



BOOK REVIEW

Customer Satisfaction: The customer experience through the customer's eyes

Cogent Publishing

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Customer Satisfaction - for the real world

There's certainly been a need for a book that addresses the 'need-to-know' areas of Customer Satisfaction Measurement for new and experienced managers alike. Many managers seem to inherit piecemeal Customer Satisfaction Measurement systems when they take on a new role, or just as commonly, they inherit no system at all! Whatever situation you find yourself in, it's good to be able to get up to speed on this sometimes complex topic quickly. The book certainly has the feel of being written for practitioners rather than academics with an emphasis on taking action and practical steps to implementing the elements of a Customer Satisfaction Measurement system. That isn't to say that the theoretical coverage isn't here, in fact there's a quite detailed explanation underpinning the practical steps, but you can leave that to read later and still get all of the practical points.

Comprehensive Coverage

Taking a logical and comprehensive tour through the Customer Satisfaction landscape, the book covers pretty much everything most managers will ever need to know on the subject. The first chapter 'Dispelling The Myths' is particularly interesting reading as it deals with most of the 'pub knowledge' beliefs around the topic and equips the reader nicely for any arguments that might take place regarding the importance of measuring Customer Satisfaction. Subsequent chapters then go through the essentials of methodology (useful if you've forgotten a lot of the terms), deciding what questions to ask, how to go about sampling and then how to collect the data. Underlining its practical nature, the latter half of the book deals with analysing your customer satisfaction data and

how to take action from it. There's also a good explanation of more advanced techniques (see below) and how to involve your employees and customers in the whole process.

The book is very nicely structured, with lots of guidance to key points and important information; this actually makes it a very easy and accessible read, despite dealing with some technical aspects of customer satisfaction. There are plenty of explanations and real-life examples throughout the whole book and some great nuggets of information. For example, do you realise that you're probably employing 'voodoo polls' somewhere in your organisation or that 'the friendly martian' can be very useful in focus groups? Thought not!

Latest Ideas

Customer Satisfaction is a very fast moving topic and there are lots of new ideas and concepts coming into the arena. This title seems to have covered most of them including customer experience, emotional versus rational customer relationships, delighting or wowing the customer, net promoter score, customer experience modelling and the financial impacts of customer satisfaction and loyalty. Again, although the book covers much ground on these topics, it does so in a readable and accessible way, so you'll certainly be up to speed with the latest thinking on this topic. It's also refreshing that the book is written by British authors, as that avoids the trap which seems to mean that many titles fail to translate successfully across the Atlantic.

More Advanced Practitioners

If you are already running some form of Customer Satisfaction Measurement in your organisation, you'll no doubt find the introduc-



tory sections a useful refresher, but the coverage of more advanced topics will undoubtedly be of most interest. Techniques covered include the implications of asymmetry in customer satisfaction data, customer experience modelling, decision tree analysis, loyalty modelling, relative perceived value, index versus single question reliability and customer lifetime value. As is becoming more common, the book comes with its own website www.customersatisfactionbook.com. The authors invite comment and discussion, so it could be the perfect place to pose that tricky customer satisfaction question that you have!

Summary

Customer Satisfaction: The customer experience through the customer's eyes is a very comprehensive book with a real-world bias. The authors' backgrounds as specialists in this area mean that the topics are covered comprehensively, but more importantly in an accessible style. If you work in this area, this is the one book you definitely need as it is undoubtedly the most advanced and up to date book on the subject. **S**