

Call Centre Market Research May 2005

What Are The Issues Currently Affecting Your Call Centre?

They could be . . .

- Handling increased numbers of calls
- Staff retention
- Customer retention
- Call resolution
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- The impact of a new automated phone system
- Whether to offshore your operations abroad

Whatever sector you are in many of the issues facing call centres remain the same and ultimately as research from the States has recently confirmed, consumers are much less likely to buy a company's products if they have a poor experience when calling that company's call centre for help.¹

This is where DJS Research can help.

Ali and Danny Sims have extensive experience of researching the service provided by call centres. Between us we have researched the service provided by call centres for amongst others:

- Nat West, Coventry Building Society, Bradford & Bingley
- ShopDirect (formerly GUS); Littlewoods, Grattan, Index
- RWE Thames Water, RWE npower, SWALEC, United Utilities, Central Networks, EDF Energy

From our experience we have come up with the following tips for conducting research in this sector:

- Speed is of the essence - it is important to interview customers as soon as possible after they have called you – how easy is it for you to remember in detail a conversation you had a few weeks ago, unless the service you received was exceptionally good or poor?

¹ April 14, 2004 – Portland Research Group

- Make sure your research consultants understand your business and how you operate your call centre – invite them in for a few hours to meet the staff and listen to a few calls. It makes for a better piece of research and more fitting recommendations.
- Measure expectations as well as customers perceptions of the service they have received. This is where a trade off technique such as SIMALTO (Simultaneous Multi Attribute Level Trade Off) works so well. By using verbal scales such as the one illustrated below you can see that although your customers perceive your staff to be friendly and polite, they want to be treated in a way that makes them believe you value their custom.

Service Attribute				
Attitude of staff	They were rude and couldn't wait to get me off the phone	They treated me as a number not as a person	They were friendly and polite	They treated me like a valued customer

- Measure customer priorities – does it matter that it took 2 minutes to get through to an operator if they managed to resolve your query there and then?
- Ask your consultant if they offer a fax or email alert system - if a customer being interviewed is obviously very dissatisfied with the service they have recently received from you, arrange for the research company to send their details back to you. You can then arrange for a manager to call them. It may save you losing a valued customer in the long run.
- Researching your customers may only be tackling one side of the story. It often pays to conduct staff research as well. You could well uncover a pressing staff training need, a problem with staff motivation which is affecting the tone of the calls or a number of other issues which would not come to light if you only spoke to customers.
- Conduct some qualitative research – it may be that customers have a problem with a particular part of your IVR system or music they have to listen to which would not surface with quantitative research.

If after reading this you have a specific project in mind or are just toying with an idea, we would love to hear from you – either fill out the form on our website by clicking here: **Contact Us** or contact Ali or Danny on 01663-732721.

If you require any further general information about the topic of Market Research, as well as <http://www.djsresearch.com/> you may also want to try...

<http://www.marketresearchworld.net/> - a useful market research resource.