

Ten Reasons You Need to Conduct Regular Client Satisfaction Surveys

Client Satisfaction Surveys offer many significant benefits to organizations, whether in the for profit or not-for-profit sectors. Here are ten:

1. It enlists your clients as advocates in selling your services.

There is compelling evidence that highly satisfied clients tend to tell their colleagues and friends about superior services and products. The ideal situation to create, therefore, is to have your clients promoting your services and products because their credibility and enthusiasm is your most effective marketing tool. An efficient client satisfaction survey process provides you with the insights to develop these highly satisfied clients.

2. It supports retention because it earns you loyal clients.

Client satisfaction surveys enable you to keep your clients informed about the progress you are making in addressing their needs identified through the survey process. This ongoing dialogue builds trust and loyalty because clients feel heard and appreciated.

3. It insulates you from the impact of your mistakes.

Mistakes are inevitable. However, if you have maintained a dialogue through regular surveys and, therefore, developed a degree of trust with your clients, there is much more tolerance for mistakes. In fact, it is a human trait to be even more supportive of trusted businesses when they own up to their mistakes and do whatever is necessary to correct them.

4. It keeps you in contact with your clients.

In a world in constant flux, it is paramount to keep in regular contact with your clients because their needs and desires change frequently. Client satisfaction surveys keep you current with these shifts in your market so that you can promptly adapt your services and products accordingly.

5. It allows you to clear up misunderstandings.

In my experience, it is quite common for clients to demonstrate misunderstandings, particularly around expectations about the scope of services offered. Controlling expectations is critically important because clients rate services and therefore organizations according to their expectations. Client satisfaction surveys alert you to these misunderstandings and enable you to correct them in time to avoid adverse consequences.

6. It helps you flag possible problem areas and clients.

If your clientele is broad based in terms of interests, demographics and/or regions, then you may well find that your clients' needs and expectations can vary considerably. An efficient survey process will keep you aware of these variations and will permit you to customize your services to address disparate service needs.

7. It keeps you improving your services and products.

When your business is doing well, it is easy to become complacent because everything looks so promising. However, in our fast-changing world, services are being constantly improved. One of the best ways to keep ahead of your competition is to be continually improving your services, and regular client surveys show you how and where to make the improvements that your clients want.

8. It allows you to determine client support.

In many for profit and not-for-profit businesses, it is important to gauge client support for various initiatives, whether for lobbying efforts or for changing standards of practice, for example. In these situations, determining the level of support among your clients is vital because success depends on buy-in and commitment. Client surveys permit you to gauge this level of commitment.

9. It tells you what your clients value and what they are willing to buy.

What clients value often comes as a revelation to senior staff. In not-for-profit professional associations, it sometimes is the level of the work standards required. In governmental and for-profit organizations, it sometimes is the level of telephone or face-to-face services provided because clients find that phone menus and web sites do not satisfactorily answer their specific needs. Client surveys will alert you to what clients value about your services and to what they want to buy from you.

10. It provides you with data to demonstrate how satisfied your clients are.

Imagine how much more credible and compelling an ad to solicit clients for your organization and services would be that read, "91.4 percent of our clients rate our service as 'excellent'" as compared to "we offer outstanding service". Better yet, how much more credible is an ad that can state "Our commitment to client service has enabled us over three years to improve our 'excellent' rating from 82.3 percent to 92.6 percent." Clearly, the information you glean from your client satisfaction surveys empowers you to offer meaningful data that substantiates your claim to be a provider of superior products and services.