

Is everybody happy?

Effective customer care results in repeat custom and new customers. But how do you know you are delivering the service or product that your customers want?

One of the most often overlooked resources is the collection and effective use of Customer Feedback. Collecting feedback can confirm what a business is doing well and what isn't working well enough so that changes can be made. Reviewing customer feedback and using it effectively will help improve the customer experience and increase profitability.

There are various ways of collecting feedback. The obvious one is talking to customers but this can be difficult when the business is busy and time is short. Also, people can be coy about giving truthful answers. Another way to collect feedback is to ask customers to complete a short feedback slip or questionnaire – but why would they, unless there is something in it for the customer?

So how can you make your feedback work? Customers are more likely to complete a short feedback slip if there is the chance of a reward – for example, a free monthly draw such as a free beauty treatment.

Once feedback is collected it is very important that it is used effectively. Also, any changes made as a result of collecting customer feedback need to be monitored carefully and reviewed at regular time intervals. Any changes need to be taken onboard by all staff. This may be easier if a small number of staff are employed but it can be more difficult when there is a large number of staff, particularly if they work part-time hours or shift patterns.

Remember, on average, each unhappy customer will tell 10 people, who in turn will tell five others about their unhappy experience - can you afford not to review your customer feedback system?

■ **For more information on effective customer feedback, log on to www.customerfeedbackservices.co.uk**