

African American Prevention Intervention Network

SANKOFA FACT SHEET

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How to Conduct a Client Satisfaction Survey

When you survey your clients, you are sending a message not only to your clients, but also to your employees. Both clients and employees know that you are focused on the quality of your services and/or products when they see that you are paying attention to client satisfaction. In fact, you can even improve client satisfaction before the survey results are tabulated. If employees know you are monitoring client satisfaction, they will pay closer attention to the service they provide. Clients will also see that you are listening to their concerns, which can give them an outlet for any frustrations they might have. There are three very important keys to getting the most out of the process and making sure it does not backfire on you:

Planning - Take time to think about what you want to learn from the results and construct questions that will gather these data. Broad questions like, "How satisfied are you with our service?" are of little use since they do not tell you what you might be doing right or wrong. Be as specific as possible when constructing questions. You should also include a few "write-in" questions that allow respondents to provide comments. Even though these qualitative data are more time-consuming to analyze, they can reveal invaluable information.

Communication, communication, communication - You must communicate to both your clients and your employees that you are interested in client satisfaction. Get the message out and make sure both clients and employees know that client satisfaction is a priority in your organization. This is your chance to match words with actions!

Follow-up is critical - You must manage the client satisfaction assessment process through to completion. If you fail to do this, client frustration can increase. Once a client has told you what you are doing wrong, he or she has an increased expectation that you will do something about it. If employees do not see any outcomes from the survey, they will quickly note that you are not "walking your talk" and realize that client satisfaction is not a priority in your organization.

- **Collecting Useful Survey Data**

Whether you are polling employee satisfaction, measuring client satisfaction, or conducting another type of survey, it is critical that you construct questions that will yield the information you need. The following guidelines will help you create an effective survey that provides useful data.

Take time to think about what you hope to learn from your survey and compose questions that will provide this information. Do not ask overly general questions. Be as specific as possible. Once you have composed your survey items, try answering them as if you were a respondent. If the answers you would provide would not be useful, then you need to rewrite the items.

Ask both quantitative and qualitative questions. Quantitative data does not give you the answers behind the numbers. By including "write-in" questions, you can reveal important information not uncovered in the numbers.

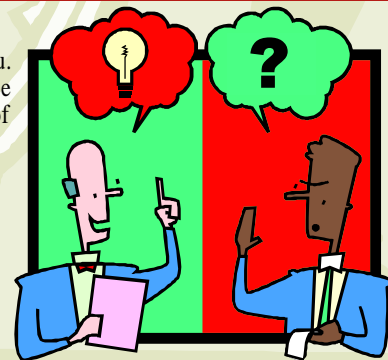
Include demographic questions. It is likely that different groups of people responding to your survey will have different answers to the items. The only way to uncover where these differences lie and pinpoint potential issues is to include the appropriate demographic questions. You should be able to break down the responses into key respondent groups.

Pilot the survey. By piloting the survey, it will help uncover any potential problems, such as ineffective items or areas in which additional insight is needed. You can also include some extra items at the end of the pilot survey that ask about the survey itself, such as appropriateness of length and content, ease of response, etc.

- **Maximizing Survey Responses**

The task of getting as many respondents as possible is largely up to you. Response rates vary widely for different types of surveys. But regardless of the type of survey you are conducting, you can have a major effect on the number of respondents who complete your survey. Some tips for accomplishing this include:

- \$ Offer a prize for responding.
- \$ Inform respondents of the what, why, who, and how.
- \$ Address confidentiality and anonymity.
- \$ Keep it brief.
- \$ Set a deadline.
- \$ Send reminders.
- \$ Follow up.



By utilizing client satisfaction surveys everyone wins. The clients and employees realize that you are focused on the quality of services and/or products. The clients will begin to understand that they are a valuable part of your process and that the results will benefit them tremendously. After the survey is complete, it is very important to let the respondents know that their time was not wasted and that by completing the survey it is an investment in their future and the quality of services that they receive at your organization. Lastly, always remember to put the findings into action and follow through on your promises. You must remember to "walk the talk" and "match words with action."

Source: <http://customer-satisfaction-surveys.custominsight.com>

For more information, call the technical assistance analyst at the Mississippi Urban Research Center, 1-866-JSU-MURC (578-6872).

