

Synovate Study On Customer Service Shows 80% of Singaporeans Do Not Give feedback To Companies

Contributed by Synovate
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Synovate, a leading global research company, today released data from a study that looked at a wide range of customer service issues.

Miranda Cheung, Managing Director of Synovate in Singapore, said that the survey uncovered information useful to large corporations when dealing with customers.

"In an increasingly automated world, companies - large and small alike - must keep track of the methods where they 'touch' consumers. Are people receptive? What do people prefer when dealing with online or telephone customer service systems?

"One major finding was that you won't know unless you ask - a massive 80% of respondents did not feel it was important to give feedback to establishments such as banks, insurance providers, hotels and telecommunications providers," she said.

Ms Cheung said the survey was conducted via Synovate ViewsNet, the company's online panel, and respondents were residents of Singapore aged 15 years and above.

"This survey showed the good, the bad and the ugly.

"For instance, it's good news for hotels and airlines - the industries voted to have delivered the highest grade of customer service at 31% and 25% respectively.

"It's less good for companies that make sales and marketing calls. 81% of respondents dislike receiving such calls, although interestingly, the older the respondent the more likely they were to be receptive to a call such as this.

"And the survey showed some downright ugly news for many companies with a voice mail option on their IVR (Interactive Voice Response) systems - 20% of the customer calls left in a voice mail system were never returned. There's definitely something to work on there!" she said.

Respondents were also asked to name a company in Asia that has delivered excellent customer service to them recently.

"The answers were as diverse as Asia, as the question was open-ended. But in great news for some of Singapore's leading companies, a few names cropped up again and again. 13% of respondents named SingTel as a provider of excellent service, followed by Citibank, Singapore Airlines and StarHub all on 7%, then DBS and UOB on 3%," Ms Cheung said.

Other key findings included:

- The majority of calls are picked up within the first 5 minutes - 71% of those surveyed waited 5 minutes or less before their calls were answered.

- People get their information about companies from a variety of sources with the two most popular being advertising (28%) and corporate websites (26%), showing companies need strong commitment to up-to-date and user-friendly websites.

- The most important factor in delivering good customer service is a person who is courteous and knowledgeable (44%), followed by prompt resolution to queries (36%).

- Strangely, less than 1% of respondents felt that accurate information was important in delivering excellent customer service.

- 64% of those interviewed have used online banking. Keep in mind that the survey was online, so the respondents may be more tech-savvy than the general population.

- IVR systems are a part of every day life now, with 17% of respondents having encountered one on the day they did the survey and 86% using one in the past month.

More about the survey

The IVR Experience Survey was conducted during the last two weeks of March 2005 using Synovate ViewsNet - an online panel. The respondents were aged 15 and above and had experienced customer service through dialling a hotline or surfing the internet. The data was weighted to reflect the profile of online users in Singapore.