



Want to know if your customers are satisfied? Commission a CS system!

Roy Kemp, Managing Partner at Surrey – based Synergy Group Media, a specialist marketing agency to the building and materials sector, outlines the benefits of good customer communication and why talking to your customers and understanding what they say can improve your business.

A customer satisfaction (CS) system is a method for identifying the areas of a business that need constant monitoring against customer satisfaction levels. A CS system is recommended for companies that are being assessed against the Quality Management System requirements as defined in ISO 9001:2000. However, even for those companies not assessed, there are many benefits to be gained. For example, a good CS system will ensure that regular improvements can be identified in products and services according to measured customer satisfaction levels. The system can also be used to spot lost business at an early enough stage to prevent serious long term losses. It can also identify areas where a customer is being 'over satisfied' and show potential problems in the supply chain.

Many companies ask their customers if they are satisfied with the service they receive. This is often done infrequently and with little or no science behind it. A true measure of customer satisfaction can only be calculated once we understand our customers' expectations. Without this half of the equation, no true measure of satisfaction is possible. For example, a customer might say they were satisfied with the price they pay for a particular product or service. However, it could be that price was the least important factor in their choice of supplier and they would still buy at a higher price given they were satisfied in other areas.

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A good CS system requires feedback from a representative cross section of customers who are asked their views on key criteria. Once the data has been collected and assimilated using formulas to show performance ratings and satisfaction levels, the final outcome will reveal trends, areas of strength or weakness and detailed satisfaction statistics for each customer, or each project or each job.

This kind of information is a vital but often overlooked tool in today's highly competitive environment. A good CS system will provide a fact – based insight into how well a company is satisfying its customers. It will identify inefficiencies, spot warning signals and secure customer retention. Once properly begun, it can be used to compare performance and trends over a period of time. Secondary information such as immediate sales opportunities, readership preferences or attitudes towards industry events can also be gathered. Last but not least, a good CS system sends a strong message to customers. It tells them that you do listen to them and you are committed to improving your service. A CS system is well worth the investment and if implemented correctly, should pay its way several times over. Contact Synergy Group Media on Tel +44 (0)20 8255 2121 www.synergygm.com

Editors note:

Synergy Group Media is a specialist marketing agency offering bespoke communication and customer satisfaction systems to the B2B sector.

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