

BOOK EXCERPT:  
PROFILE OF OVERTONE

# NET value

HOW TO PROFIT  
AS THE DIGITAL CULTURE  
CHANGES YOUR  
VALUE PROPOSITION

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EVEN IN A DOWNTURN, ARE YOU DOING AS WELL  
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**Overtone** (<http://www.overtone-inc.com>) serves companies grappling everyday with high volumes of data. They include Microsoft, e-Harmony, Wal-Mart and Yahoo. Some of its clients receive over six million direct comments per year – far too many for staff to keep up with. Much is said about these companies on blogs and social media also. No company can justify investing human capital in the analysis of such a volume of content everyday. A real-time text analysis engine is sufficient to get a reasonably accurate and timely picture of customer feedback. Rather than using the data for promotional purposes, Overtone focuses on true intelligence gathering.

Overtone delivers an on-demand listening system, Open Mic™, that continuously captures and analyzes “free form comments,” including discussion threads, blogs, review sites, email, surveys, feedback forms on web sites, text messages and chat sessions. Based on these sources, it offers insight analytics, behavioral analytics and website analytics, as well as tools for dynamic surveys and responses.

In a survey of 160 executives by CustomerThink, more a third of them (36 percent) cited improved customer experience or loyalty as the leading reason why they would pay attention to unstructured data from customers. “Increased revenue” was second at 17 percent. Not surprisingly, Overtone’s services are being applied to brand monitoring, customer experience management, product management, early warning alerts, customer service, and Net Promoter Scores (see page 254).

Product managers often receive ad hoc feedback from customers about product suggestions. Overtone’s analysis helps prioritize upgrades or changes that can cut adoption costs for users.

Overtone creates a two-way connection from customers to R&D staff. Feedback pours in as soon as customers start using a product. This enables streamlined decision-making processes, resulting in faster release cycles. It also enables the kind of reaction to customer needs and concerns that Garden Fresh Restaurant Corporation was confronted with in a crisis.

Buffet-style restaurants Souplantation & Sweet Tomatoes® are two brands operated by **Garden Fresh** at 104 locations throughout the United States. They receive feedback in many different forms – around 10,000 unstructured comments

each month. In 2005, Garden Fresh asked Overtone to look for patterns in the mass of data. Using the dashboards employees can quickly identify common issues such as a desire for a particular kind of soup at the salad bar or a complaint about noise in certain parts of the restaurant. If they want to hear what individual customers are saying, Garden Fresh managers can drill down to review customer comments. Jill Trecker, manager of guest loyalty, says that “menu decisions were solidified by the information we obtained from Overtone.”

Having a mechanism in place in advance enabled Garden Fresh to deal with the spinach scare in 2006 – even though it had nothing to do with the panic. Three people died and at least 205 were sickened by spinach tainted with *E. coli* bacteria, sending sales of leafy greens plummeting by one-third.

Garden Fresh listened to consumers and changed the choices at the buffets and salad bars to offer what they felt comfortable and safe with. This enabled the chain to weather the storm. “If you solicit feedback, and don’t respond, you are wasting people’s time. In our business, where we have very loyal customers and so much guest feedback, we not only capture the data, but sort it to reveal the top issues guests are talking about. This fosters customer loyalty and makes people more excited to come in and dine with us,” said Trecker.

DialogueTDN is way to take full advantage of this feedback, by featuring comments relevant to the value proposition. It can be integrated into a CRM system and an email can be sent out to customers with similar concerns, driving more traffic to the site. This makes Overtone part of a whole system.

Base pricing for direct feedback (onsite) begins at \$8,000 per month while base pricing for indirect feedback (social media) begins at \$12,000 per month. Overtone enables a company to continuously collect, categorize, analyze, and act on customer comments. The company works with CMOs to determine which metrics are most relevant to revealing the value being created by listening to the voice of the customer. It also helps determine the categories and analysis needed to identify gaps between brand and product promise, and customer perception. The fees can be justified by companies facing large volumes of data (typically found within social media) and a need to focus on relevant insights.