

REPORT

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enhancing the quality of SME service provision (ERDF funded project 2002-2005)

John Kershaw & Co Surveyors 29.04.05

CUSTOMER SURVEY (SHORT) REPORT

As part of the action plan agreed with your company we have recently carried out a customer survey on your behalf. Here is a report of the findings of this survey – other activities which may be carried out within the action plan will be reported back to you at appropriate stages. This project is funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and is free to specified beneficiaries - such as your organization.

Analysis of our background research findings, from customers of a range of services, has indicated a number of 'service aspects' - which may be seen as important and against which the quality of services can be assessed. These service dimensions, as perceived by customers, are representative of the skill and behaviours (competencies) of organizational employees. The purpose of this report is to help identify areas where skills may be lacking – or are over-emphasized. The dimensions, and their associated skill areas, are as follows:

Task Understanding.....	<i>Knowledge & Reasoning Ability</i>
Communication	<i>Information Exchange and Communication Skills</i>
People Focus.....	<i>Interpersonal/Customer Skills</i>
Flexibility of Service.....	<i>Adaptive Ability</i>
Image of Quality	<i>Attention to Tangible Details</i>
Reliability of Service.....	<i>Planning & Organizational Skills</i>
Staff Motivation.....	<i>Personal Drive & Motivation</i>
Trustworthiness.....	<i>Responsibility & Integrity</i>

Future stages of the project can involve study of the skill profile within the organization (at individual or group level) and the Human Resource Management practices (HRM) which impact upon this. Final output will involve recommendations with regard to training need or selection of future employees.



Overview:

The information presented here suggests that the overall perception of service quality provided by **JOHN KERSHAW & CO SURVEYORS** is very in all areas. Nevertheless, there is some room for improvement indicated in the areas *People focus* - which relates to how customers are made to feel as individuals, and *Reliability* – which relates to the degree to which customers can depend on an error free service. However, it must be pointed out that these are relative statements only, as **JOHN KERSHAW & CO SURVEYORS** service quality is generally perceived to be high and offering good value for money.

Below is a summary of key results from the customer survey – which we suggest you read first. Following this, more detail can be found in the appendices, which include: tables showing detailed scores, for each service aspect (Appendix 1); questionnaire items, complete with individual item summary scores (Appendix 2); results relating to customer expectations (Appendix 3), and finally, customer comments (Appendix 4).

Sample:

Survey response rates vary, we normally expect between 5-15% for a questionnaire where no incentive for reply is offered. In this case we received **6** replies which, at **18%**, is above average for the companies surveyed – although a small sample upon which to base analysis.

Results:

Importance – Customers rated all service dimensions as important, however, they may be ranked in the following order of importance:

1. Task Understanding (*most*)
2. Communication
3. Trustworthiness
4. Reliability
5. Motivation
6. Image of Quality
7. Flexibility
8. People Focus(*least*)

Perceptions of Quality - Customer perceptions of quality may range from 1 (very low) to 7 (very high). In this case, all scores were in the upper sector (i.e. above 5). The lowest score was for *People Focus* (**5.50**) and the highest score was for *Task Understanding* (**6.83**). In addition, scores were calculated for *overall* perceptions of quality (i.e. the average of all aspects of service) and obtained for *overall* feelings of satisfaction (a single rating for the overall service). It is possible for customers to be satisfied with a service they evaluate as quite poor (if they expected little better) or to be dissatisfied with something they perceive as good (if it was not what they wanted, or didn't suit their tastes etc).



Overall service quality was perceived as **6.31**, which is higher than the average for customers in this project (average = 5.60, n=500). Customer's overall satisfaction with the services they are receiving was extremely high - at **6.67** (average – 5.98). However, it is preferable for perceived *overall quality* to exceed *overall satisfaction* - to reduce the risk of competitors attracting satisfied customers, by offering what appears to be a better quality of service.

Gap scores - Although useful, the *perception scores* are more meaningful when compared to the *importance scores* for each service aspect – as it is your company's performance in areas of importance to the customer which determines their loyalty. For example, where *perception scores* are lower than *importance scores* this is unsatisfactory to the customer – however high the perception scores may be. Where the reverse is the case (ie perception exceeds importance), organizations may be over-committing in these areas – possibly at the expense of other more important aspects of the service.

Service Dimension	Gap scores*
Task Understanding	0
Communication	-0.16
People Focus	0.67
Flexibility	0.50
Image of Quality	0.33
Reliability	-0.17
Motivation	0.33
Trustworthiness	0.17
Value for money	0.50

**Gap score = perception – importance (a minus score shows that perceived quality is inadequate)*

Scores of one point and above indicate real difficulties. In this case, scores are positively aligned with the importance customers place on different service aspects - and exceed them with regard to *people focus*, *flexibility* and perceived *value for money*. The only negative gap scores are for *People Focus* (refer to items: *q3* and *q3a* – in appendix 2) and *Reliability* (*q4*, *q4a*), but these are negligible.

Benchmarking – the chart overleaf shows a summary of your scores in relation to the general perception scores obtained from customers from a range of services (including *software*, *financial*, *recruitment*, *legal*, *care* and *design* services; n=500). It must be noted that this is a limited comparison group and that none of the services involved specifically relate to your business activities.

JOHN KERSHAW & CO SURVEYORS customers in this survey perceived the quality of the service you provide to be higher than benchmark scores on all dimensions, except for *People Focus* – although this still exceeded the importance your customers place on this area.





Customers were also assessed with regard to their expectations (see appendix 3), **50%** stated that the service exceeded expectations, the remaining **50%** stating that their expectations were met.

Conclusion

The information given here indicates that the level of service quality provided by JOHN KERSHAW & CO SURVEYORS is generally very high in all areas - and of a greater quality than most of the organizations surveyed. No particular areas for concern were indicated. However, it must be noted that this is based on a small sample of customers (only 6), and may not represent all customer views. Having said that, it is generally customers who do have a particular axe to grind, who are most likely to respond. In this case it is recommended that any resources which may have been available for enhancing quality be spent on either ensuring the current levels are maintained – or on an associated area, such as marketing.

We are happy to endorse these findings in any marketing literature – should that be required.



APPENDIX 1

Table 1 shows *customers' assessments of importance* placed on each service dimension:

Service Dimension	n	Min score	Max score	Average score	Std. dev.
Task Understanding	6	6.00	7.00	6.83	0.40
Communication	6	6.00	7.00	6.83	0.40
People Focus	6	1.00	7.00	4.83	2.31
Flexibility	6	4.00	7.00	5.17	1.32
Image of Quality	6	5.00	7.00	6.00	0.63
Reliability	6	5.00	7.00	6.50	0.83
Motivation	6	4.00	7.00	6.17	1.16
Trustworthiness	6	6.00	7.00	6.50	0.54
Value	6	3.00	7.00	5.33	1.60

Table 2 shows *customers' perceptions of the level of quality delivered* on each dimension:

Service Dimension	n	Min score	Max score	Average score	Std. dev.
Task Understanding	6	6.00	7.00	6.83	0.40
Communication	6	6.00	7.00	6.67	0.51
People Focus	6	4.00	7.00	5.50	1.37
Flexibility	6	4.00	7.00	5.67	1.03
Image of Quality	6	6.00	7.00	6.33	0.51
Reliability	6	5.00	7.00	6.33	0.81
Motivation	6	6.00	7.00	6.50	0.54
Trustworthiness	6	6.00	7.00	6.67	0.51
Value	6	4.00	7.00	5.83	1.17
<i>Overall Quality</i>				6.31	
<i>Overall Satisfaction</i>	6	6.00	7.00	6.67	0.51

Table 3 shows *questionnaire items* used to construct each dimension:

Service Dimension	Question numbers
Task Understanding	1a, 1b,
Communication	2a, 2b,
People Focus	3a, 3b,
Flexibility	4a, 4b,
Image of Quality	5a, 5b,
Reliability	6a, 6b,
Motivation	7a, 7b,
Trustworthiness	8a, 8b,
<i>Overall Quality</i>	<i>Average of all the above</i>
Value	9a, 9b,
<i>Overall Satisfaction</i>	10,



CUSTOMER SURVEY – Questionnaire Items & Scores**APPENDIX 2**

Item No	Item	n	Min	Max	Mean
1a	Employees of this company have the knowledge to do their jobs well	6	6.00	7.00	6.83
1b	How important is this to you?	6	6.00	7.00	6.83
2a	This company communicates well with its costumers	6	6.00	7.00	6.67
2b	How important is this to you?	6	6.00	7.00	6.83
3a	I feel this company cares about me as an individual	6	4.00	7.00	5.50
3b	How important is this to you?	6	1.00	7.00	4.83
4a	This company will always adapt its services to comply with my needs	6	4.00	7.00	5.67
4b	How important is this to you?	6	4.00	7.00	5.17
5a	This company portrays an image of quality, in its: literature, website, facilities, premises etc.	6	6.00	7.00	6.33
5b	How important is this to you?	6	5.00	7.00	6.00
6a	I can rely on this company to be well organized and get things right, regarding deadlines and details etc	6	5.00	7.00	6.33
6b	How important is this to you?	6	5.00	7.00	6.50
7a	Employees of this company show motivation in responding promptly to my needs	6	6.00	7.00	6.50
7b	How important is this to you?	6	4.00	7.00	6.17
8a	I trust employees of this company to always behave with professional integrity	6	6.00	7.00	6.67
8b	How important is this to you?	6	6.00	7.00	6.50
9a	This company's services offer good value for money	6	4.00	7.00	5.83
9b	How important is this to you?	6	3.00	7.00	5.33
10	Overall, I am satisfied with the service I receive from this company	6	6.00	7.00	6.67



CUSTOMER SURVEY

APPENDIX 3

Table 4 shows *breakdown of customer expectations* with regard to service quality (q.11)

Does the service you receive.....	Frequency	Percentage %
...exceed expectations	3	50
...meet expectations	3	50
...fail to meet expectations	0	0
<i>Total</i>	6	<i>100.0</i>

CUSTOMER COMMENTS

APPENDIX 4

Very good service. Transparent & un-biased. A credit to you John!

There is little I can add! John Kershaw can always be relied upon and provide a clear, informative and comprehensive report when his services are requested.

It would greatly assist if the Scott schedule could have a final blank column for views of the Judge and others using the Schedule.

