New Working Paper by Patrick Diogenia Turns Net Promoter Score Criticism Into Practical Lessons for Managers

Expanded public guide explains NPS calculation, survey design, eNPS and tool governance while asking why the contested metric became managerial common sense.

PHILADELPHIA, PA, UNITED STATES, July 21, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A newly released working paper and practitioner guide examine whether surveys asking customers how likely they are to recommend a brand, product, or service are effective or merely ubiquitous. Net Promoter Score (NPS) has become one of management's most recognizable metrics—but what should marketers and managers do when a simple customer signal is relied on for promotion, compensation, and strategic decisions?

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>
> *Patrick Diogenia*

In The Diffusion of a Contested Metric: Net Promoter Score as a Managerial Innovation, marketing consultant and researcher Patrick Diogenia traces the history of NPS to explain how it spread despite sustained debate over its validity, scoring logic, response bias, and incentive effects. A companion article, Net Promoter Score (NPS) Defined: Calculation, Survey Questions and eNPS, translates the paper into an accessible guide for customer experience, marketing, operations, and people leaders.

"NPS became durable because it was simple, visible, and portable," Diogenia said. Those qualities made it useful to managers. They also made it easy to ask the score to carry more meaning than the evidence can support."

The guide explains that different response distributions can produce the same net promoter score and that surveys may be conducted before customers can assess the service in question. It notes that customers who abandon a journey might never be surveyed, and that scores can vary due to sampling, timing, channel, or response bias rather than actual experience.

Rather than calling for organizations to abolish NPS, Diogenia offers a set of operating principles:

- Use NPS as a directional signal and retain the underlying 0-to-10 distribution, sample size, and response rate.
- Distinguish relationship NPS from transactional NPS, and avoid treating method changes as performance gains.
- Time surveys for moments when customers can reasonably judge the service outcome, and account for failed or abandoned journeys.
- Pair NPS with qualitative comments, behavioral data, operational evidence, complaints, retention and service outcomes.
- Do not tie individual pay or employment consequences to noisy scores that frontline employees influence but do not fully control.


Patrick Diogenia, Marketing Consultant and Researcher

“NPS can be useful, but a metric should help an organization notice reality,” Diogenia said. “Once the organization begins reorganizing reality to protect the metric, the dashboard has ceased to be an instrument and become an audience.”

The public guide also addresses employee NPS (eNPS), which Diogenia describes as a useful pulse but insufficient on its own for engagement. He recommends combining it with measures of workload, role clarity, psychological safety, manager behavior, fairness, and intent to stay, while ensuring anonymity and safeguards against retaliation or small-team rankings.

The guide also reframes the market for NPS survey tools. Platforms such as Medallia, Qualtrics, and SurveyMonkey can automate deployment and scoring, but they cannot verify whether sampling frames are representative or whether surveys are timed correctly in the customer journey. The recommended buying criteria therefore emphasize invitation logs, frequency caps, journey triggers, data integration, response-distribution visibility, closed-loop case management, privacy controls, method-consistent benchmarks, and access to response-level data.

The working paper is a conceptual narrative synthesis, not an original empirical study or a systematic review, and has not undergone peer review. It integrates published scholarship with selected practitioner and corporate materials to explain the metric’s diffusion and its organizational consequences. The working paper, calculation infographic, fact sheet, and expanded article are available on Diogenia’s website.

About Patrick Diogenia

Patrick Diogenia is a strategy, loyalty, and lifecycle marketing leader with more than two decades of experience across marketing, customer strategy, technology, and organizational leadership. At Comcast, he held senior management roles spanning omnichannel enablement, MarTech strategy, and product management. Prior to Comcast, he founded and led a boutique advertising agency and consultancy serving SMB and Fortune 1000 clients. He holds dual MBAs from Indiana University's Kelley School of Business and Alliance Manchester Business School (UK), and a bachelor's degree, summa cum laude, from the University of Pennsylvania. He is currently a graduate student in Communication Studies at New Mexico State University, where his research examines organizational judgment, leadership communication, customer strategy, employee selection, and the organizational dynamics and constraints facing small business owners and franchisees. The paper represents the author's analysis and does not imply endorsement by any university or employer.

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