

The Ultimate Guide to the
Marine Industry
CSI Program



ABOUT THE MARINE INDUSTRY CSI PROGRAM

DEVELOPED BY THE NMMA AND POWERED BY ROLLICK

As the largest source of consumer satisfaction information in the marine industry, the Marine Industry Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI) program, powered by Rollick, was created to raise the bar for boat owner satisfaction and improve the overall customer experience to support long-term growth opportunities for the industry.

The program conducts two surveys with new boat and engine customers during the first year of ownership. The first survey is sent shortly after the time of boat delivery, and the second is sent nine months later. Together, the two surveys track customer satisfaction with the product, sales experience, delivery, and service process as well as product quality.

Each year the Marine Industry CSI Awards program honors participating manufacturers that actively measure customer satisfaction and pursue continuous improvement to better serve the consumer. Award recipients achieve and maintain an independently measured standard of excellence of 90 percent or higher in initial customer satisfaction over an annual award period. This measurement is based on responses provided by customers purchasing a new boat and/or engine.





Which components of the Marine Industry CSI Program make the biggest impact on your business?

The program speaks to the core of our commitment to our customers. We want all of our customers to have exceptional experiences. We promote our commitment to customer satisfaction on our website, in our company brochures and through our sales and service training. We also demonstrate our commitment to customer satisfaction by setting the goal for our dealers to achieve 90% or higher CSI scores each year. Together with our dealers we have worked in tandem to exceed customer expectations.

How does your brand leverage customer satisfaction data to elevate the future owner experience?

We send out thousands of surveys each year and receive over a 55% response rate. This information is used by our company as we design and innovate new products. We believe it is important to provide this information to our dealers to use for continuous improvement. We also use the data to learn more about our customer using demographic information to identify our customer and track changes and trends. For example: we utilized our CSI data to track first time boat buyers throughout the pandemic.



**BOSTON
WHALER**



What tools does your brand use to reach and stay in touch with owners?


Boston Whaler has been able to utilize the Marine Industry CSI Program to deeply impact how we evaluate owner feedback in various areas of the customer experience. Aimbase has provided us with a great foundation for reporting that we were able to grow with and now feed into our local database program thanks to the versatility Aimbase

offers. Once in our local database we auto-generate follow-up opportunities to touch base with owners based on the scores and feedback provided. We categorize all of our feedback and distribute it to our business leaders on a monthly basis. We create reports based on product type, manufacturing line, and other areas of ownership around a product.

Which components of the Marine Industry CSI Program make the biggest impact on your business?

Sharing our insights to leaders of all areas of the business including manufacturing, engineering, and quality have created our largest impact. Even down to our hourly staff, it's important for them to hear both the constructive feedback from the surveys but also the positive experience feedback. Sharing survey insights across the organization allows us to identify key areas of opportunity and make improvements based directly on owner feedback. A large percentage of our customers receive the opportunity to have a post-survey conversation with us and we are looking to expand our customer touch-points to 100% of survey responders. Typically we initiate communication via email to request their best time/date to schedule a call and then follow-up accordingly. Many of our customers respond just to say they appreciate that we took the time to review and read their survey to the point of understanding their experience. By connecting with our customers, we may not be able to fix a previously negative experience, but we are able to help clean the slate and provide them with an improved experience going forward.

WHY MEASURE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION?



The Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI) is often seen as a KPI (Key Performance Indicator) for businesses because of its impact on repurchase and new customer acquisition. The benefits of regularly measuring customer satisfaction include:

- Identifying dissatisfied customers and addressing their issues rapidly
- Identifying areas for design, engineering or manufacturing improvement
- Identifying areas for improving the sales and service experience
- Leveraging customer satisfaction awards in your marketing
- Identifying satisfied customers to recruit into customer advocacy activities
- Identifying customers to participate in further research

Measuring changes in customer satisfaction also helps manufacturers forecast retention rates and future sales relative to their industry.

If your company has been using CSI for several years, you may want to investigate if there is a correlation between changes in your historic CSI scores and subsequent customer retention rates.





CSI VS. NPS

A CSI score is based on survey results from customers, providing an overall measurement of customer satisfaction. The CSI methodology usually includes satisfaction scores across several criteria. These scores are typically averaged and often reported on a 0% to 100% scale.

A NPS (Net Promoter Score) is based on responses to a single question: "On a scale of zero to 10, how likely are you to refer to a friend or colleague?" The survey responses are classified as follows:

- 0 - 6 = "Detractors"
- 7 - 8 = "Passives"
- 9 - 10 = "Promoters"

A NPS is calculated by subtracting the percentage of respondents that are labeled "Detractors" from the percentage of respondents that are labeled "Promoters": % of Promoters - % of Detractors = NPS. Therefore a Net Promoter Score can range anywhere from -100 to 100.

The NPS question is often followed by a request for the customer to provide rationale for their score. The thinking behind NPS is that a single loyalty question may be sufficient to gauge individual customer purchase and referral patterns across seemingly disparate industries. Studies have shown that the "likelihood to recommend" question correlates to actual customer behavior 80% of the time.

The advantage of using NPS is two-fold; a single question improves survey response rates and the resulting score provides an excellent snapshot of overall customer satisfaction. The key disadvantage is that an NPS doesn't provide detailed guidance into the factors that are influencing overall satisfaction.

The CSI is perhaps a better method of determining why a customer may make future purchases. The main benefit of CSI is you can isolate the reasons for satisfaction and dissatisfaction. The greatest weakness of CSI is lower survey completion rates, which requires manufacturers to extrapolate meaning from a limited set of responses.

OPERATIONS AND METHODS

1. TYPE, TIMING, AND FREQUENCY

Surveying your customers should become part of how you conduct business, not an isolated event. A typical customer satisfaction survey is sent approximately 30 and 300 days after purchase. Subsequent annual surveys will enable you to identify durability and performance issues that may occur long after the 300 day survey is taken.

A properly conducted customer satisfaction survey program can also be an extremely valuable tool in providing insight for strategic business planning.

Ask yourself:

- What is the ideal timing for surveys?
- Should surveys extend several years post-purchase?
- How many questions should a survey include?
- What are the most important questions to ask?
- Will the questions be relevant over the long term?
- How much of the survey should focus on product? Sales? Service?
- What is the ideal delivery method for surveys?
- What role, if any, should your channel's sale and service personnel be involved in the survey process? What are the pros and cons of their involvement?
- Should an incentive be used to increase survey response rates?

2. RESPONSE METHOD

A response method is how you collect the answer from the respondent or customer. Often times, these response methods are broken down into two types: structured and unstructured. Structured formats help the customer respond more easily and provide data that is already normalized. While there are a wide variety of structured response formats, there are relatively few unstructured ones. Generally, unstructured responses are written, free-form text.

Surveys can be distributed in a variety of methods, each with their own set of advantages and disadvantages.

- Postal mail – Costly, but useful when an email address or telephone number is not available.
- Telephone – Also costly and not ideal for longer surveys.
- Email with link to the web – Very efficient, but response rates can vary dramatically depending on the product and demographics of the consumer base.
- Point of sale/service – Response rates are higher, but this method is subject to fraud.
- SMS/text message – A text message with mobile friendly surveys can improve response rates, particularly with younger customers.

3. QUESTION TYPES

Owner surveys or customer interviews are often a good place to start when designing survey questions. Owners can identify areas of concern and criteria that are most influential in purchase decisions.

You should also survey members of your organization and channel, from frontline sales and service employees, to members of your PD&E (Product Design and Engineering) team. They are not only primary beneficiaries of a CSI system, but they can provide insight into what questions they feel are most important to customers.

Management Tools

A customer experience tool, like Aibase, should offer tools to help manage the satisfaction process, like hot alerts and survey notifications.

Hot alerts are often used in the reporting process, and they are typically generated based upon scores given to key questions in the survey. For example, a principal of a dealership might want to be notified of a negative survey response immediately, giving them the ability to take care of customer concerns as they're collected. This feature is extremely valuable in managing customer satisfaction, mostly because of its ability to provide customer service professionals with instantaneous information they can act on.

Issue resolution and ticketing tools allow the OEM service team, dealer, and consumer to have visibility and insight into the escalation of the customer issue. Allowing the customer to create a dialogue with both the OEM and dealer in one solution creates a better experience for the customer and transparency between all parties involved.



OUTCOMES

The success of any customer satisfaction survey program comes from the actions that take place after the data is collected. Many organizations spend a tremendous amount of time honing the appropriate questions but spend little time on how the results will be acted upon. Satisfaction data is more than a topic of discussion for the water cooler.

Manufacturers should establish detailed guidelines and procedures for acting on satisfaction data.

Here are some suggestions for using the satisfaction data you collect:

1. PRODUCT QUALITY REMEDIATION

Satisfaction data can be used to identify and remedy product design, engineering or manufacturing issues that can lead to customer dissatisfaction. Ideally, product design, engineering and manufacturing management will review satisfaction data on a regular basis and create issue lists that can be prioritized and addressed. Most issues will require further investigation before an action plan can be fully developed, but your customer service department needs to be regularly notified about the status of all high priority issues.

2. SALES AND SERVICE QUALITY REMEDIATION

Sales and service satisfaction is also critical to developing high levels of customer retention. Sales and service satisfaction data should also be reviewed on a regular basis, prioritized and acted upon by respective management. Too often, management is driven solely by customer service complaints, and so many companies miss the big picture by not analyzing sales and service satisfaction data.

3. INSIGHT TO STRATEGIC PLANNING

Survey data can lead to answers to many questions, allowing you to make strategic business decisions for future efforts. For example, you may be able to forecast sales over the coming months or years based on changes in your customer's NPS or CSI scores. Or, your marketing department could act on survey results by promoting aspects of a product that customers find most satisfying. The uses of customer satisfaction data are only limited by your imagination.



4. IDENTIFYING ADVOCATES AND GENERATING ADVOCACY

Advocates are perhaps the most powerful influences on how others perceive your product. Customer satisfaction data is an ideal way of identifying satisfied customers who are willing to promote your product to their friends and family.

It's important to identify and approach advocates in a delicate way, ensuring that their endorsement can be spread as far as possible. For example, you may identify a satisfied customer that's also an "online celebrity" – someone who has hundreds of thousands of followers on social media channels like Instagram and Tik Tok. It would make a lot of sense to invite consumers like this to your next event or give them exclusive access to try out a new product. The likelihood of influencer-advocates spreading the word about their experience with your brand is high.

5. LEVERAGE RATINGS AND REVIEWS IN YOUR MARKETING

It's no surprise that online reviews have a proven impact on sales. In a study by Econsultancy, it was found that reviews can produce an average 18% lift in sales. This is why marketers should actively seek out highly-satisfied customers and encourage them to post product or service reviews on their social channels or brand website. In addition to sales, there are significant SEO benefits of implementing a ratings and reviews strategy, such as:

- Supplying your website with fresh user-generated content, thus, increasing your chances of ranking

higher in Search Engine Results Pages.

- Improving the likelihood consumers will find your website when searching for your "product name + reviews"
- Improved conversion rates

Source: <https://econsultancy.com/ecommerce-consumer-reviews-why-you-need-them-and-how-to-use-them/>

6. EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION, APPRAISALS AND REWARDS

Your product team, whether design, manufacturing or engineering, works hard to make your product perform well for your customers. Product satisfaction data should be shared beyond the executive suite, allowing all employees who directly contribute to product quality know how well they're doing in the customer's eyes. Closing the feedback loop empowers employees to take actions that can directly impact product quality, ultimately improving customer retention and advocacy.

Here are a few examples of how satisfaction data can be used in the workplace:

- Post satisfaction scores in key areas of the workplace
- Communicate key satisfaction scores and customer comments throughout the company via newsletters, memos and emails
- Encourage management to conspicuously celebrate positive CSI results with employees as frequently as warranted
- Reward employees with small tokens of appreciation such as time off, free lunches, awards or even gifts
- Use CSI scores in performance appraisals and employee compensation formulas

CUSTOMER SERVICE COMMUNICATIONS: BEST PRACTICES

We all have stories about when we were treated exceptionally well or poorly by a company. We tend to share these experiences with others, and we all know that word of mouth marketing can either be a great advantage or the worst drawback for a company.

LISTEN

Customer service is largely dependent on one's ability to listen. You will never be able to provide satisfaction to the customer unless you're listening to their concerns. Not only do you need to hear their concerns, you need to be able to understand what they're saying. This is one of those customer service skills that are most often polished over an entire career, but it begins with the willingness to listen.

COMMUNICATE

Retailers and manufacturers may handle customer service functions in different ways, but both of their verbal and written communications need to be mastered in order to provide your customers with the proper voice and message. Retailers and call centers often experience a high volume of verbal communications that requires clear and understandable messaging. In contrast, a manufacturer may turn to customer service and social media professionals who understand the importance of establishing a brand voice in their communications.

EMPATHIZE

Customer service professionals that empathize can have your customers feeling like your brand understands and is sensitive to their thoughts and feelings. By not empathizing, they may miss special considerations in order for customer service to be kept at a high quality level. Empathy is the ability to recognize the emotions of others. People who can empathize well will often win the trust of very dissatisfied customers.

UNDERSTAND WANTS AND NEEDS

Every customer is different, but there are many things that are common amongst all of us. Basic psychology can often help you anticipate what a customer wants or needs before they even tell you. For instance, a customer may have concerns about the safe usage of the product they've just purchased. Based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs, a wise customer service professional would understand that the customer must be assured of their safety before feeling a sense of belonging to the brand.

FOLLOW PROTOCOL

The majority of customer service professionals have standard protocol when handling certain customer service situations. It's important to document and implement these protocols in the way they're intended. Companies that establish and implement a customer service protocol are more likely to excel at satisfying customer service inquiries and even avoid legal trouble further down the line.

ROLICK

Rollick.io