Customer Satisfaction: Preparing, Surveying, Analysis, Action

Background
The Business and Finance (B&F) Division of the University of Michigan employees over 2800 staff members in over 39 customer-facing units. The B&F Strategic Framework identifies Employer of Choice and Provider of Choice as two of its three main goals for all of units comprising the Business and Finance organization. Employee Satisfaction and Customer Satisfaction are the main metrics for these goals. First measurements were taken through a B&F employee satisfaction survey administered during February, 2005 and a B&F customer satisfaction survey administered during June, 2005. The second administrations of the employee survey and the customer survey were completed in October, 2006 and June 2007 respectively. In each case an overall organization target of 5% improvement was set.

The B&F Employee Satisfaction Survey
With an overall 82% response rate (2324 staff members), the intent of the October 2006 B&F Employee Satisfaction Survey was to measure employee’s perceptions of behaviors that are linked to overall satisfaction and high performance in our 57 operating units or sub units. Its purpose is also to provide feedback on the actions that were taken in response to the February, 2005 survey (76% response rate). Doing the survey every 18-24 months provides a metric of the overall B&F strategic goal of being an Employer of Choice for high-performing individuals and teams. The next survey will be administered March, 2008. While the 2007 overall B&F job satisfaction mean score remained the same, many units saw significant increases related to actions they had taken.

Understanding the B&F Employee Survey Results
The 2007 B&F Employee Survey results are reported in terms of 15 dimensions scores created from the scores of the specific 123 survey questions that make them up. The dimension score is an average score from 1-100, created from the responses given by staff members on a 1-10 scale. Below are the dimension summary scores for B&F overall (and the amount of significant change since the 2005 survey administration).

B&F EMPLOYEE SURVEY DIMENSIONS
Climate (60)  Advancement -5 (59)
Supervisor (69) *  Survey Perception (56)
Autonomy/Involvement +2 (66) *
Workload (62)  Overall Job Satisfaction (71)
Resources/Environment +2 (73)  Unit/Dept Commitment +2 (76)
Recognition (60)  Unit/Dept Loyalty +2 (65)
Co-workers +2 (74) *  Unit/Dept Recommend +5 (72)
Communication (58)  UM Commitment +2 (83)
Training and Development (61)  UM Loyalty +4 (79)
Task Significance +4 (76) *  UM Recommend (83)
Compensation +2 (53) *  Customer Focus (84)
Benefits (72)  * highest impact on satisfaction
Upper Management +3 (57)  (#) = mean scores, 1-100 scale

The 2007 B&F Employee Survey questions can be seen at http://www.umich.edu/~busfin/docs/Final%20_BF_2006_Survey_for_Reference_Only.pdf
The B&F Customer Satisfaction Survey

On February 27, 2007, the 2007 Business and Finance Customer Satisfaction Project Team took over the entire B&F customer survey process from our 2005 partners, Sibson Segal Consulting. The team revised the survey and administration process, and processed, analyzed and distributed the results. During this round of customer surveys, feedback for 37 core service units was simultaneously collected, using the Zoomerang survey site and software. Managers of the organization were asked to set targets for improvement during their FY08 planning cycles.

Based on feedback from B&F EVPCFO Senior Staff and the 2007 B&F Customer Survey Advisory Team, the Customer Survey team made several improvements to the survey and the process, including:

- shortening the survey by reducing the service attribute list from 13 to 9,
- improving the identification of targeted customer lists,
- allowing/encouraging forwarding of surveys by customers to other customers
- upgrading core service descriptions including adding logos,
- utilizing conditional formatting in the survey to help customers bypass services with which they were unfamiliar,
- more closely matching units with managers who wanted feedback,
- providing more access to more surveys for customers who wished to give feedback, and
- updating the Excel reporting tool to show Time 1 and Time 2 comparisons. (All presentations and tools are currently available at [http://www.umich.edu/~busfin/2007customersurveyresults.htm](http://www.umich.edu/~busfin/2007customersurveyresults.htm))

The 2007 B&F Customer Satisfaction Survey was open from May 21 to June 10, 2007. A significant increase in response rate was achieved from all groups. The table below represents the increases by demographic.

### DEMOGRAPHICS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Responses by Customer Type</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>RATING</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>RATING</th>
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<tr>
<td>Academic Units</td>
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<td>6085</td>
<td>7.3</td>
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<td>Div Student Affairs</td>
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<td>7.5</td>
<td>332</td>
<td>7.5</td>
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<td>UM Health System</td>
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<td>7.5</td>
<td>1065</td>
<td>7.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Central Admin Users/Other</td>
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<td>7.9</td>
<td>544</td>
<td>7.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bus &amp; Finance In Central Office</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1614</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### CUSTOMER SURVEY – SERVICE ATTRIBUTES

1. Understands the customer’s needs
2. Understands and explains University policies and procedures
3. Communicates service standards
4. Demonstrates functional/technical expertise
5. Implements service changes effectively
6. Communicates change effectively
7. Easily accessible
8. Provides friendly and courteous service
9. Overall Satisfaction
Key Survey Results
Research says that employee satisfaction is a key driver of customer satisfaction. We have done analysis on the results from both surveys. Below is a picture of the relationship between Employee Satisfaction scores and Customer Satisfaction Scores.

Survey Implementation Stages and Tips
Below are 10 tips to being successful in implementing surveys, based on our experience and supported by best practice research.  

(See Corporate Leadership Council – CLC Best Practices member research 1998)

Stage I: Preparation and Administration

Tip #1: Convene a broadly representative survey committee. Take time to form the team. Use good project planning tools. Secure expert consultation on survey design and statistical analysis. Communicate broadly in advance to the organization. Consider the use of Survey Ambassador/Liaisons and/or Advisory Committees.

Tip #2: Ensure that the survey format allows you to obtain accurate, actionable and measurable data. Time the surveys appropriately. Invite employee/customer comments. Allow customization. Use questions that drive initial predictions regarding overall satisfaction. Maintain a consistent survey format from year to year. Allow paper and on-line administration for employee surveys. Assure anonymity of results. Allow 2-3 weeks for input.

Tip #3: Set goals that demonstrate the organization’s commitment to improving satisfaction. Set improvement goals. Determine whether significant improvement is necessary. Establish a system of accountability for accomplishing goals. Tie senior management’s compensation to achievement of goals.

Stage II: Reporting Survey Results

Tip #4: Establish a formal process for communicating both organization-wide and individual unit survey results to employees at all levels of the organization. Employees complete surveys. Results are compiled and written up into formal report. Overall organization results are communicated to senior management. The group responsible for the survey
communicates overall results, key trends and
notable issues to the organization. Unit heads relay
results for both the entire organization and for the
individual unit to employees via face to face
sessions presented by senior management, through
team presentations or directly from supervisors.

Stage III: Identifying Satisfaction Improvement Drivers

Tip #5: Utilize feedback from focus groups to obtain the “story behind the numbers”; conduct focus groups to identify several key issues and generate action plans based upon findings.

Tip #6: Use statistical analyses of survey results to identify what areas of the organization’s performance have the most influence upon satisfaction. Use this information with focus group data to help determine what the most effective satisfaction score improvement initiatives will be. Analyze survey data for individual employee unit groups rather than the employee population as a whole when identifying key drivers of employee satisfaction (or dissatisfaction).

Stage IV: Acting on the Survey Results

Tip #7: Form action teams comprised of employees at multiple organizational levels to work on improving upon areas in which employees have indicated dissatisfaction.

Tip #8: Regularly and visibly communicate your organization’s efforts and progress toward improving upon areas in which employees or customers indicated dissatisfaction. Communicate through a variety of vehicles include periodic meetings, newsletters, and in-unit training programs. Share best practices with all various units within the organization. Communicate about failures, not only best practices, in order to give an explanation as to why improvement was not achieved. (Employees and customers have a tendency to accept this rather than growing in their dissatisfaction.)

Tip #9: Encourage continuous feedback rather than requiring employees or customers to wait until the next survey to voice their opinions and make improvement suggestions.

Tip #10 What would you add based on your experience?

Implementation considerations:

• What is the role that leadership needs to play in this process?
• What do you use as benchmarks or to set targets?
• What is the appropriate interval between surveys?
• How important is statistical significance, standard deviation, and standard measurement of error when reporting results?
• How do you manage multiple departments wanting to survey the same customers (e.g. a closed setting)?
• How local do you want to/need to produce results?

Closing
Whether the units about which you are surveying number 5 or 35, the same questions will emerge and the challenges will be similar. This is particularly true when you survey across multiple time periods. I appreciate the help I’ve gotten from others, so please feel free to contact me if I can be of any support or assistance. Catherine Lilly Senior Advisor to the EVPCFO, UM-Business and Finance 647-7890