TOP 5 TIPS FOR DEVELOPING A CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY

Peter Oxley, VP Global Marketing, ResponseTek
experiences, you’ll lose their interest, or worse yet, annoy them enough so they never take your survey again. When choosing your questions, always consider to what end the questions serve you or the customers.

Now here comes the predicament that I always hear about. “I need to collect a lot of information and there is no possible way that one five-question survey can get me that breadth of feedback from my customers!” It’s quite the pickle, but there is a solution:

“How satisfied are you with the service you received?” It’s an age old question companies ask their customers year after year. But, as a consumer, does it really mean anything to you? More importantly, does it make you feel like the company actually cares about you?

Measuring customer satisfaction isn’t easy, but businesses with customer experience management (CEM) programs have made the process simpler by adding targeted strategies to their surveys. These strategies draw out only the most useful and relevant feedback from consumers, so effective plans and actions can be put in place to improve company services, resolution procedures, and employee training.

That brings us to the big question, what are good strategies for developing useful customer satisfaction surveys? Here are a few tips:

1 **Make it Easy; Make Their Time a Priority**

When a customer takes the initiative to fill out a survey, they are doing you a favor. You need to return the kindness by making the process easy for them. That means make your survey accessible through all collection modes. Email surveys are a great staple, but case studies show that customers have a much higher response rate with mobile/sms surveys (over 20% percent in fact). Why? Because short message services force quick, effective surveys that can be filled out in the moment close to the transaction. With them, you reach the customer in a way that is convenient for them, in a time frame that is convenient for them.

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2 **Keep It Short and Sweet**

Delighting customers doesn’t build loyalty, reducing their effort does. That’s why your survey should be short, easy-to-understand, and relevant to your customers’ experiences with your company. If you ask question that don’t relate to their experiences, you’ll lose their interest, or worse yet, annoy them enough so they never take your survey again. When choosing your questions, always consider to what end the questions serve you or the customers.

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3 **Rotate Your Questions**

Narrow down your list to 20 essential questions that directly relate back to your top level key performance metrics. Is overall satisfaction a key metric of yours? Maybe you actually need customer service representative metrics instead.

In other words, don’t throw together questions without a purpose. These questions should create results for the customer and your company, while also remaining relevant to the interactions that the customers have with your company every day.

Then, rotate these questions in your surveys. That means you’ll still ask five questions, but five different questions to a variety of customers. This will give you a broad range of insights, and it will give your customers a headachefree survey process.

*The whole point of surveying your customers is to find out how you can improve your services*
4 Make the Questions Personal

When people remember your name, and the little details about you, it’s a pleasant surprise isn’t it? That’s why you should personalize your survey questions. You’ll show your customers that you are really listening, that you clearly pay attention to their interactions with your company, and, most importantly, that you care about how they feel.

Here’s a good example of how you can change a question’s impact through personalization. A common question companies like to ask is, “How was our service?” While this question will give you a general understanding of how your service is overall, it’s vague and encourages a one-word response (good, so-so, bad etc.) that has no real actionable information in it.

However, if you change the question to, “Rachel, how satisfied were you with the data plan information Greg gave you, on a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 is very dissatisfied and 10 is very satisfied?”

You’ll get an answer that is:
• Specific to the type of interaction
• Relevant to the customer and the employee.
• Highly personalized and ACTIONABLE

From there, you’ll have enough specific information to…

5 ACT on the Feedback

Why collect feedback if you’re not going to do anything with it? The whole point of surveying your customers is to find out how you can improve your services at every level. In order to do that, you need to have a system that allows you to make positive changes with the feedback.

Take the question from before. Let’s say Rachel gave Greg a 4. With a good CEM system her rating should get automatically routed to the right managers so they can find out what happened. Once the system identifies the reason behind the failed interaction, it should deploy an ACTION to ensure this does not happen again.

From there, your company can and MUST resolve the issues for BOTH Rachel and Greg. This could be through a resolution callback to Rachel and a training session with Greg. This is called a closed-loop feedback system, and it is the difference between a company that says they care, and a company that actually cares.

So, before you send out your next survey, remember:
• Make your surveys accessible
• Keep them short and sweet
• Rotate your questions and design the survey to align with your key metrics
• Make it personal
• Design the survey to draw information that can be ACTED UPON.

When in doubt, also remember this: Good companies listen. Great companies act on what they hear.

Peter Oxley

Peter Oxley is responsible for the overall sales and marketing strategy that drives awareness and growth from ResponseTek's global leadership position in Customer Experience Management. In a career spanning more than two decades as an entrepreneur, platform provider, and strategic consultant, Peter has experience in the development of customer retention initiatives and loyalty programs for global blue-chip companies.