

BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE VS CUSTOMER SURVEYS—WHAT WORKS

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Your sales team needs information on how to better develop, sell and retain customers, your company wants to know what products and services to sell in the future, and you want to know why customers buy and the value-proposition your business offers. Your goal - you want to know why, what and how to grow your business... and your customer has the answers.

"Realizing that business today has become more complex... the needs of your customer have become more dynamic as well. No longer will a general survey create the level of response rate required to garner measurable customer results or information required to benefit your company."

What has changed in today's marketplace

Over the past 2-3 years so much has changed in the industry. Customers are buying differently than ever before, companies are more strategic in what they do and how they go to market, and business is more complex and dynamic than ever before.

Today, customers want it all - technology, price, relationship and service - and they want it faster, cheaper and with the best service. A truly complex selling environment has formed. Industry research shows that the average company loses 10-15% of customers yearly, and only 4% will tell you about it.

To support sales success, marketing efforts, product development, customer retention programs, pricing methods, etc., you must know WHY, WHAT and HOW customers want to do business now and in the future, or you are simply selling blind.

“Business Intelligence” VS Customer Surveys

Often as I travel, a CEO will ask “How do you really define what customers want and grow sales. We do customer surveys – but they’re no help?”

Aren't we all “surveyed-out” – tired of taking general satisfaction surveys where the results and ROI for the time, recommendations and feedback are not realized? Customer satisfaction surveys often are general in nature and are just one-side of the customer equation. A customer can be very happy or satisfied with your company and switch vendors because they believe another is better at what you do - or has better pricing, or are more supportive - BUT they were happy with your company.

Since 2010, the response rate for general satisfaction surveys has dropped below 7%. The reason is simple, general surveys do not allow customers to effectively assess or communicate important topics relative to their business, although it requires their valuable time. In addition, too often a customer survey is poorly released and customers seldom receive results or a “thank you” for their time...so the next time they do not complete the survey at all.



Today, “business intelligence” is providing customers with a

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platform or “voice” to communicate, measure, assess and recommend solutions that advance your efforts to support their business. A company-specific, customized customer intelligence



survey provides valuable insight into customers’ buying expectations – how, what, and why they buy today and in the future, product and service needs, inside and field support effectiveness...and generates leads for the sales organization.

Why General Customer Satisfaction Surveys Fail

Business today has become more complex and the needs of your customer have become more dynamic as well. No longer will a general survey create the level of response rate required to garner measurable customer results or information required to benefit your company. The reality is, a well-designed, targeted business intelligence survey realizes high response rates of 50-60%, generates good will, and allows customers to share how you can best support their company and grow your business. “Satisfaction” is only one aspect of your customer’s requirements... you need more.

SMART Surveys – What’s the Difference?

In the survey and customer retention industry, this is called a “SMART” survey (Simple, Measurable, Aligned, Relevant, and Targeted).

A successful SMART survey that elicits strong customer response will provide the following “business intelligence” and results:

- Effectively market and communicate your company’s programs and services
- Assess and measure your products, services, programs and pricing
- Measure sales effectiveness, customer service, delivery or quality
- Analyze current and future customer needs, expectations or requirements for success
- Attract leads, new business opportunities, new contacts, and even customer contact info (emails, numbers, etc.)

- Define KEY decision makers and what they expect
- Trend results by target areas (IE: territory, product type, customer, market or business type)
- Leadership recommendations that support sales, marketing, service, future needs and growing or improving customer sales and retention

Companies who focus on business intelligence or develop their own SMART surveys engage executive management, sales leadership and the sales team, marketing, production, customer service, and other teams to effectively explore the goal of the survey. Then develop the survey around specific industry topics and questions to engage decision makers or buyers in an “experience” that both brands your company’s programs and services, while also gathering critical customer intelligence that will impact your company and customer bases directly.


“Why, how, and what customers buy... this is in line with our company vision.”

After the Survey - Customer Follow-up and Sales Team Communication

A critical but often forgotten part of the survey process is to send a thank you to customers who took the time to offer ideas and feedback and communicate results and success of the survey. Second, present the results to your sales and service teams to share your findings, present new information and recommendations and have them follow-up on new opportunities, requests or leads generated. This is a powerful way to assure customer needs are supported and business opportunities are realized.

The Result... How will this impact your company?

In today’s competitive marketplace, leadership is seeking ways to increase sales, retain customers and introduce new products or services that support the customer and grow business. Business intelligence generates invaluable data and recommendations that allow you to develop new products and services, saturate customer accounts, increase sales and assure that as you grow you are aligned with your customer, helping you retain their business. Defining a customer’s real needs and goals is a complex mix but the customer is the key to helping you define what is most important to growing and retaining their business.

With effective “business intelligence” you can arm your sales force to go out and navigate the new and changed landscape. Business Intelligence is your customers “voice” to your business success! 



GDI provides world-class sales leadership solutions for the selection, performance and retention of top performers in today’s leading organizations.

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