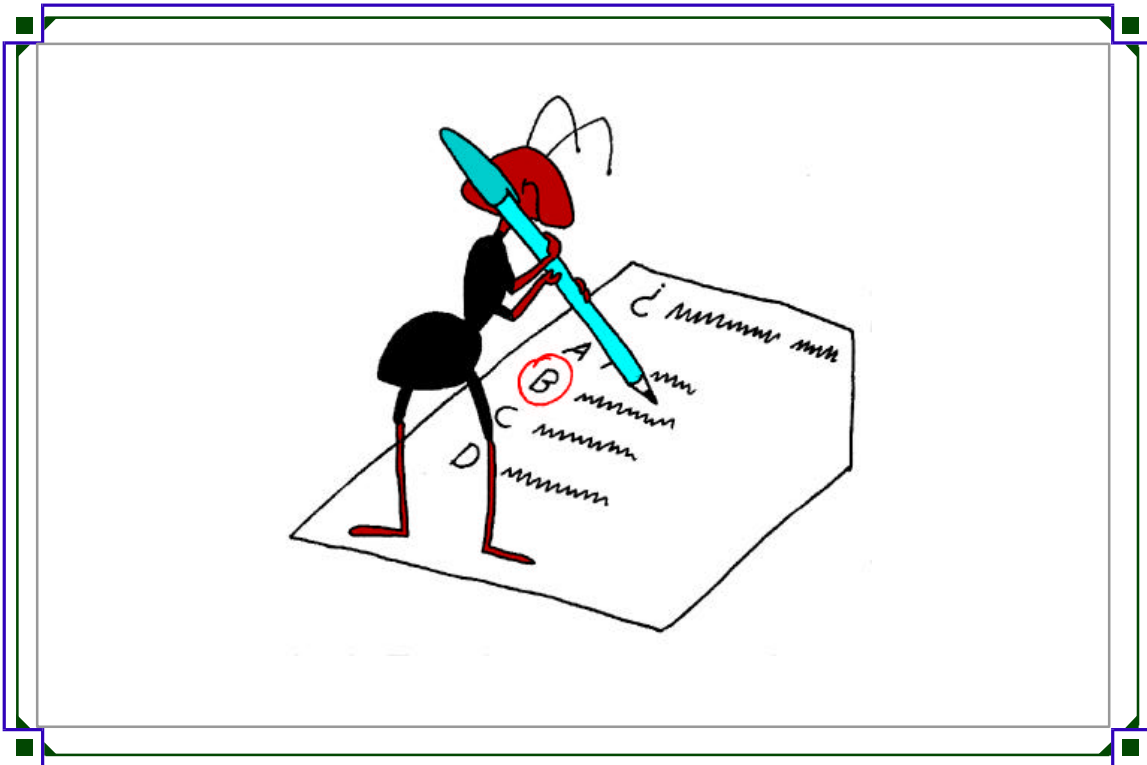


SURVEYS



Purpose

A survey can be defined as a structured method of obtaining data and measuring performance of a work group or to gauge customer satisfaction with a product or service.

A survey is useful whenever quality or process improvement may be desired. The data collected can be used to identify opportunities for improvement or indicate that no changes are necessary. They are especially important in the phases of quality improvement, process improvement, and problem solving when problems, solutions, and customer requirements must be identified and selected.

Only by gathering data related to the customers' expectations, specifications, and satisfaction with the product or service can the team begin to work toward improving customer service and satisfaction.

Surveys take on countless forms and styles. The most important issue to consider in developing a survey are that the questions must be easily understood by the customer; the survey must be organized and logical in presentation of questions and response prompts, and the format must be uncluttered and pleasing to the eye. For self-administered surveys (an oral interview of a customer), form is not important, but the questions must proceed in a logical order and allow the interviewer to maintain a comfortable rapport with the customer.



Process

Although surveys appear on the surface to be simple to create and administer, they require many decisions, each of which can affect the accuracy of the results. However, as difficult as it is to develop an accurate survey, the quality of the data they provide will justify the work.

1. Identify the customer. It is important to remember that the “customer” refers to anyone in the work process who receives a product or service from someone else in the process. This might be a clerical person in one department, a supplier, or manager in another department. The customer is not just the end user of the product or service.
2. Determine who will be surveyed. Who is to be surveyed is as important as what they are to be asked. The data source can be as important to your understanding of the results as is the raw data collected. A random sampling of a representative number of each customer population should be surveyed. If all customers, or customer groups, are not represented in the survey sample, the results of the survey may not identify all of the possible variables affecting the product or service.
3. Determine the sample size. The random sample must be large enough to assume the average responses are representative of the average responses of the total population from

which the sample was drawn. In determining how large a sample would be effective, consider the following:

- a. The unit cost of sampling,
- b. The cost of inaccurate estimates,
- c. The amount of variability of possible responses,
- d. The desired confidence level required for the sampling.

Statistical tables and formulas exist to assist in development of sample size required to achieve the desired confidence level.

4. Determine what questions will be asked. First, develop an outline of desired subjects followed by careful selection of questions. Each question should contribute to your understanding of the process, product, or service in question.

The content of the survey should focus on the needs of the customer, their expectations for services or products, and how satisfied they are with the service or product currently being provided. Survey questions should cover all relevant subject areas related to the topic being researched. Not only should questions related to all the issues be included, but they should be presented in such a way that they identify both strengths and weaknesses.

The decision of which questions to ask customers will determine the quality of the data collected and to what extent the results will help improve the quality of the process. It is important that all questions are worded very carefully. If not worded properly, questions can be misleading or confusing to the customer, they can lead to false results, or lead to results that have no meaning.

5. Write the questions as outlined in step 4. Consider the following guidelines for proper wording of survey questions.

- a. The questions should contain only words which are simple, direct, and familiar to everyone who will be receiving the questionnaire. Do not use job language or jargon unless you are absolutely sure that everyone will understand it.
- b. The questions should be as clear and concise as possible. Short words are usually better than long words, and short sentences are better than long sentences.
- c. The questions should be specific. For example, instead of asking “How long have you spent on this project?” the more specific question might be “How many hours have been charged against this project in the past fiscal year?”

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- d. Avoid “double-barreled” questions. For example, “ Are you dissatisfied with your team leader and trying to get off the team?” Since the question has two parts it should be divided into two questions.
- e. The content of questions should be as neutral as possible. The questions should not influence the customer’s response to the question. Instead of asking “How bad is the condition of roads in your county?” try to ask, “How would you rate the condition of roads in your county?”
6. Decide on the most effective means of conducting the surveys. There are three methods of conducting surveys. All three have their own advantages and disadvantages.

Telephone surveys are most useful when a quick turnaround is required. It is also useful when there are many questions that allow for free response and where there is easy access to potential survey respondents. The cost of a telephone survey is small but limits effective interaction between surveyor and respondent.

Self-administered surveys are useful when respondents are difficult to reach by phone, there are visual aids to understanding questions, and the number of respondents is expected to be large. Self-administered surveys have moderate costs and large numbers of non-respondents.

Face-to-face surveys are best when the survey is long, requires visual aids to understand questions, questions allow for free responses, and interaction between surveyor and respondent will impact the quality of answers. The face-to-face survey is the best form but carries the highest cost and is limited in the number of respondents.

7. Once the surveys have been completed, data must be analyzed and presented in a manner that will aid in the understanding of existing problems, identify improvement opportunities, and uncover possible solutions. Some of the most useful measurements that can be applied to survey data include:

a. ***Incidents of Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction*** per number of respondents. This simple measure shows how many of the survey respondents indicated that they were either satisfied or dissatisfied with the issue of the question. For example, your survey asks respondents how satisfied they are with the digitized picture on their new driver’s license. Their responses are based on a scale of 1 (very dissatisfied) through 5 (very satisfied). The number of people responding with a 1 or 2 would indicate the number of respondents that were dissatisfied with their picture.

b. The ***average response*** is simply the mean or average response to a question. In the above example we would take those same 100 responses and calculate the average by adding up all the responses to the question and then divide by the number of respondents (100).

c. Another technique that could be used to analyze data would be to translate data to ***percentage of respondents***. As in the example above we could calculate the percentage of each response scale (1 to 5). Each scale is calculated independently. The responses may indicate 5% of respondents indicated a 1 (very dissatisfied), 10% selected 2 (dissatisfied), 40% selected 3 (neutral), 40% selected 4 (satisfied), and 5% selected 5 (very satisfied).



Example

The following example questions were used for surveys of internal customers. The survey was conducted by a DMV process improvement team and was conducted face-to-face with small groups of Drivers License examiners. The questions were all open-ended with the intention of eliciting free expression by the examiners.

1. If you could design an ideal Driver License system, what would it be like?
2. If an ideal system were not possible, what would you continue, start or stop about the current system?
3. What would you continue, start or stop about the supervisor's role?
4. How are you treated by your supervisor?
5. What would you continue, start or stop about the administration's role?
6. How are you treated by the administration?
7. What policies, procedures, laws and regulations prevent you from doing your job as well as you would like?

8. What training do you need to enable you to do your job better?
9. What are your opinions about these proposed changes:
 - a. eliminating uniforms or going to more casual dress such as slacks and blazers?
 - b. implementation of a suggestion system?
 - c. implementation of an employee recognition system?
 - d. top managers performing front line work?
 - e. part-timers; including greeters, photographers, special service for elderly, etc.?
 - f. displaying a “promise of service”?
 - g. independent material and information site?
 - h. leadership training for supervisors?
10. What should you continue, start, or stop that would increase customer satisfaction?
11. What do customers expect?
12. Give examples of customer service excellence you have experienced that should be implemented by DMV?



Key Points

- Survey programs may either be one-time events tied to a process improvement initiative or may be on-going. An on-going program allows an open channel of communication with customers and can provide meaningful data that can be incorporated into many stages of continuous process improvements.
- For a survey of external customers, you should have the survey reviewed by The Research and Policy Unit of DOT. This unit can help to ensure that the survey is appropriate, reflects the proper Department image, and is consistent with Department goals.

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