



8 Finding out what existing customers value about your business

What is customer feedback?

Customer feedback is the information that you get from your customers about the work that you do for them, positive and negative. How do you get yours? There are several different ways in which feedback can be gathered.

- Best and worst selling products/services.
- Repeat business.
- Behaviour and body language observation.
- Questions asked.
- Complaints.
- Verbal comments.
- Conversations with customers.
- Testimonials and letters.
- Recommendations.
- Survey information.

Why is this important?

It is important to be aware of the feedback you are getting from your customers. This is how you learn about what is and isn't important to the people you wish to influence. If you are selling something that people want and you are delivering value, you need to know about it!

This is information that you can use to attract more customers. It is also a confidence boost for you if you know how much people value what you offer. You can allow yourself to feel good and very proud of what you are doing. If your business is missing what customers value most, you need to know about that as well. This information can teach you how to make your business more attractive to the people that you value most: your customers.

Your challenge

Your challenge is to set up a system both to gather and evaluate this information on a regular basis. You need to be open and able to listen to customers' views. You will need to be prepared to ask and develop questions that are targeted to extract

the right information. When asking for customer feedback you will need to be careful about guiding the customer's mind in the right direction. If you ask 'What didn't you like about the service today?' the response can only be negative. Whereas if you say 'What did you think about the service today?' and give a choice of responses, there is a greater chance of a positive result.

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO KNOW – SPECIAL RESPONSE CHECKLIST

- ▶ What are people buying?
- ▶ What do people want to buy?
- ▶ What are their service expectations?
- ▶ What is really important in terms of product/service delivery?
- ▶ What irritates and frustrates people?

Great questions to ask

- ▶ When choosing a [your service] what do you look for?
- ▶ When buying [your service] what is most important?
- ▶ What prompted the decision to use x services?
- ▶ What have you found of most value?
- ▶ What (if anything) could we do to improve the x service we offer you?
- ▶ What do you like about x ?
- ▶ Which aspect of x do you find of most value?

Depending on whether you are using a written or telephone survey, or holding a one-to-one conversation the way you organise your questions will vary. You may use multichoice, with a range from most important to least important, or leave them open for comments. The important thing is that you make it easy for people to answer the questions when you ask them. Any surveys you do ideally should comprise no more than 10 questions. If you are conducting a telephone survey and you get some really positive statements always ask if you can quote them. This is a very easy and quick way of getting testimonials.

How to use this information

A list of what your customers most value about your business can be used to help you create all your marketing messages, your brand, your unique selling proposition, your customer commitment statement, your list of attractive benefits, your website or brochure copy and even your elevator speech. Knowing what customers value is invaluable to you.

Think feedback and learn more