

Consumer Corner

Survey Says—Service By Phone Reigns Supreme

(NAPSA)—While it's no secret that consumers are always on the lookout for the best value and lower price, there is another factor that wins their loyalty and secures their business—quality customer service. In fact, a recent survey found that consumers have distinct preferences, opinions and expectations when it comes to customer service.

Among the survey's top findings is how consumers feel about the length of time spent waiting for a customer service representative. As the clock ticks, we may find ourselves getting "ticked" about having to wait. The Discover Card survey revealed that most consumers, 65 percent, consider a wait time "reasonable" as long as it's less than two minutes. Nearly half, or 48 percent, find wait times longer than two minutes unreasonable, and when wait times are over three minutes, 80 percent find it unreasonable. Only 26 percent of respondents to the survey recall connecting with a representative in less than 60 seconds.

Though we are a "wired" society, consumers overwhelmingly (73 percent) prefer a little human element; i.e., contacting customer service over the phone. Only 16 percent prefer to use e-mail, 9 percent prefer using online forms and 2 percent prefer online instant messaging.

Age and Gender Matter

Women expect more from the quality of customer service they receive than men, evidenced by a higher percentage of women defining customer service attributes as "extremely important" across all 16 categories evaluated, such as being able to resolve issues in one phone

Customer Service by Industry

- Banks and financial services routinely provide the best customer service—40 percent of consumers were "extremely satisfied" by the overall telephone customer service provided by these sectors.
- 29 percent of consumers were "extremely satisfied" with cell phone companies.
- 28 percent of consumers were "extremely satisfied" with cable/satellite TV companies. (T)

call or connecting with a live person in less than a minute. Additionally, 18- to 34-year-old respondents were the most demanding age group across half of the categories that were surveyed.

Making Contact

When it comes to their feelings about contacting customer service in general, consumers tend to be polarized. Over half, or 56 percent, said they don't mind contacting customer service at all or very much; however, over a quarter said they don't like it at all.

Discover Card's customer service support has been designed to put Cardmembers first, anticipating and caring for their needs by providing top-notch customer service anytime, day or night. The company's customer service representatives boast the longest tenure in the industry and are measured on their ability to effectively resolve customer needs. Nearly every inquiry to the Cardmember service team, which handles some 80 million calls every year, is resolved in a single phone call. Additionally, Cardmembers are guaranteed to speak with a live representative in less than a minute.

For more information, visit www.discovercard.com.