



11. Customer Surveys

Coalesce Consulting have a wide range of experience in the design and implementation of customer surveys on a stand-alone basis or working with external research agencies to ensure that the deliverables match the requirements of any on-going customer experience programmes from an holistic perspective.

A good way of outlining our work in this area is to provide a brief overview of a project which embraces several elements of research/survey work, linked to continuous improvement and staff rewards.

Company “x” had been using an external research agency to undertake market research on a quarterly basis, for some time. This research was not entirely valid as it confused marketing product research and messages with customer service and satisfaction. Additionally the sample sizes were very low and therefore statistically insignificant. Managers within the business knew this and rejected negative results when published but always accepted upward trends despite sample size issues. There was also some concern that the business listened to customers but never truly heard them and rarely fed back any of the outputs of surveys to customers and the mechanisms we used were more to satisfy the business than to truly measure what mattered to the customer.

Solution

We defined a completely revised process.

This involved a dramatic shift in what was measured and a different mechanism for gathering data. We established that customer satisfaction starts early on in the life cycle – just measuring how people felt at the telephone was not acceptable. So we undertook a piece of qualitative work where we asked customers what mattered to them, who they held up as shining examples of service delivery (not just or even in the same market) and how they rated us compared to their expectations.

We established that two functions – which to date had not figured in the survey process – were both elements to include as opposed to simply customer service/the contact centre. Thus, it became clear that this was a cultural issue where everyone had to accept that their role was to deal with and satisfy customers. In the qualitative stage we teased out the issues, grouped them into subject matter and weighted and rated them.

We then tested out the survey protocol, refined it and implemented it across all geographical units of the business on a quarterly basis with sample sizes often tenfold higher than previously – this being the qualitative element.

We also started a mystery shopping process, where contacts were made (from acquisition to service) on a regular basis and rated, against expected responses, etc.

The quantitative piece was then fed back to all business units and Head Office on a quarterly basis. Each business unit received an Action Plan as an outcome, against which they had to perform for the next quarter. People’s bonuses were in part related to the customer satisfaction index.

Both the mystery shopping and customer survey work was linked to a change mechanism and training process within the business and we gave newsletter feedback to customers as to the results (good and bad) of the survey and what we were doing, how by when.

This was a truly global survey process embracing all functions and geographic areas within the business. It was also holistic and end-to-end in that it sought feedback, took it on board, undertook mystery shopping in parallel and then used all the information to actively improve matters, to honestly feedback the results and involve the enterprise by engaging people in the importance of customer satisfaction knowledge by linking some elements of their reward programme to its continuing success.

