Customer Satisfaction Surveys Best Practices

A Methodology to Implement Customer Satisfaction Surveys In Public Sector

What are Customer Satisfaction Surveys?

Customer Satisfaction Surveys are systematic efforts undertaken by organizations, meant to determine the degree of customer satisfaction, in order to make the improvements needed to upgrade the level of services. It is also meant to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the processes, which in turn leads to increasing customer satisfaction. This is influenced by a number of factors, including, for example, the quality of services, time and cost, as shown in Figure 1.

Why Customer Satisfaction Surveys?

- Determine the level of customer satisfaction, with the services provided by the organization.
- Improve the quality of the provided services.
- Increase the efficiency and effectiveness of procedures and processes.
- Ensure that improvements have the desired results and determine the extent of their contributions, in increasing customer satisfaction.

How to implement Customer Satisfaction Surveys?

1. Set goals
2. Determine the categories covered by the surveys
3. Determine the size of the sample
4. Determine survey methods
5. Prepare the questionnaire
6. Prepare to conduct the customer service satisfaction surveys
7. Collect Data
8. Analyze data
9. Develop recommendations and the corrective actions

Figure 1: Factors affecting customer satisfaction

Improving services through customer surveys is a continuous process, conducted periodically in order to measure the degree of performance improvement on the one hand, and ensure the continuation of the development process on the other hand.

It is possible to conduct customer satisfaction surveys by conducting focus groups, interviews or questionnaires. Questionnaires are the most commonly used method, for measuring customer satisfaction.

Set Goals

Firstly, the goal of this project is determined, as it affects the questionnaire design and the methodology to be used. There are two types of customer satisfaction surveys:
Surveys that aim to assess the opinion of customers of a particular service. They are usually conducted after providing a new service.

Surveys that assess the opinion of customers, regarding the services provided to them, in general.

Determine the categories covered by the surveys

These surveys cover a number of groups, as shown in Figure 2.

Determine the size of the sample

The sample size is determined by following these steps:

A. Determine the study population: A group of individuals from the general population who share certain characteristics.

B. Determine the type of sample, to be used. Samples can be divided according to selection methods into two types, as shown in Figure 3.

It is advised to use probability samples to assess the opinions of customers, for the services provided to them by the organization, in general. It is also advisable if the number of customers is large.

C. Determine the margin of error and the required result accuracy.

D. Determine the confidence level.

E. Calculate the sample size.

Determine survey methods

Examples of methods used to conduct customer satisfaction surveys using questionnaires

- Mail or e-mail
- The organization’s website
- Personal interview
- Phone interview

Prepare the questionnaire

The questionnaire is a set of questions designed to assess a number of themes. The questions are linked to each other to achieve the organization’s goal of measuring customer satisfaction. The answers usually have statistical significance.

The customer satisfaction questionnaire consists of three sections:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall level of satisfaction</td>
<td>Overall degree of satisfaction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Quality indicators of the services provided | • Time  
• Timing  
• Staff courtesy  
• Justice  
• Easy access to the service  
• Accuracy  
• Responsiveness |
| Customers data               | Social and demographic information, such as gender and education |

[Figure 2: Groups covered by customer satisfaction surveys]

[Figure 3: Sample types]
To prepare the customer satisfaction questionnaire, the following steps are required:

A. Determine the goals and main themes of the questionnaire.

B. Determine the type of questions to be used in the questionnaire, and the type of questionnaire based on the characteristics of the targeted group and the desired results. Questionnaires can be divided according to the required answers into four types: open-ended, closed-ended, open-closed and picture completion.

C. Hold a brainstorming session to identify the organization’s services and customers.

D. Identify all the indicators that can be used to determine the level of service quality and the organization’s performance.

E. Conduct a discussion to identify the most important indicators, eliminate the repeated ones and classify them.

F. Determine the initial questions.

G. Conducting the initial survey and the final drafting of the survey questions

After completing the initial drafting of the survey questions, an initial survey should be tested on a sample of customers. Based on the results, the final questions are drafted.

Objectives of the initial survey

- Identify repeated questions unnoticed by the survey developer
- Assess the extent to which respondents understand the questionnaire
- Identify the questions that respondents may refuse to answer
- Ensure that the questionnaire outputs serve its purpose
- Detect any problems in the questionnaire design
- Determine the time needed to fill out the questionnaire
- Removing ambiguity of some questions

Figure 5: Objectives of the initial survey

Prepare to conduct the customer satisfaction surveys

- Prepare a cover letter for the survey to explain the purpose of the survey.
- If the questionnaire will be administered in person, there should be written instructions for the administrators conducting the interviews.
- Train the surveyors and administrators who will conduct the survey.
- Technical equipment and materials needed to collect data should be prepared if it was decided to use electronic methods, such as websites and e-mail, to collect information.

Collect data

Data is collected, using the previously identified methods according to the sample size and the times determined. The progress of work should be monitored, in order to ensure that the project is proceeding as planned.

Analyze data

1. Enter data into a computerized system, such as MINITAB, SPSS, or EXCEL. Note that some electronic methods used to collect data (websites, automated questionnaires) automatically provide electronic copies of data.

2. Analyze the data by calculating the frequency and percentages, following these steps:
- Analyzing the distribution of the sample (by region, governorate or type of service).
- Converting answers into numbers that are easier to deal with statistically.
- Finding the overall satisfaction level of the services, by calculating the arithmetic mean for all the questions.
- Calculating the mean and standard deviation for each theme.
- Identifying the themes that achieved low evaluation scores.
- Analyzing theme questions that showed low satisfaction levels, in order to identify weaknesses according to the arithmetic mean, frequency and percentages.

3. Read all suggestions and observations provided by customers.

4. Identify the reasons for low satisfaction levels by holding brainstorming meetings or focus groups. It is possible here to use cause and effect analysis (cause & effect diagram) as shown in Figure 6, which is intended to list all the possible causes of the problem to be solved.

5. Based on the causes identified in the previous step, it is necessary to hold brainstorming meetings or use Pareto Analysis, as shown in Figure 7, in order to determine the most influential causes, thus finding workable radical solutions within the limits of the available resources in order to improve the level of services provided.

Figure 6: Cause and effect diagram

Figure 7: Pareto Analysis chart

9 Develop recommendations and the corrective actions

After identifying opportunities for improvement and selecting and discussing solutions, the following should be done:

- Implement corrective actions.
- Develop a corrective action plan according to the priority points that have been identified.
- Identify those responsible for implementing the corrective actions.
- Identify facilities and resources that could be provided by the organization, in order to implement the development plans.

It is possible to conduct another customer satisfaction survey after an appropriate period of time has passed, in order to verify the appropriateness and feasibility of corrective actions.