

# What if we voted for green grocers and shoe shops, banks and service providers?

 By [Andrew Cook](#)

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In its truest form, a democratic country is ruled by public opinion. This is as true of governmental elections as it is of determining which retail companies will trump others or which banks will take the largest chunks of the customer pie graph.

Our political parties may not hit the mark in every area, but one area I think companies could learn from them is the importance of finding out what people want.

## What customers want

Post-election day, I've been wondering: what would happen if we voted for green grocers and shoe shops, banks and service providers? We may not actually mark an X for the service providers and companies we choose to support, but just like political parties, companies have to actively earn customer loyalty. And there's only one way to do this: learn what customers want and make it happen.

How do you find out what your customers want? Yep, you guessed it, X marks the spot. Customer satisfaction surveys give companies specific information about positive and negative perceptions. Customer feedback allows companies to understand how customers rate and use their products or services and how they perceive competitor options. Companies can determine through surveys whether customers are getting the service they want, the products they need or any problems resolved.

However, a customer satisfaction survey could be worthless unless it creates statistical data that can be analysed to enable improvements or change. Much like during the elections, when the method of gathering public opinion is under scrutiny, I believe the method of obtaining customer feedback plays a vital role in determining whether the results will be accurate and usable.

In essence, customer satisfaction surveys are a type of marketing research. If the methodology behind the survey isn't accurate, the reliability of the customer feedback is going to be questionable. Each step of the survey process is critical: from defining what customer satisfaction means in your company and determining the goal of the survey, to choosing the best method, using the right technology, and transforming the survey data into real business value.

## Customer satisfaction

More companies are realising that ensuring customer satisfaction is crucial if they want to maintain their share of the

customer pie. There are several companies that can assist with the implementation of a customer satisfaction program. Choosing the right one will ensure that you're not just handed survey software that's one-size-fits-all, but that the process is designed and carried out to actually achieve the business objectives.

If you want to know whether you're on the right track with your surveying methods, I'd suggest using these seven points as a guide:

- Make sure you're offered a consultation with experts, not just a survey software package, to ensure the method and process is actually suited to your needs.
  - The best survey quickly becomes the worst if it is deployed incorrectly. Reach your customers using the right technology and at the most appropriate touch points.
  - Sample size is critical to reliable data, but there isn't a golden number or a percentage to ensure that it is representative. Ensure you have the right confidence levels and margin of error for a more accurate measure of sample size.
  - Check that your survey asks only relevant questions. Experts will use a logical routing to only display questions that are relevant to the specific customer based on previous answers.
  - Keep it short and sweet. Shorter surveys increase the accuracy of customer feedback. Too many questions lead to question fatigue, in which the respondent gets tired of reflecting on the question and simply selects random answers.
  - Even worse is survey fatigue - or what I call death by survey - avoid sending too many surveys the same respondents.
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- Once the survey is done, make sure you know what you want to achieve with the data. Surveys are only the first step to enabling customer satisfaction.

## ABOUT ANDREW COOK

Andrew is the CEO of Smoke Customer Care Solutions (South Africa) and part of the solutions team helping to take the company's voice of the customer technology - Eyeris - to all corners of the globe. Great customer service is Andrew Cook's mission in life. In fact, it's more than a mission, it's an obsession.

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