

# GUIDELINES FOR CREATING EFFECTIVE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEYS <sup>28</sup>

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## Purpose

To provide agencies and organizations with information that needs to be considered in generating customer satisfaction surveys.

## Why is Customer Satisfaction So Important?

Consider the following:<sup>29</sup>

- It can cost five to ten times as much effort to attract a new customer as it does to keep one you already have.
- 96 percent of your dissatisfied customers will not tell you.
- 91 percent of those non-complaining, unhappy customers will never come back.
- Dissatisfied customers will tell 10 more people (your existing and potential new customers) of their bad experience.

## Define What You Want the Survey to Accomplish

For example, are you looking to get a measurement of **general** customer satisfaction such as determining the gap between a customer's expectations and perceptions of the level of service they're being provided? Or are you looking to measure something **specific** such as how well your agency is performing in the eyes of your customers (e.g., a new training program, the timeliness of your agency's response to new inquiries, etc.)?

Keep the survey simple and focus on factors you recognize as areas of customer concern such as:

- **Understanding the customer.** The degree to which agency staff members know the customer and understand their needs.
- **Technical competence.** The degree to which agency staff members possess the required skills and knowledge to perform the service required.
- **Reliability.** The degree to which agency staff members perform as promised, dependably, and accurately.
- **Credibility.** The degree to which agency staff members are perceived as trustworthy, believable, and accountable.
- **Responsiveness.** The degree to which agency staff members are willing and able to respond to problems and issues.
- **Communication.** The degree to which agency staff members listen to the customer, keep the customer informed, and support the customer through effective presentations.
- **Courtesy.** The level of politeness, respect, and friendliness agency staff members have.

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<sup>28</sup> This tool was adapted from the works of Brad Sickles, US Dept. of Labor Employment and Training Administration, Performance Accountability Team [www.doleta.gov/performance/trainingtutorials/ppt/roadshow-surveys.ppt](http://www.doleta.gov/performance/trainingtutorials/ppt/roadshow-surveys.ppt) and Craig Borysowich Enterprise Technology Architect <http://it.toolbox.com/blogs/enterprise-solutions/guidelines-for-customer-satisfaction-surveys-19635>

<sup>29</sup> Source: <http://www.surveyyracker.com/app-custsat.htm?gclid=COqi16OkhKICFeQc5wodBySNDQ>

## Construct the Survey

### Write Effective Questions

- Develop questions designed to measure the customer satisfaction factors determined in step one on page 43.
- Make the survey form simple to complete, stating each question simply and unambiguously.
- Begin with the end in mind. When considering a question, ask yourself how the responses will be tallied and used?
- If you have doubts about a question, discard it.
- If a question can be misinterpreted by the respondent, chances are that it will be.
- Include only one subject per question.
- Avoid questions that lead people to respond in a certain way.
- Consider optional ways to ask questions that deal with sensitive areas.
- Keep open ended questions to a minimum.
- Consider having a “don’t know” response when you create answer sets.
- Create meaningful scales for rating such as the following (note that with this kind of scale, a reasonable target might be to achieve higher than 90 percent of very good or excellent ratings):  
**1 = Poor 2 = Satisfactory 3 = Good 4 = Very Good 5 = Excellent**

### Sequencing the Questions

- The first series of questions should be easy for the respondent to understand and should capture his or her attention and interest.
- Start with general questions and gradually shift to questions that are more specific.
- Group questions in logical sections. Each section of questions should be in a well thought-out order.
- Introduce each new section with a summary statement so participants have an opportunity to adjust to the new set of questions.
- The order of similar items on a list can bias results. Randomly or alphabetically order items and indicate in the instructions how they are ordered, reducing the likelihood that people will see the first items as most important of the group.
- Position questions about personal or sensitive issues toward the end of the questionnaire. Put demographic questions at the end of the survey form.