

Topic:
Customer
Satisfaction

Customer Satisfaction – what's the norm?

You may know your customer satisfaction ratings – but how do they compare to industry norms?

iCAD is produced by Business Advantage, a B2B research, business development and marketing consulting practice operating in the global IT, Digital and Telecommunication sectors.

"Keep the customer satisfied" is a mantra for any business seeking sustained success. But getting this right means staying in touch with the views of the people that really matter - the customers themselves. Understanding their views of your products and services enables you to take the right action to keep their business.

But what level of customer satisfaction must you achieve to make you stand out in comparison to other suppliers to the same or similar markets? Comparing your customer satisfaction scores to industry norms is a useful exercise to give some context to your target setting.

The table below will enable you to compare your own customer satisfaction data with a selection of industry norms.

The data is extracted from customer satisfaction surveys that The Business Advantage Group has conducted in the international information and communications technology (ICT) sectors, over a number of years with various companies.

Areas of investigation

Every company has its own issues to investigate but in this sector four common areas to measure in ICT sectors are:

- technical ability
- response times
- quality of product
- overall satisfaction.

The table below shows the lowest and highest satisfaction scores we have measured in the ICT sectors, and the average scores for the four categories mentioned above.

Customer satisfaction surveys enable you to:

- understand customer perceptions of your business
- improve on areas that are failing to match the quality of service demanded by clients
- take urgent action towards groups of customers identified as 'at risk'
- set realistic targets and monitor them effectively
- react to early warnings of a change in customer expectations.

Measuring satisfaction

The classic way of measuring satisfaction is to use rating scales and attribute each point in the scale a value which can then be used to calculate a mean score. The examples shown are based on the following rating scale.

Excellent	5 points
Very good	4 points
Quite good	3 points
Not very good	2 points
Poor	1 point.

Once a survey is completed, average scores can be calculated so that different services and sub-groups can be compared and contrasted easily within one survey and over time.

Satisfaction Norms

	Range	Average
Overall satisfaction	3.0 - 4.2	3.7
Scores relating to technical know-how/expertise	2.7 - 4.2	3.6
Scores relating to fast response times	2.5 - 3.5	3.2
Scores relating to quality of product	3.4 - 4.0	3.7

1 = poor, 5 = excellent

So, how do your scores compare? While the figures above only allow for the broadest of comparisons, they can help dispel false perceptions that might arise from looking at your own ratings in isolation. In terms of overall satisfaction, the key challenge appears to be to break into the 'very good' category, rather than setting sights on 'excellent' ratings that customers are very reluctant to give.

Response times

One interesting feature of the above figures is the significantly lower than average rating for response times, (this includes technical/helpdesk support etc). The suggestion that this element of service needs improving crops up regularly in our own interviews with CAT users, and indeed is raised again by Foxboro's Nick Zucchero in the '[User View](#)' article in this edition of *iCAD*. Are you in touch with your customers' views on this issue?

For more information about customer satisfaction research

Customer satisfaction surveys can of course provide a wealth of information behind the headline ratings. Read about Business Advantage's [customer satisfaction research services](#) to find out more about how your customers' perceptions of your products and services can provide the solution.

Note from the Editor:

In future editions of *iCAD* we'll be looking at more marketing and market research issues, from how to write effective direct mail letters to a look at competitor analysis research. If there are any issues you'd like covered, please email me at david.eaton@business-advantage.com.

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