

What's next



Enterprise

Know and be known: building relationships, asking questions, and finding silver linings

In the spirit of using the pandemic as a force of creation, we look for new ways to get to know our customers and build a better tomorrow. Not only does this mean we must ask new questions, but we must also let ourselves be vulnerable as we listen for the answers.

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To know and be known: it's at the core of forming a relationship, and it's what we all truly desire from our friends, family, colleagues, and customers, if we're honest with ourselves. For those who know us best, we want them to respect and accept us because of our flaws (not despite them, as many might say). In building this type of relationship, a knowing relationship, we must also build trust, courage, and vulnerability.

We at Nuance have been working to build these knowing relationships with our customers – which means putting ourselves in uncomfortable zones – those vulnerable places – where the most meaningful relationships can flourish. It also means that [we must flex our listening muscles](#) so we can really get to know our customers, to ask new questions, and to embrace the answers on our path to co-innovation.

As others have written ([here's one great analysis](#)), the COVID-19 pandemic is accelerating innovation, creation, and development; it's one of the silver linings of 2020. In other words, nearly every organization must find *new* ways of being, engaging, connecting, and knowing. One of the ways we can do this is to ask our customers those *new* questions, for example:

1. ***What's top of mind for you?*** Whether it's a professional or personal concern doesn't matter; if it's top-of-mind, it can affect relationships. Perhaps it's an initiative to cut costs. Maybe it's caring for a sick family member. Maybe it's a birthday or a pending vacation. But asking this question opens the door to getting to know people better, and that's what's most important.
2. ***What can we do to better support you?*** Very often, when we ask this question, the immediate response is something along the lines of, "We're good! But ..." and in that "but," if we're truly listening, we get something that's vitally important. It could be about service delivery, solution performance, or some other way we can stand [shoulder-to-shoulder](#) with you to solve new challenges—or solve an old problem in a new way.
3. ***Are we delivering meaningful outcomes for your organization?*** If we don't know something, we cannot course correct, so if the answer to this question is no, then there is an opportunity to make an immediate difference in the relationship. And if the answer is yes, then there is an opportunity to truly understand why and what it is that we are doing right so we can replicate that with our other customers.

Ultimately, customer conversations are not one-way streets. Everyone learns a lot from these conversations, and we get to know our customers better—which puts us all on the path to building a better future – together.

The co-innovation blog series, written by Joanne Taylor, Senior Vice President of Customer

Success and Business Operations, takes a close look at the topics, trends, and innovations that push us all toward long-term success. From exploring the programs and plans that drive growth, to examining the issues that can hold us back from reaching our full potential, nothing is off-limits in this series after all, the future is ours to build today.

Tags: [customer success](#), [innovation](#)



About Joanne Taylor

Joanne Taylor is Senior Vice President of Customer Success and Business Operations at Nuance. Joanne has more than 20 years of experience designing and directing comprehensive digital transformation and continuous improvement programs to maximize client success and revenue generation for world-class companies. Prior to joining Nuance in 2018, Joanne held senior positions at PwC, IBM, AlixPartners, and ADP where she ran the company's outsourcing and enterprise payroll services divisions. She holds a bachelor's degree in marketing from Graceland University and an MBA with a focus on information systems management from Baylor University's Hankamer School of Business.

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