

Develop a Customer Satisfaction Process

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Published by [Rockford Register Star](#)

Monday, July 31, 2006

Customer perception is reality, and developing a process to evaluate your organization's customer service effectiveness will help to manage your clients' perceptions and expectations.

While larger companies may have a customer service department, championing client satisfaction evaluations falls directly into marketing's lap to help understand and manage the external perceptions about your organization.

There are obviously hundreds of avenues to track customer satisfaction – from formal surveys or focus groups to more informal avenues.

One of the most important issues to remember when appraising your customer service issues is that it must be driven from the top of the organization. CEOs and senior management usually nod their head in appreciation of having excellent customer relations but usually they do not become involved or live what they say.

Some ideas to engage your executives include:

- Organize for one senior executive to handle complaint calls or work in the customer service department at least once a month.
- Coordinate for executives to "live the experience" of your business. For example, if your business is a hotel, have a senior manager experience everything from making a reservation, to checking in, staying overnight and having a meal at the on-site restaurant.
- Arrange informal luncheon meetings between an executive and employees on a regular basis to gain feedback and insight into their jobs and anything that might affect customer satisfaction.

During the next few weeks, I'll share some additional ideas with you of how your organization might assess customer satisfaction.