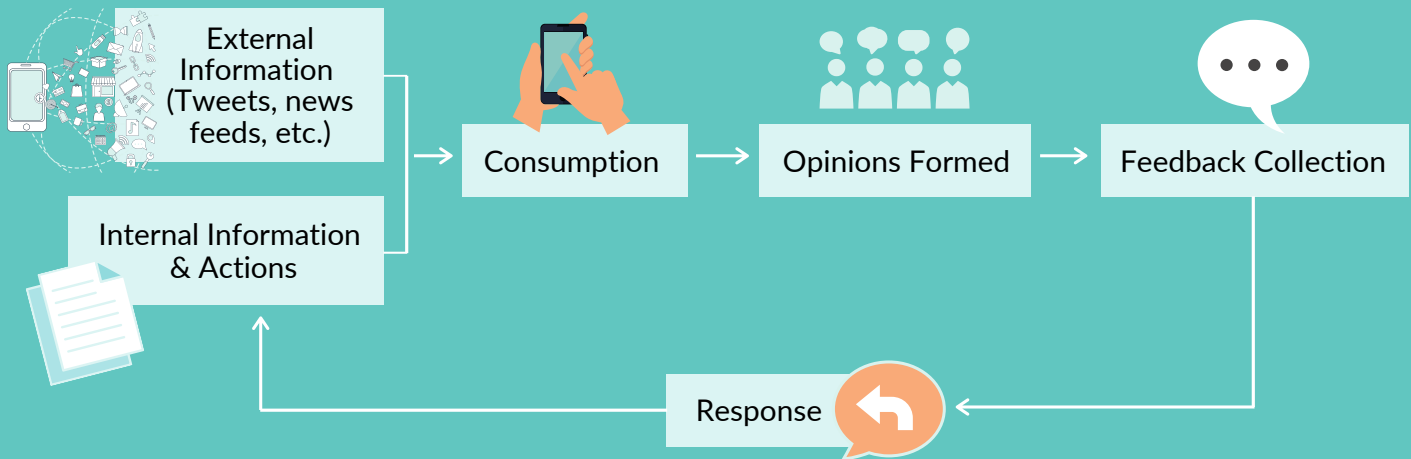
There was a time that the Pony Express was the fastest way to communicate and spread the news. The telegraph soon took its place as the quickest communication method. Then, the telephone replaced the telegraph and emails replaced snail mail. With smart phones and social media, all of the traditional ways to communicate and receive news are outdated. It has reached the point that any news that is older than 24 hours is no longer current news.

People are forming opinions just as fast as information is transferred. This repetitive cycle of transferring and digesting information and then formulating an opinion is part of the "Opinion & Response Cycle." Technology is rapidly shrinking the time it takes for this process to occur. Why is this important? Because the ability for an organization to leverage this cycle is often critical to its success.



There are very few organizations that can survive, much less grow, if they don't listen and respond to people that are critical to their success. Whether they are employees, customers, association members or registered voters they are the reason your organization is successful, and you must stay in touch with their opinions and views on all types of issues. These are your constituents and you don't want them to get to the second reaction without having engaged them first. To do otherwise is to risk losing their support.

Opinion & Response Cycle



PURPOSE

This white paper will help you answer the question “Are you collecting feedback and responding quickly enough to stay successful?”

Some organizations existence is clearly linked to their key constituents opinions and feedback. For example, newsrooms and politicians can benefit from gathering and responding to the opinion of their “followers” on breaking news and events that impact society. Therefore, they benefit significantly from a very short Opinion & Response Cycle.

Your organization most likely does not depend on an information cycle that is as rapid as the one that is essential to newsrooms and politicians. However, like these two types of institutions almost all organization’s success depends on maintaining a positive relationship with their key constituents.

Take our assessment below to determine where your organization stands.

Assessing Your Organization's Capability and Needs

The following questions will help your organization assess its need for a short Opinion & Response Cycle. Specifically, it will determine how much your organization relies on feedback and if your opinion gathering tools are adequate.



Take the Assessment

1=strongly disagree	2=disagree	3=somewhat disagree	4=neutral	5=somewhat agree	6=agree	7=strongly agree	N/A	YOUR RESPONSE (ON A SCALE OF 1-7 OR NA):
1. Understanding our organization's key constituent's opinions & views is important to maintaining a positive relationship with them								
2. Understanding and reacting to our organization's key constituents' opinions is time critical								
3. Standard periodic surveys do not provide the feedback our organization needs in a timely manner								
4. Our organization does not have an effective method to assess the opinions of its key constituents								
5. Our organization does not respond adequately to our key constituent's changing opinions & views								
6. Current methods for gathering opinions do not allow our leadership to dialogue with key constituents to gain greater insight								
7. Our organization's Opinion & Response Cycle time is too long to be useful/valuable								
Add up your score for the questions you were able to answer (ignore those that were Not Applicable - N/A) and then divide the by the number of questions that you count to calculate your average score.								TOTAL

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TOTAL

The following is an indicator of your organization’s need and ability to evolve with the rapid changes in information transfer as it impacts your relationship with your key constituents.

- **If your average score was between 1 and 3.5** you most likely have an adequate method to gather and react to key constituents changing opinions and your organization most likely does not need a faster Opinion & Response Cycle.
- **If your average score was between 3.5 and 4.5** you are most likely in a transition stage. Your organization can “sit and wait”, but it must remain vigilant because it might not be long before it is too late to make the changes needed to remain successful. As a minimum senior leadership must be looking at options and making plans that can be implemented quickly if key constituent’s loyalty begins to wane. Have a plan ready to execute.
- **If your average score was higher than 4.5** it is time to make some changes. Just watching from the sidelines will most likely result in an “always trying to catch up” situation. Senior leadership must get behind the plan and lead the execution. In this day of almost instant information transfer, key constituent’s loyalty can easily be eroded if their opinion is not heard and acted upon quickly.

SUMMARY

The speed with which information is transferred has radically changed the communication landscape. If your answers to the questions above leave you in state of “limbo” you need to continue to assess the importance of rapid feedback from key constituents and the need to improve the ways you engage them in a meaningful and timely manner.

Waiting too long to make changes can become disastrous. Thinking that the way you currently interact with your key constituents will be OK for even the next couple of year could have grave consequences. While this is just one element on the road to remaining successful, it must be part of your strategy for the future. It’s not a matter of “change or don’t change”, it is a matter of when will it be too late to change.

Sears and Roebuck is an important example of a company that failed to change. At the beginning of the 20th century they were on the road to becoming the most successful retailer in the world. They ignored the technology change brought about by the Internet. They had all the essential ingredients to become the dominant player in online retailing. They had the distribution centers, the relationship with suppliers, and existing communications with millions of customer; all they had to do was adapt to the new technology. Jeff Bezos was thinking outside the box and started competing with Sears and Roebuck out of his garage. Sears and Roebuck tried to compete with Amazon, but it was too late.

Your key constituents are already tuned into rapid information transfer and they form opinions quickly. If your Opinion & Response Cycle is too slow they will find an organization that fills the same needs your organization does, but one that is more conscious of their views and opinions.

You won’t be able to wait for the results of traditional surveys forever. Your organization will have to have, as a minimum, an Opinion & Response Cycle that matches that of your key constituents ability to consume information and change their opinion.

Are you interested in learning more about a product that can help you shorten your Opinion & Response Cycle?

Contact us to learn about our continuous feedback tool called **OpinionUP Pro**:



info@opinionup.com