



GUIDANCE NOTE: THE WORLDGBC RETAIL CUSTOMER PERCEPTION SURVEY

This Guidance Note is intended to help you design and implement a “Customer Perception Survey” in your retail area.

In its report entitled [Health, Wellbeing and Productivity in Offices](#) the WorldGBC recommends that organizations conduct a perception survey of employees. Following on from this work, the WorldGBC has developed a Retail Metrics Framework that suggests that customers – in addition to store employees – also be surveyed for their perceptions of the retail environment. This guidance note sets out the reasoning for undertaking a customer survey and provides sample questions that you may wish to use or adapt should you wish to undertake such a survey.

If you decide to use the survey questions suggested below, either in part or in their totality, please consider acknowledging the WorldGBC in your survey and contacting us to let us know. Also, please get in touch if you have any questions or want to explore ways of working together on this survey at betterplaces@worldgbc.org

WHY A SEPARATE CUSTOMER SURVEY?

Customers are not the same as employees. They have a different, less intensive interaction with a retail environment than employees. But their perceptions are highly important and perhaps even more reflective of the effect of places on people. After all, employees by definition have to be in the store – customers do not.

Customer will typically have less experience with (and perhaps subsequently less interest in) how a particular store environment performs as compared to employees. So they may have less interest in answering a survey. On the other hand, since customers have more choice than employees in where they spend their time,

understanding where and why they choose to shop presents a significant opportunity for the retail industry.

A customer survey must ask questions that customers can understand and want to answer. The survey questions that we propose attempt to help you gather important information where impressions are important but where experience with the environment may not be extensive.

The sample questionnaire we propose can be used as is or modified to your particular requirements. Our approach in this note is not meant to be prescriptive but instead to provide you with our thoughts on the kinds of questions that might be used to derive actionable intelligence from customer insights.

THE CUSTOMER SURVEY: AN EXAMPLE

The questions are meant to be instructive and follow a specific pattern. All questions (with the exception of the open comment box) provide an easily-understood continuum. This makes the survey simple for customers to understand while simultaneously providing a sufficiently graduated scale for useful data analysis.

The first question asks for a general perception of the store environment – this is typically done in all kinds of perception surveys, including those for workplace. The next 10 questions

ask in a general manner about each of the environmental metrics detailed in the framework. This enables you to correlate answers with specific elements of the environment.

A final question asks about customer satisfaction based on customer service to test if there is a relationship between the store environment and employee performance. At the end of the survey an open comment box is available for customers who wish to express sentiments not captured by the survey. This comment box, although it requires more customer interest and effort, can be a source of valuable information.

Note: In the questions below, either “center” or “store” should be used, depending upon which unit is more appropriate for the particular survey. Questions are to be answered based on the continuum represented.

Question 1: This (center/store) provides me with a pleasant place to shop:

Agree Disagree

Question 2: I found this (center/store):

Too bright Too dark

Question 3: I found this (center/store):

Too warm Too cold

Question 4: I found this (center/store):

Too loud Too quiet

Questions 5: I found this (center/store):

Fresh Stuffy

Question 6: Finding my way around the (center/store) was:

Easy Difficult

Question 7: I found the look of this (center/store):

Inspiring Dull

Question 8: This (center/store) felt:

Natural Artificial

Question 9: This center/store encouraged me to want to walk and move around:

Agree Disagree

Question 10: This center/store provided me with the facilities I needed:

Agree Disagree

Question 11: I like how the community can make use of this (center/store):

Agree Disagree

Question 12: My interaction with employees of this center/store was:

Positive Negative

Please feel free to provide any additional comments in the place below:

HOW TO USE THE SURVEY

There are many ways organizations can use the questions above. If the questions are used verbatim, there may be opportunities to compare results (in whole or in part) with other companies that do the same and wish to share those results anonymously through the WorldGBC. This would be the case for the entire survey or individual questions.

Companies can also tailor the questions to their specific needs and audiences, using the questions as a guide. Using the same questions, however derived, across other assets or over time is recommended. Whatever questions are asked, it is the consistency in asking the same questions that yields the best results.

We know from our work that customers are already asked a myriad of questions, and so asking customers to answer an additional survey may take an incentive. Some ideas to encourage participation include providing a coupon or discounted parking for answering the survey, a strategy commonly employed by retailers with typical success.

The survey questions could be incorporated into existing surveys on customer satisfaction or act as a stand-alone survey. The survey could be available online or conducted in person, or both. The choice is up to you and the possibilities are numerous. The important thing is to start asking the questions.

CONCLUSIONS

Understanding where customers shop and why is what retail is all about. Understanding how positive environments shape positive economic results is what the WorldGBC Retail Metrics Framework is all about. By asking your customers about their experiences you (and we) can build a better case for what works and what does not. If, as we believe, better environments drive better economics, it is this kind of exercise that will show this relationship and add value to the kind of sustainability (and overall business) decisions you make going forward.

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