

# Strategy International

## Customer Satisfaction Research FAQ

Organizations considering conducting a customer satisfaction study often have many questions related to Strategy International's approach and methodology for measuring the pulse of your customer base. The following are some of the more common questions we've been asked.

### **Why should we measure customer satisfaction?**

It's simple. *You need to understand what your customers expect of your organization.* A byproduct from understanding what customers need is that you retain more customers and you develop new product/service ideas.

### **Why should we hire an outside firm to do a customer satisfaction study? We talk to our customers all the time.**

Strategy International takes a disciplined approach to creating and implementing customer satisfaction studies. As an outside firm, we are able to manage the process in a timely fashion, to provide objective feedback from an outsider's perspective, and to build on year's of experience conducting customer satisfaction studies.

### **What makes Strategy International customer satisfaction studies different?**

Several things stand out with Strategy International studies:

1. We spend the time to get to know your business and customers so that we are asking the right questions of your customers. These questions are key to taking action on the results.
2. Our studies produce results on which your organization can act. The data you receive back from us will help you develop strategies and action plans for retaining current customers, attracting new ones, and improving operational or product performance. Key to this is our Performance Alert Reports. These reports give you individual answers and comments from customers who are consistently rating your organization below average. You are then able to make the needed adjustments to keep your customer from defecting.
3. The results are presented in an easy to understand, graphical format. One look at our Performance Windows and you'll know how satisfied your customers are, how you stack up to the competition, and how important certain attributes are to your customers.
4. Because we are a consulting firm, we can provide additional strategy management consulting services to help you formulate plans and implement positive changes within your organization after the study is completed.
5. Because we typically recommend telephone surveys, we are able to capture off-hand or side comments that become invaluable in seeing the whole picture of how you are meeting the needs of your customers.

### **How often should customer satisfaction studies be performed?**

For organizations with a relatively small customer base, we typically recommend conducting annual customer satisfaction studies.

For larger customer bases, quarterly studies may be appropriate.

### **What does a Strategy International customer satisfaction study measure?**

Our customer satisfaction studies measure the level of your customer's satisfaction with various service and product attributes. We also measure how satisfied your customers are with the

competition. In addition, we measure how important these various service and product attributes are to your customers, so that you can see in which areas your performance is having the biggest impact.

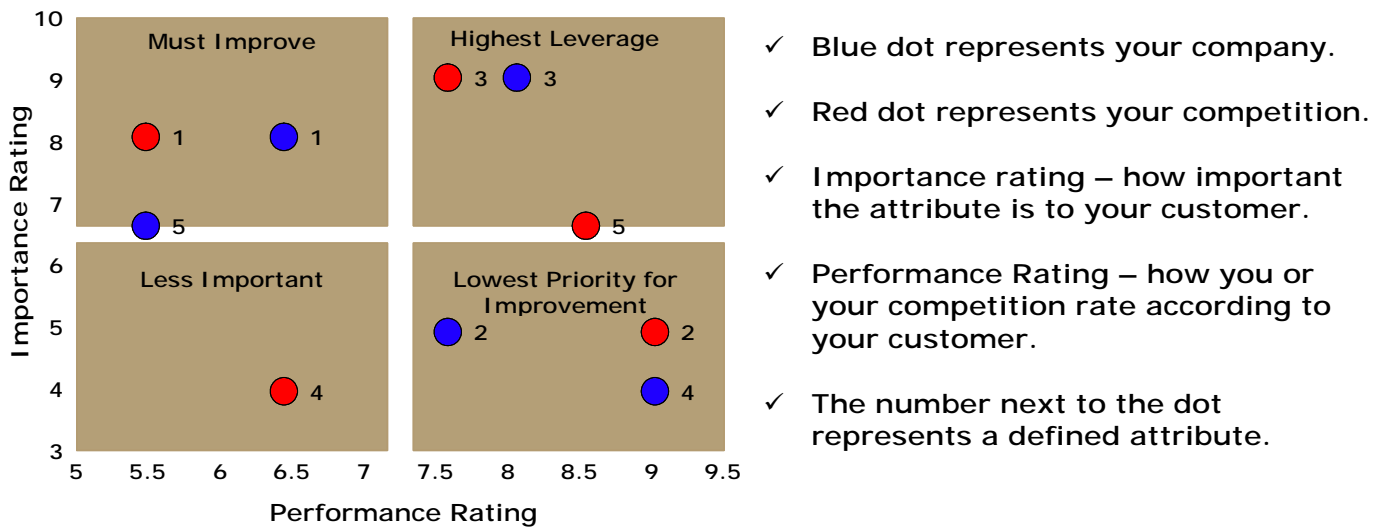
In many cases, we also survey your customers about services or products they will need to meet their future business objectives. This data allows you to plan for future product/service offerings.

### What is a PerformanceAlert Report?

A Performance Alert Report is the accounting of individual ratings from customers who consistently rate your organization below average. This report allows you to take action on potential problem areas. Equipped with customer intelligence, your sales, customer service, or operations team can formulate action plans to address these customer concerns.

### What is a Strategy International Performance Window?

A Performance Window is the key tool we use to show you how well you are performing/how satisfied your customers are and how you stack up to the competition. In one glance, you know the attributes to leverage and the attributes that need improvement.



### What data gathering methodology is best to use?

In most cases, we recommend using telephone surveys because:

- A telephone conversation with your customer shows you want to get their feedback in a very personal way.
- We have control over whom we call and who answers the survey.
- We are able to capture side comments and other concerns your customers may have.
- It allows us to effectively manage the amount of time for data collection.

In some specific cases, we will recommend a combination of telephone and web surveys. This allows your customers to complete the survey in the manner with which they feel the most comfortable.

## Do you find that customers feel bothered or annoyed by the survey process?

Customers respect your desire to listen to them. Furthermore, we pride ourselves on treating your customers as our own. If for some reason there is a negative response to the process we report it to you immediately.

## What attributes should we measure?

This is the fun part! Deciding what service and product areas to measure is an exciting part of the customer satisfaction study. This allows your organization to take an internal look at itself and really think from the customer's perspective. In many cases, we will also talk to your customers to find out their "hot buttons" or critical areas of service. Below is a sampling of the possible attributes to measure. Remember every organization is unique – you will have a specific combination of attributes that are particular to your organization, product, or industry. During the discovery phase of the customer satisfaction study, we help you define and choose the attributes to measure.

- Overall satisfaction
- Overall service
- Value
- Total Cost of ownership

### Sales

- Ability to anticipate your needs
- Ability to find unique solutions on behalf of customers
- Ability to help my company meet our business objectives
- Accurate quotations
- Communication skills
- Courtesy
- Creativity
- E-mail/phone accessibility
- Face to face contact
- Innovation
- Integrity
- Listening skills
- Product knowledge
- Professionalism
- Readability of quotations
- Responsiveness
- Source of industry knowledge
- Speed of response
- Technical knowledge
- Timely quotations
- Trustworthiness
- Understands my business
- Understands my expectations
- Willingness to handle special, non-standard, non-routine requests

### Customer Service

- Ability to anticipate my needs
- Accuracy
- Communication skills
- Courtesy
- Creativity
- E-mail/phone accessibility
- Knows me
- Listening skills
- Problem solving skills
- Professionalism
- Responsiveness
- Seeks unique solutions on behalf of customers
- Speed of response
- Technical knowledge
- Timeliness of scheduling inquiries responses

- Understands my business
- Understands my expectations
- Willingness to handle special, non-standard, non-routine requests

### Technical Support

- Ability to answer my questions quickly
- Accessibility
- Accuracy
- Communication skills
- Courtesy
- Creativity
- Friendliness
- Innovation
- Listening skills
- Problem solving skills
- Professionalism
- Responsiveness
- Speed of reaching a "live" support person
- Technical knowledge
- Understands my business

### Operations

- Ability of onsite technical support to solve problems quickly
- Ability to "plug into" our IT systems
- Ability to produce custom products
- Ability to ramp up/ramp down quickly
- Accuracy of order received
- Accurate invoicing
- Accurate reporting
- Compatibility of estimates with your needs
- Compatibility of invoicing with your needs
- Completeness of orders
- Customization
- Ease of doing business
- EDI reporting
- Effectiveness of project management team
- Flexibility
- Geographical coverage of distribution centers
- Geographical coverage of facilities
- IT support
- Line item fill rate
- Management responsiveness
- Management's ability to problem solve
- Management's creativity
- Management's operational expertise
- Meeting delivery dates
- Notification of incomplete order shipment

On time delivery  
Order acknowledgment  
Product availability  
Professionalism of onsite technical support  
Quality consistency  
Real time reporting  
Reliability of promised delivery date  
Reliability of promised ship date  
Reliable transportation services  
Response to challenges  
Technical support  
Timely invoicing  
Timely reporting  
Total cost of ownership  
Velocity (turning of order or speed of delivery)

#### **Product Attributes**

Accessibility of service/replacement parts for product  
Aesthetics  
Amount of returns  
Consistency  
Construction of product  
Customization

Customized to my specifications  
Durability  
Easy to assemble  
Easy to configure  
Easy to understand documentation  
Easy to use  
Freight damage  
Manufactured to my specifications  
Packaging allows for ease of reshipment  
Price  
Product arrives unbroken  
Product conformance  
Product performance  
Quality  
Quality of features  
Quantity of features  
Reliability  
Serviceability  
Sufficient packaging  
Total cost of ownership  
Warranty

### **How do we determine which customers to survey?**

We usually recommend a three-tiered approach to determining the sample. Most of our clients break out their customer base by key customers, current customers, and lost (former) customers. During our discovery meeting, we would walk through with you the process to determine how to segment your customers for the most effective and meaningful data analysis and reporting.

This is a critical step in the customer satisfaction process. Getting the right sample is crucial in placing validity in the final results. It has been our experience that this step can be very complex and may involve many people from your organization to validate/verify the customer data.

### **How many completed surveys do we need to be able to validate the results of the survey?**

It all depends on the size of your customer base. Before we present you with our proposal, we will find out how many customers you have and how revenue is distributed among your customers. From this information, we will give you a recommendation in the proposal for the number of completed surveys we would need to validate the results of the study.

We believe a sample of your customer base is sufficient to measure satisfaction levels. A complete census of your customer base is typically not needed.

### **What are the steps to implementing a customer satisfaction study?**

We usually follow the approach below:

- Discovery Meeting
- Interviews with internal personnel and key customers
- Questionnaire development
- Customer base processing
- Data collection
- Report preparation
- Final report presentation
- Follow up consultation as needed

### **How long does executing a customer satisfaction study take?**

Again, it all depends. With first-time customers, the process from discovery meeting through final report presentation takes eight weeks.

On subsequent studies – follow up studies the next year or quarter – the time to complete is usually six weeks.

### **What is the final deliverable? What does the final report include?**

Please take a look at the enclosed sample of a typical customer satisfaction study. This sample will give you a better idea of the type of graphics used and analysis we do.

### **How much do Strategy International customer satisfaction studies cost?**

Although our process is standardized, we consider each study as a custom project. As we've mentioned before, each organization is unique in how it operates and what data is needed to make meaningful decisions. However, the variables that come into play in determining the cost of a study are:

- Data collecting methodology
- Number of completed surveys needed
- Number of attributes measured
- Level of reporting needed
- Amount of strategy consulting time