

RED FUNNEL

Having run a ferry service between Southampton and the Isle of Wight for over 150 years and operated in other forms since the 1820s, Red Funnel is obviously doing something right. But it is still keen to keep improving its level of customer service and Key Survey is helping it to achieve that aim

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LEVELS

INCREASING CUSTOMER SERVICE LEVELS

Before Michele Potheary was appointed to the new post of Customer Experience Manager, no one in the company had actively sought customers' views. Having been brought in specifically to increase customer service levels, she decided to run surveys to find out what customer really thought. To do that properly, she needed a professional survey tool. The selection process involved seeing what was available and, says Michele, the choice was surprisingly easy:



I really just met with a couple of companies, just to see what they had on offer. I liked the fact that, with Key Survey, we could set it up how we wanted to do and we could run any reports that we wanted. They were really helpful and it suited what we needed.

Key Survey was used from the outset to run regular customer surveys and this remains its main function. All customers who have booked online or have provided an email address, at least 1,000 people each week, are asked to complete a survey. Michele comments:



An email will be sent to them after their return journey and they will be asked to complete our survey for us. We have to get the data from another system so we create an Excel spreadsheet with the data and transfer it to Key Survey. We have to pre-populate some of the information onto the survey before sending it out, such as the booking number, the post code and email address.

It's a high volume, regular process with little customisation and no reminders sent to those who don't respond. However, by offering the incentive of the chance to win a free trip for a car and up to six passengers, a 22% response rate is achieved.

SAVING

SAVING RESPONDENTS' TIME

Red Funnel does make extensive use of Key Survey's logic and piping functionality to ensure that completing the survey is as simple as possible and is kept relevant to each respondent. To achieve this, as Michele explains, the survey questions have a logical structure:



When we do the survey, it literally takes customers on their journey from the minute they checked in at either East Cowes or Southampton. We ask if they went into the terminal, if they had a coffee at the coffee shop, about boarding. Once they've boarded, did they have anything to eat, how did they rate the toilets, what about the whole ambience of being on the ferry and then departing?



If they answer 'no' to any question, they may skip the next ten questions and go to the following section. If they didn't go into the terminal, the ticket office or the coffee shop, we're not going to ask them questions about that. It means that, for those people who didn't use many of the facilities, it's a quick survey.

Structuring the survey means that the presentation of the results can be similarly structured. Reports go out on a regular basis to seven different managers who only want to see information about their own particular section. This means that the Food and Beverage Manager, for example, is only interested in customers' views on the quality, selection, value for money and service levels in the catering establishments on the ships and at the terminals. Similarly, the Southampton and East Cowes Terminal Managers are only concerned with the operation of their own terminals and so only get the relevant reports.

REPORTING

IMPROVED AND TARGETED REPORTING

The reporting has evolved with experience since Key Survey was acquired about two years ago. The original process was to export survey results into Excel and produce graphs there. However, sessions with a Key Survey Business Development Manager have produced a greater understanding of the application's capabilities, particularly on the reporting side. As a result, the last 3-4 months have seen results analysis increasingly produced directly through Key Survey's own reporting functions, with graphical reports going to the company's seven managers. Michele says:



Now, for each manager, I'm giving them a report from Key Survey. For our directors, we are still at the moment taking the information out by Excel and making our own graphs for the directors' monthly report.

The likelihood is that the directors' report will also be produced directly from Key Survey. This is dependent on further investigation to determine if the application will produce everything that is needed. If not, the option to export to Excel still remains.

Having initially used Key Survey with no formal training, Michele now sees the benefit of a training course to appreciate the application's true capabilities fully. She has made use of the customer support service and is impressed by the online chat facility:



It's excellent. Every time I've had a problem, they've sorted it out straightaway for me. It's mainly just learning the different language that Key Survey uses against what we would expect something to be called. Sometimes, it's just about finding something.

EXPANDING KEY SURVEY'S USE

After around two years of operation, there are now plans to expand Key Survey's use into other areas. As often happens in these cases, news of Key Survey's successful use prompted interest from another department:



Human Resources want to do an employee survey. I've just told them to have a look at Key Survey to see whether they want to go down that route, which I think they will do.



They want to build their own surveys and they can use Key Survey because we've already paid for it. They want to start sending out one survey every six months. They can change it and adapt it however they want to do.

The original reason for acquiring Key Survey, of course, was to improve the level of customer service. In this respect, the application has more than proved its value. Michele says:



One of the questions we ask is 'What can we do to improve the service and what do you like about it?'. Obviously, once the managers have their report, they can feed opinions back to their staff and say 'This is what our customers do like and these are good examples of what they would like'. Sometimes, we already offer a service and they don't realise. Maybe it's something to do with our marketing and we need to make it more visual to our customers.



We listen to our customers and get their feedback. We find out what our customers are thinking so that we can, month in and month out, improve all the time.