



## Customer Satisfaction

8.2.1 of the ISO 9001:2000 standard obligates an organisation to monitor the customers perception of how their requirements have been met. This is often a burden for a company to establish, especially a small company with no full time marketing resource. Quite often this monitoring is anecdotal and haphazard. As a result the customers views and ideas are often not implemented or even worse unheard.

So what is the standard looking for?

In a nutshell, this means obtaining some type of feedback from your customers. From the outset we must emphasise that this **does not** mean you **have** to send out hundreds of customer satisfaction surveys. Some companies may well find this effective, it does suit some industry categories, especially if you have a lot of small customers – but it doesn't fit everyone. Here are some other ways you could monitor perception.

Number of complaints / returns

A very weak measure on it's own but valid none the less.

Monitor the use of your product / service by your existing clients.

If I borrow 10 books per week from your library, I must think you are doing something right.

Monitor and use focus groups.

Every politicians favourite and very useful with companies with many customers and software companies developing product for "user groups"

Sample interviews conducted with your customers

This can be done in two ways:

Firstly, conducting the interviews yourself, attempting to garner specific feedback on the various processes within your business and also looking for clues as to how to improve your offering.

The second way is to do the same, but to conduct the interview via a third party. This is where Ativa can help you. 3<sup>rd</sup> party interview is powerful **because** it is independent. Your customer feels they can be honest about you and not feel "pitched". Your organisation gains credibility in the eyes of both your customer and your certification body. It demonstrates that you take your customers seriously. One other point that often gets overlooked is that it gets



done: frequently customer feedback issues only get raised as a result of a visit from your certification body so everything gets hurried, no-one really takes any notice of the feedback you obtain and the results are often damaging to the reputation of your company.

Activa have created telephone interview formats for talking to a sample of your customers with. We can also change some of the questions we ask to specifically cater for your business and you can highlight areas that are most relevant to you. We then source a sample of customers from you and telephone them, having first sent a letter in advance explaining why we will call. From the results we construct a set of graphical representations of how you perform individually, plus a certificate of how you perform against your peers. Since we ask a number of standard questions, your performance can be benchmarked across industries. We also give you a short report on areas in your business that you can improve on.

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