

# Create Customer Loyalty By Asking For Feedback

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In a down economy, it is critical to nurture customer loyalty. This requires an unrelenting commitment on the part of your call center to continuous improvement. Everyone must work hard not just at meeting, but exceeding customer expectations. The best way to stay in tune with your customers is to ask them how well you are doing. There are five ways to elicit feedback from your customers.

- 1. Surveys:** Surveys are the easiest way to find out what you are doing well and what needs improvement. The advantage to surveys is that they can be sent to a large number of people. Consequently, they offer quantitative research that can generate statistical information. They can easily be distributed by phone, e-mail, fax or general mail. The key to a survey being effective is asking the right questions and the right number of questions. Ideally, questionnaires should be short and have multiple-choice answers. It is also a good idea to pre-test the survey on a small number of people first. This insures that the questions are clear and meaningful.
- 2. One-on-One Customer Conversations:** Customers are happy to tell you how well you are meeting their expectations so ask them. An individual conversation with particular customers will give you valuable information on your organization. In addition to building customer relationships, you also demonstrate your desire to deliver world-class service. All information received from the customer should be documented and inputted into their customer profile so that they know you took their comments seriously.

- 3. Focus Groups:** The goal of a focus group is to discuss and evaluate issues deemed relevant to your organization. Typically, it consists of a small number of customers who are invited to share their opinions in a roundtable discussion. Their insights are often very perceptive because of the relaxed, small group atmosphere. Make sure that a skilled facilitator who can focus the group on the designated agenda and elicit opinions from everyone chair the group.

- 4. Key Incidents Reports:** These are either negative or positive reports from customers usually elicited immediately after a particular significant experience, such as the installation of a large system by your organization. Tallying key incidents each month will reveal reoccurring problems or successful turn-arounds.

- 5. Customer Complaints:** Most people don't bother to complain. They simply take their business elsewhere. When a customer takes the time to complain, take these complaints seriously. As an organization, make sure to discuss the validity of these complaints on a regular basis. Also, train all reps on how to deal with dissatisfied customers in a positive manner. If a customer's problem is quickly resolved, 95% of the people will continue to do business with you.

Customers have a lot of choices today. Getting feedback from your customers on a regular basis will help you to identify breaks in your system or trends that need to be addressed. When customers are proactively asked about their needs and expectations, they feel valued. You increase the likelihood of their remaining loyal.

Impact Communications, Inc. consults with individuals and businesses to improve their face-to-face and over the phone communication skills. It is not what you know but how you communicate it that makes a difference. To reach us, phone (847) 438-4480 or contact our web site, [www.ImpactCommunicationsInc.com](http://www.ImpactCommunicationsInc.com).