

Satisfaction Flunk

Almost 80% of business decision makers responsible for customer satisfaction think they deliver 'poor' or 'average' results...

This result is in stark contrast to the almost 100 % that rate customer satisfaction as the number one factor in business success.

These were the key findings in a recent iStart-Microsoft survey of business decision makers conducted in late 2010. The survey reflects the responses of 54 senior decision makers responsible for customer satisfaction outcomes.

The consensus was that businesses in New Zealand do a very poor job with customer satisfaction, with the majority choosing poor or average to describe the way New Zealand businesses approach customer satisfaction.

And whilst 94.4% of business decision makers say that customer satisfaction is the most important thing they can do to drive business growth and success, one in three don't undertake any customer satisfaction research (38%) to understand whether their customers are happy.

Of those factors that contribute to business growth, improving the skills of staff, along with more regular and better targeted communications to customers are cited as the two things businesses could do to increase satisfaction with customers.

'Latest technology' and 'investment' rated average to low, and 'risk management' is perceived to be the least important element out of those listed in the survey relating to business growth and success factors.

In presenting the results, Hayden McCall, general manager at iStart, who ran the survey across their readership, noted "there seems to be a disconnect between recognition of what is important, and actually doing something about it.

"In this and other surveys it is clear that a customer-centric culture driven from the top down delivers results. But there seems to be a lack of customer perspective from leadership, and this leads to the frustration that comes through in the results," says McCall.

Business decision makers also say the number one thing they can do is to really understand the customer and design an approach which shows they are empathetic and have attempted to walk in the customers' shoes.

Sixty nine % of respondents don't think New Zealand businesses have an adequate focus on customer satisfaction.

Regular communications was seen to be the key overall contributor to customer satisfaction (70.4%), with staff knowledge (66.7%) and having real people available to take calls (63.7%), following as second and third most important.

Reliable products and efficient management of complaints are seen to be roughly even in terms of importance (below regular communications, staff knowledge and real people), and value for money is seen by 22% of respondents as being important to growing customer satisfaction.

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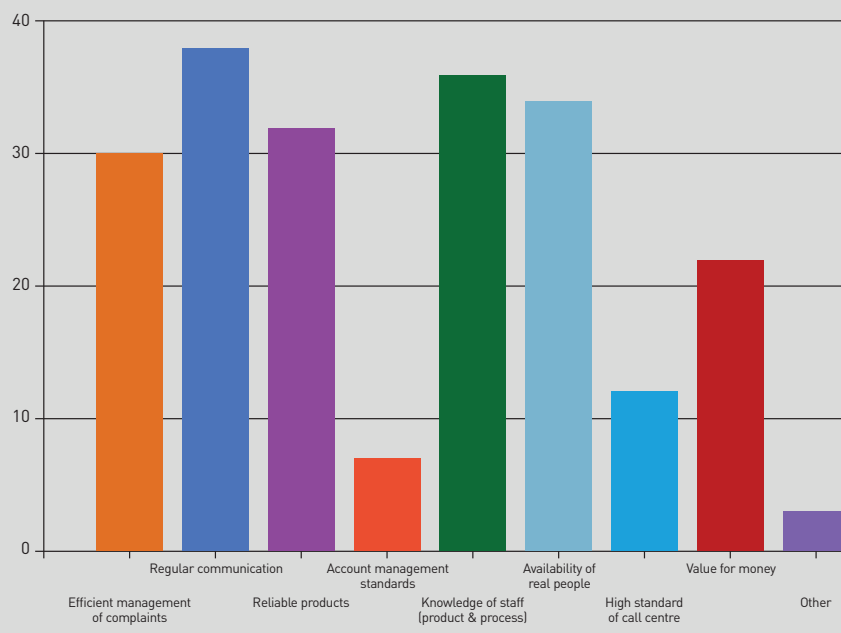
The call centre, account management standards and 'other' were seen as the least important factors contributing to customer satisfaction.

Face-to-face communication versus customer surveys define the difference between customer service and customer satisfaction according to respondents. **f**

When it came to activities that enhanced customer service, the most common answer was face-to-face communication, followed by:

- Follow-up calls
- Freebies
- Listening
- An actual person dealing with issues
- Keeping promises
- Training to staff to understand how important customer service is to the business
- Timeliness
- A CRM system
- A service desk with ITIL processes

WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE KEY CONTRIBUTORS TO OVERALL CUSTOMER SATISFACTION?



Source: iStart Microsoft Customer & Partner Experience Survey. n= 54